

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

FBI targets union resisting takebacks by Puerto Rico gov't

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Mississippi: Socialist Workers beat back red-baiting attack SWP ticket also on ballot in Louisiana

BY SUSAN LAMONT

JACKSON, Mississippi—The Mississippi State Board of Election voted on the morning of September 7 to place the Socialist Workers presidential ticket on the state's ballot. The socialist candidates will appear along with those of the Democratic,

Republican, Libertarian, Green, Reform, and Constitution parties.

"This is a big victory for workers and farmers in Mississippi and around the country," said Norton Sandler, SWP national campaign director. "Not only because we are on the ballot but because how this happened.

The SWP candidates beat back a serious red-baiting attack on the socialist campaign to get here."

Sandler also noted that the same day state officials said that the SWP ticket has been placed on the ballot in Louisiana too.

The victory in Mississippi came after three months of campaigning by supporters of the SWP ticket of Róger Calero for president and Arrin Hawkins for vice president in this southern state. It marks another step in the successful nationwide effort to get the working-class alternative to the parties of capitalism on the ballot in the most states since 1992 (see listing on page 9).

Since June, supporters of Calero and Hawkins from Mississippi and surrounding states worked to bring this to fruition.

In June and early July, volunteers petitioned in Jackson, Meridian, Natchez, Pascagoula, and Tchula to gather nearly 2,200 signatures for the socialist candidates. They campaigned at shopping centers in working-class communities, at Jackson State University, at meetings of farmers, in the Delta, and

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Class polarization sharpens in Argentina over 'piquetero' protests

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

The government of President Néstor Kirchner of Argentina is stepping up its crackdown on protests by unemployed workers, unionists, and others.

The Peronist administration, which took office last year pledging not to unleash the police against social protests, has been deploying more cops on the street and threatening to prosecute hundreds of protesters.

To justify this offensive the Argentine ruling class has whipped up a propaganda campaign against organizations of jobless workers, known as *piqueteros* because of their frequent tactic of setting up pickets to block roads. The capitalist media blames the unemployed groups for creating "chaos" and hurting the economy. This campaign has found an echo among middle-class layers.

On August 25, in a signal that the government is taking a harder line, the police arrested Raúl Castells, a leader of the Independent Movement of Pensioners and Unemployed Workers (MIJD), which for

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U.S. rulers press attack on Social Security

Tout tax 'reform,' say 'peace dividend' ended

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

Coming out of the Republican National Convention, President George Bush has been campaigning around some of the key domestic policies his administration would push for in a second term. He has called for making previous income tax cuts permanent, establishing individual "health savings accounts," and—in the name of "strengthening" Social Security—the creation of private retirement accounts. This package of measures is billed as a way for working people to become "owners"—to have savings, investments, and property—as protection in face of economic uncertainty.

In reality, the proposals for individual retirement and health-care accounts are part of preparing the way for a stepped-up offensive by Democrats and Republicans against Social Security, Medicare, and other social conquests of working people.

The Republican candidates are also campaigning around the gains U.S. imperialism has made in shifting its military strategy to be able to wage wars to defend its interests around the world under the banner of the "war on terrorism." They contrast this with the previous decade, the years of the post-Cold War "peace dividend," when Washington scaled back military spending and had not yet adjusted



AP/Jim Reed

Lena Rodríguez, a retiree, works part-time at a Burger King restaurant in Tampa, Florida. More people are working past the retirement age to make ends meet. Latest proposals by White House will undercut Social Security.

to the perspective that "we're faced with a new enemy and we need a... fundamental redesign of our national security strategy," as Vice President Richard Cheney put it in a September 3 speech.

Bush pulled ahead of Democrat John Kerry in the polls following the Republican convention. A *Newsweek* post-convention poll put him 11 points ahead of Kerry—54 percent to 43 percent. This followed virulent attacks on Kerry at the Republican National Convention. Some speakers, especially Sen. Zell Miller, a conservative Democrat, questioned Kerry's ability to act as commander-in-

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Russian troops end hostage crisis with bloody raid; 338 die in assault Unrest in Caucasus spells trouble for Putin gov't

BY RÓGER CALERO

The government of Russian president Vladimir Putin has seized on the events around the armed takeover of a school in Beslan, a town in the southern republic of Ossetia, to broaden its "antiterrorism" offensive, especially against groups fighting for Chechnya's independence from Moscow.

In the aftermath of the brutal raid by Russian commandos that ended the hostage crisis in a bloodbath, the popularity of Putin, who has built an image of a "tough guy" who will do anything to "defend the fatherland," has plunged. At least 338 people, including many children, were killed during the raid. A governmental crisis has been provoked once again by the growing instability in the Caucasus, and the far-from-defeated movement for self-determination in Chechnya.

The 53-hour crisis began September 1. Armed attackers took over Middle School No. 1 in the small town in the middle of the Caucasus, and held nearly 1,200 people hostage, threatening to kill them if an assault was launched.

Military officials who began negotiations with the armed group, which initially resulted in the release of 25 hostages, claimed that the demands of the attackers were not clear.

The Russian government responded by surrounding the school with troops, tanks, helicopters, and armored vehicles. While Putin had said the school would not be

stormed, two Special Forces squads were practicing an attack at a nearby school similar to the one occupied. A shoot-out reportedly began September 4, when a bomb was set off accidentally by those holding the hostages. The explosion sparked panic among the captives who ran outside trying to flee, only to find themselves caught in the crossfire between Russian commandos and the hostage-takers.

Responding to widespread criticism of

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Militant/Brian Williams

SWP campaign supporters petition June 17 at Jackson State University in Jackson, Mississippi, for ballot spot. The state certified SWP ticket on ballot September 7.

Utah miners affirm support for UMWA representation at meeting of boss 'union'

BY GUILLERMO ESQUIVEL AND ANNE CARROLL

HUNTINGTON, Utah—Twenty miners at the Co-Op mine here reaffirmed their determination to be represented by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) at a September 3 meeting of the company "union," workers reported. This was the second meeting of the International Association of United Workers Union (IAUWU), the outfit run by the Co-Op bosses, that UMWA supporters at the mine have attended.

After a 10-month strike for UMWA representation that ended in July, the company has felt obliged to organize these monthly "union" meetings to keep up the façade that the IAUWU is a labor organization, the miners said. Not one Co-Op miner remembers any such meetings being held prior to the strike.

"How long has your union existed?" Jesús Salazar, one of the leaders of the UMWA

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representation struggle, said he asked IAUWU local president Chris Grundvig. "For 30 years," responded Grundvig.

"For those 30 years you have never represented us. How long before you represent us. Should we wait another 30 years?" asked Salazar, amid laughter from

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Maryland protesters condemn cop killing of African immigrant

BY GLOVA SCOTT
AND NANCY BOYASKO

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Almost 200 people marched and rallied at the Silver Spring, Maryland, police headquarters August 21 to protest the killing by a cop of Peter Ayompeuh Njang. The protest began with a car caravan from the site of the shooting to a Montgomery County police substation where demonstrators rallied for several hours. Protesters then formed a car caravan and drove downtown, where they rallied at several street corners before marching to the police station.

Family members, friends, and supporters of Njang organized the action, and another five days earlier of 100 protesters at the same police station.

Njang, 25, a recent immigrant from Cameroon, was shot once in the chest at arms length by Montgomery County police officer Candice Marchone shortly before noon, August 12, in front of his sister's apartment. He was flown by helicopter to a trauma unit in Washington, D.C., where he was pronounced dead.

"Black, white, same justice," "No taxes for murder," and "No to police brutality!" chanted the demonstrators. "Montgomery County police took away Peter's citizenship rights," read one placard.

"What has happened here, is what I hear and see on radio and TV," said demonstration organizer and family spokesperson Julius Oben at the August 16 rally. "I never paid attention. It has landed home. It could have been any one of us. Peter is gone."

A *Washington Post* article repeated the police story that Njang failed to obey Marchone's orders to halt and lunged at her with a utility knife before she shot him in the chest at close range.

Organizers called on demonstrators to return to where Njang was killed to see the layout of the scene, stating they do not see how the cop could be in danger by the approaching Njang in broad daylight.

A neighbor, Carlos Méndez, witnessed the shooting. He told these reporters that

he did not see a weapon in Njang's hand. Instead, Méndez said, he saw Njang reaching into his back pocket, probably to pull out his wallet. Méndez also said that Marchone did not administer medical aid, as all the news reports are claiming, but ran off crying after dropping her gun belt.

Other witnesses noted that they saw Njang in front of the ground floor apartment waiting for his sister to go job hunting. Relatives stated that Njang had won a visa lottery and arrived in the United States May 14.

At 8:00 p.m. every evening since the shooting family, friends, and residents in the White Oak Apartments complex gather in a protest vigil. A memorial has been constructed, featuring a glass-framed photo of Njang and candles. Cars slowly drive up and stop as the occupants view the memorial and talk to family members.

Family members and others at the apartment complex where Njang was killed are angry over the cops' policy of shoot to kill. "Why could she not use the Mace or shoot him in the leg?" Clifford Dedzo said. "Why did she shoot him in the chest?"

Lea Sherman, Socialist Workers candidate for District of Columbia delegate visited the vigil site August 15. "The march planned for the next day is exactly

United Kingdom: rail workers strike Eurostar line for single pay rate



Militant/Jim Spaul

LONDON—Unionists at Eurostar rail service from London to Paris and Brussels carried out their first strike on August 28. Some 160 Rail, Maritime and Transport union members picketed outside the main entrances to the London stations at Waterloo (above) and Ashford. Maintenance workers from the west London depot who were not part of the strike joined the picket line before starting work at 8:00 a.m. Union organizer Agustín Pérez said, "We are fighting for a rate for the job. At the moment we have workers doing the same duties on different rates. If they work at Ashford outside London, they earn £4,000 [\$7,290] less" per year than those in London.

what is needed in order get a criminal indictment of Marchone," she said. The Socialist Workers 2004 campaign here issued a statement calling for prosecuting and jailing the guilty cop.

Njang's family has set up a fund for the transportation of his remains back to Cameroon. Donations can be sent to P.O. Box 141, 10169 New Hampshire Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20903.

Federation of Southern Co-ops meets in Alabama

BY JANINE DUKES

EPES, Alabama—More than 100 farmers and their supporters gathered here August 20–21 for the 37th annual meeting of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund. Farmers who are Black founded the federation in 1967 in order to advance the fight to retain their land. The theme of the conference was "Celebrating Rural Women: The Roots and Wings of Southern Development." A special workshop focused on an exchange

of experiences among women farmers who are Black.

A centerpiece of the meeting was the initiation of the Minority Farm Register, a new United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) program. The register is open to all "socially disadvantage farmers and ranchers." It will supposedly allow USDA agencies to locate such farmers and inform them of aid programs for which they may be eligible. Signing the register does not in itself guarantee assistance to any farmer.

John Zippert, the federation's director of programs here, said the group had been fighting for such a register for 15 years, but a key piece of its original proposal was still missing. "We wanted to know how much land people of color had and use that as a baseline," Zippert said. "We wanted to not let the acreage drop below that baseline."

Zippert and Ralph Paige, the federation's executive director, encouraged farmers to nominate themselves and other Black farmers to run for seats on the County Committees of the Farm Service Agency (FSA), a division of the USDA. One function of these committees is to decide who will be given loans in case of a natural disaster, and supports. Farmers who are Black have often been denied such assistance.

The liveliest discussion broke out dur-

ing the session on the *Pigford v. Veneman* lawsuit. In 1999 a federal judge issued a consent decree in the suit, which farmers agreed to based on provisions for a tax-exempt \$50,000 payment to those who could provide minimal proof of discrimination against them, and canceling outstanding debts owed to the USDA.

Mattie Mack, a lifelong farmer who now grows tobacco in Brandenburg, Kentucky, expressed the frustration of many in the room when she described how getting the funds promised in the settlement of that lawsuit, or debt relief, has been tied up in red tape. "If you call the monitor's office, they tell you to call the adjudicator," she said. "If you call the adjudicator, they tell you to call the arbitrator. They give us the runaround, when they need to give farmers the money."

The federation passed a resolution calling on the "Black Congressional Caucus and all members of Congress to adopt legislation and take action to correct problems and errors with the Black Farmer Class Action lawsuit as well as improve the general condition of all small and disadvantaged family farmers."

Jeanne FitzMaurice and Lisa Potash contributed to this article.

THE MILITANT

Get the facts on Utah miners' fight for union

After a 10-month strike, Co-Op miners in Huntington, Utah, have returned to work to continue the battle for the union from inside. The *'Militant'* has covered this fight weekly for the past year. Subscribers can get two back issues of their choice to learn more about this important labor struggle. Don't miss a single issue!



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Crisis in Argentina

Continued from front page

years has led demonstrations by retired and jobless workers. He was accused of leading a sit-in at a casino and demanding money to leave the premises.

About 3,000 piqueteros are now facing prosecution for actions they were involved in over the past several years.

On September 6 the government deployed dozens of riot cops in downtown Buenos Aires to prevent jobless workers from blocking railroad ticket offices.

The big-business daily *Clarín* applauded the police action. It complained that unemployed groups had already carried out 100 blockades at the rail line's ticket offices this year, allowing passengers to travel free. The company has lost millions in sales as a result, the paper said.

The ruling class has seized on the class polarization fueled by the unfolding social crisis to whip up its campaign against the piqueteros. Newspaper headlines proclaim that "public support" for the unemployed protesters has "worn thin." These divide-and-rule tactics have had an impact on layers of the middle class and better-off workers that had previously expressed sympathy with the jobless workers because they too had economic grievances.

The Kirchner administration has taken full advantage of the refusal by the pro-Peronist union officialdom to come to the defense of the unemployed organizations.

Playing on the grinding social decay, the big-business press has fostered a middle-class hysteria around the increase in street crime and kidnappings for ransom. On August 26, some 75,000 people holding candles gathered outside Congress in Buenos Aires to demand a police crackdown on

crime. The protest was led by newly famous anticrime crusader Juan Carlos Blumberg, whose son was reportedly killed in March in a botched kidnapping.

On April 1, Blumberg led an anticrime march of 135,000 through the capital city, "making him a hero among a middle class worn down by spiraling violence after the economy's collapse in 2001 and 2002," the Reuters news agency reported.

These class-polarized reactions have been sharpened by the differential impact of the current economic recovery on the population.

Following a severe recession in 1999–2002, in which the economy shrank more than 19 percent, the gross domestic product rose by 8.4 percent last year. The country's exports have increased sharply.

Inflation has gone down substantially and unemployment has eased from its high point in 2002. The official jobless rate is 14.4 percent.

If the number of jobless workers who rely on stingy workfare-type welfare programs is included, however, unemployment is closer to 19.5 percent. Half the population remains below the official poverty line.

The middle class has benefited from the current recovery more than the working class, which is still feeling the long-term effects of the 1990s sell-off of state-owned industries—and consequent mass layoffs—and the plant shutdowns of the past few years.

In December 2001, as a depression mounted, the Radical Party government of President Fernando de la Rúa defaulted on the foreign debt, setting off a financial collapse. After an eruption of working-class protests, the ruling class forced de la Rúa's



AFP/Alì Buraf

Piqueteros, jobless and retired workers, march in Buenos Aires August 11 demanding guaranteed minimum wage and increased pension and unemployment benefits.

resignation. A month later the newly appointed president, Eduardo Duhalde of the Peronist party, ended the decade-long linkage of the Argentine peso to the U.S. dollar, precipitating a 70 percent devaluation of the national currency.

Working people were devastated, as prices for essential goods skyrocketed and the percentage of the workforce that was jobless or underemployed rose to 40 percent. Middle-class layers were also hit hard by the inflation, and they howled in anger at the government's decision to freeze bank accounts. Demonstrations by workers, often joined by middle-class protesters banging pots and pans, mushroomed.

Unlike de la Rúa, Duhalde was able to get away with the devaluation and other brutal

economic measures to try to restore the confidence of capitalists because of his Peronist credentials as a "man of the people."

In last year's elections Duhalde was replaced by another Peronist, Kirchner, who continued to take steps to protect the interests of the ruling class while demobilizing some of the protesters with the promise that he would address the needs of working people and the devastated middle classes.

Meanwhile, foreign bondholders are banking on the current economic recovery to get the Argentine government to reach an agreement to begin paying off \$100 billion in defaulted debt. The Kirchner administration has proposed that Argentina pay only 25 percent of the value of that debt, arguing that this is necessary to be able to make payments while avoiding a social explosion at home.

The bondholders, pointing to the current upturn in the country's economy, are demanding that at least two-thirds of the bad debt be repaid.

In a visit to Argentina, the new managing director of the International Monetary Fund, Rodrigo de Rato, met with Kirchner and his economic team. Afterward Rato said the IMF accepted the government's proposal to temporarily suspend the financial institution's \$13 billion short-term loan program and accompanying economic "reform" requirements so it could work out a debt restructuring plan with the bondholders.

Argentina's total foreign debt has continued to mount—from \$144 billion in December 2001 to a record \$177 billion by the end of last year.

Iberia Air pays fines to U.S. for Cuba trade

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Iberia, Spain's flagship airline, paid a fine that Washington recently imposed after charging the company with violating the U.S. embargo against Cuba. This indicates a shift from the practice eight years ago, when companies and governments in the European Union clashed with Washington over punitive measures against Cuba that these imperialist powers said infringed on their right to carry out business.

Iberia's decision to pay the fine, which was imposed in June, and keep quiet about it indicates a more solid united front between imperialist powers on both sides of the Atlantic in their economic war against Cuba.

The London-based *Financial Times* disclosed in early September that over the last few months the U.S. Treasury Department has also levied fines against Alitalia Airlines and other companies in Europe, after charging them with similar violations of Washington's embargo against Cuba.

Representatives of Iberia Airways, a U.S. subsidiary of the Spanish airline, told the *Financial Times* that the fine is based on a four-year-old transaction. In 2000 the airline shipped goods between the Spanish-controlled Canary Islands and Central America through its regional hub in Miami. U.S. Customs agents seized the goods in Miami. Washington said Iberia was guilty of the "transportation and importations of Cuban goods to the United States," which violates the U.S. Cuban Assets Controls Regulations.

Iberia Airways paid the fine, estimated to be several thousand dollars, without admitting guilt, said the *Financial Times*.

The European Union's response to this action is likely to be mild, at most.

In its September 3 edition, the London-based daily said the "sanctions may force the European Commission, which has strongly criticized the extra-territorial application of the Cuban embargo laws, to protest to Washington."

The paper quoted a spokesperson for Pascal Lamy, the European Union trade commissioner, saying, "We are opposed to any extra-territorial measure [from the U.S. government] that affects any European interests." She said the commission had not reached a conclusion yet on whether the fine against Iberia constitutes an "extra-territorial measure."

While several imperialist governments in the European Union (EU) have maintained somewhat normal trade and diplomatic re-

lations with Cuba, they share Washington's fear of the Cuban Revolution as an example for working people and a mortal threat to their capitalist interests. They differ with the U.S. government on how best to isolate and ultimately overthrow the revolution. In June 2003, Madrid and Rome imposed a range of sanctions against Cuba. The EU also announced that its member states had unanimously decided to end high-level visits to Cuba and cut back on cultural exchanges with the island nation.

An EU statement declared that the measures were in response to the trials and executions of three hijackers of a passenger ferry in Havana and the prosecution of several dozen opponents of the Cuban Revolution at the time who were found guilty of collaborating with Washington to advance the U.S. economic war against Cuba.

In July, the month after it was fined, Iberia withdrew from its regional hub in Miami, citing "security and visa problems." Connection times for passengers traveling from Spain to destinations in Central America through Miami have doubled as a result of onerous transit procedures imposed by U.S. immigration authorities, said the *Financial Times*. Spain is the largest foreign investor in a range of joint economic ventures with the Cuban government, and has the second-largest financial investment in Cuba after Canada.

Relations between Madrid and Washington have become somewhat strained following the election of the social democratic government of Spanish president José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, who criticized the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq and withdrew Madrid's troops from the country last spring.

Between February and June of this year, the U.S. Treasury Department also fined Alitalia along with several other Italian companies. Most of the penalties were based on charges of shipping Cuban goods. Banca Commerciale Italiana was charged with "transferring funds" to Cuba in 2001 and fined \$6,000.

Industria Compozioni Stampate and Societa Industriale Accumulatori Romano di Lombardia were fined \$30,000 each. The two companies were fined directly in Italy as neither company has subsidiaries in the United States.

There is no information yet on whether these companies have paid the fines as Iberia did.

Extra-territorial application of the U.S. embargo against Cuba triggered a confron-

tation in 1996 between Washington and its allies, who are also its competitors, in the European Union. That's when the Clinton administration passed the Helms-Burton law, which intensified Washington's economic war on Cuba and sharpened a U.S. trade offensive against competitors in Europe. Two years later, Washington and the European Commission reached an agreement under which the U.S. government would not penalize European companies in exchange for the EU's withdrawal of a complaint to the World Trade Organization.

Current developments indicate that imperialist powers in Europe are more willing to cooperate with Washington over application of the U.S. embargo against Cuba.

WTO OKs tariffs on U.S. goods

BY PAUL PEDERSON

The World Trade Organization ruled in late August that European Union members, Japan, and six other countries can raise tariffs on U.S. exports in response to a protectionist measure enacted by Washington in 2000. Known as the Byrd Amendment after its author, Democratic senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia, the law grants U.S. companies the income collected from tariffs on goods produced by foreign competitors that Washington rules are in violation of "antidumping" laws.

The U.S. government uses such laws to penalize foreign firms that sell goods on the U.S. market at prices with which U.S. companies cannot compete. Tariffs, or import taxes, are then slapped on the goods, increasing their retail price.

Under the Byrd Amendment Washington funnels the tariff income to the U.S. companies that file anti-dumping suits, giving them a further competitive edge. Since the law's passage, these companies have benefited from the government subsidy to the tune of \$710 million. The prime beneficiaries have been giant corporations including Micron, the world's second-largest producer of computer memory chips, the ball-bearing producer Timken, and U.S. Steel.

Democratic presidential hopeful John Kerry defended this cash cow for U.S. industrialists, charging that the Bush administration had "failed to stand up for American companies and workers at the WTO." The White House has not an-

nounced if it will seek to repeal the Byrd Amendment.

The WTO ruling allows the governments of EU member states, as well as those of Brazil, Canada, Japan, Chile, India, south Korea, and Mexico, to impose retaliatory duties on U.S. goods of up to 72 percent of the tariffs collected under the Byrd Amendment.

Tokyo announced it could potentially hike tariffs on U.S. imports by \$78 million annually to protect Japanese exporters, who were the hardest hit by the U.S. measure. An EU spokesman said the European trade bloc could levy tariffs of "more than 150 million euros" (\$180 million).

None of the governments involved in the suit, however, seem eager to hit Washington back with the retaliatory duties. Officials of the European Union and Tokyo said they will wait to see if Washington repeals the law before imposing the WTO-approved sanctions "as early as this autumn." A representative of the other imperialist power involved in the suit, Canada, says Ottawa would hold "public consultations" before deciding to invoke the retaliatory sanctions.

The semicolonial countries affected by the law are in the weakest position to respond to U.S. imperialism's protectionist assaults. A spokesman for the Chilean government said the foreign ministry is not yet ready to announce plans to hike tariffs on U.S. goods. Salmon, grapes, and raspberries are among the goods from Chile that Washington has slapped with tariffs.

Miners protest blow by Horizon under bankruptcy scam

BY TONY LANE
AND JANET POST

LEXINGTON, Kentucky—Fifteen hundred miners, retirees, and supporters gathered here August 31 to protest the on-going bankruptcy proceedings by Horizon Natural Resources. Through the bankruptcy scam, the work conditions and benefits of 800 working miners and 2,300 retirees have come under attack. Judge William Howard has ruled that the contracts the company had signed with the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) can be terminated.

Before marching to the bankruptcy court, miners and supporters gathered at the Rupp basketball arena in downtown Lexington for a rally. "This is not the end, this is the beginning of this fight," UMWA president Cecil Roberts told the rally. After marching to the court building, Roberts and 16 other union leaders sat down in front of the building doors where Lexington police arrested them.

Later at the bankruptcy hearing, Judge Howard approved the results of an August auction of Horizon's assets. The new owners are Massey Energy, and Newcoal and Oldcoal. Wall Street financier Wilbur Ross owns the latter two companies.

Busloads of miners and retirees came from Horizon-owned mines in Illinois, Eastern Kentucky, and West Virginia. Miners took union "memorial" days to attend.

"It ain't right that they're taking health-care coverage away from miners," Dennis Dixon, a disabled miner from West Virginia who worked at the Ziegler mine in Illinois, told the *Militant*. "We were promised this. We wouldn't be protesting if we had the same hospitalization as the judge does."

Miners at Horizon's Starfire mine in Eastern Kentucky, the one union operation in that half of the state, have been told that the buyer of their mine, Massey Energy, is planning to lay them off. Ronnie Sullivan from Pike City, a miner at Starfire, told the *Militant* that when "contract time comes up, there is going to be a bad long strike."

In addition to Horizon miners and retirees, three busloads of miners and others from Virginia came. Roberts welcomed them as veterans of the union's 1989-90 fight with Pittston Coal Co. at the center of which was defending health-care benefits. About 1,900

UMWA members struck Pittston Coal for 11 months at the time. During the strike, another 40,000 union coal miners across the country walked out for up to six weeks to back the Pittston miners. More than 50,000 supporters of the UMWA struggle visited the strike center, Camp Solidarity, in southwest Virginia. Thousands of miners were arrested during that strike.

"The judge ruled against retired miners," said UMWA retiree Bobby Kiser from Castlewood, Virginia. Describing past experiences with the courts, Kiser said that during the Pittston strike "judges put us in jail right quick."

Black-lung activists were among those who took part in the protest. Two older women in the march said their husbands had gotten black lung, and one died from it eight years ago. "It's because of this that we're here today and why these protests are so important," one of the women said.

Meat packers lose union vote in Storm Lake, Iowa

BY LISA ROTTACH

STORM LAKE, Iowa—Union supporters at the large Tyson Fresh Meats slaughterhouse here lost a union representation election August 19. The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) reported 558 votes in favor and 877 votes against representation by United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 440. Union officials said they will challenge to the outcome, citing irregularities in the voting procedure reported by workers.

About 1,800 workers kill and process hogs in two shifts at the plant in this Midwestern town, which is home to many meat packers from Latin America, Southeast Asia, Africa, and elsewhere.

Several years ago workers from the Tyson plant approached the UFCW to begin the organizing effort. For the last nine months a workers committee had met regularly with union organizers to prepare for the election. The meetings often included 40-60 workers, many of them women.

On August 22, some 65 workers met at the union's organizing hall to discuss the outcome of the election and plan a response. Most were upset by the result, saying that the



Militant/Tony Lane

Some 1,500 miners and supporters marched August 31 in Lexington, Kentucky, to protest federal bankruptcy court ruling that allows Horizon to tear up union contracts.

majority of the workers wanted the union. Many claimed the company won the election through fraudulently manipulating the ballots. "On some ballots, the company changed the 'yes' box to 'no' in order to confuse us," Gloria Solís, a kill floor worker, told *Militant* reporters. Before the election, sample ballots had been distributed to workers with the box marked "yes" on the left and the box marked "no" on the right of the ballot. "We want a new election, and have begun to collect signatures to demand a new election," she said.

Based on such reports, union officials are challenging the outcome, asking the NLRB to nullify the election.

Throughout the drive workers organized inside the plant to build the union. Many wore union stickers on their hard hats, and helped to distribute leaflets to their co-workers explaining the need for a union. "When the company harassed three women who supported the union, 40 of us went into the cafeteria, stopping the kill chain," Solís said. "We won some respect, and showed the company what we could do."

Tyson responded with a concerted anti-union campaign. Modesto Santana, a 42-year-old worker of Cuban origin with one year in the plant, described some of the tactics. "Supervisors wore 'Union No' stickers," he said. "They fired some of our leaders, handed out lots of leaflets against

the union, held anti-union meetings, and slowed the line down to show us how 'nice' they are. The company also tried to divide us, trying to pit one nationality against the other. Despite these attacks, he said, he was "surprised that we lost by so many votes. I know that a majority supported the union."

Tyson's divide-and-conquer tactics got a hearing from some workers. "The union only cares about the Latinos," said a mechanic entering the plant on election day, for example. "What about me? Who will represent me if the stewards only speak Spanish?"

Union supporters in the plant report that very few workers who were not Latino attended union organizing meetings.

Three Swift & Co. workers traveled two hours from Omaha to help pass out flyers and talk to workers entering the plant on election day. "We learned to stick together during our organizing drive," said one of these workers who participated in that successful organizing drive in 2002. "We also learned how the NLRB and the courts work, dragging their feet to frustrate workers. When we lost our first election, we started to organize again. We were stronger the second time around."

Many workers said they are not ready to give up. "We have to keep fighting," said kill floor worker Mario Martínez.

Steelworkers approve contracts in Minnesota's Iron Range, Michigan

BY CARLOS SANCHEZ
AND ILONA GERSH

HIBBING, Minnesota—Two thousand members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) in northern Minnesota and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan approved contracts with Cleveland-Cliffs, Inc. in votes August 13 and 19. Cleveland-Cliffs is owner of three of northern Minnesota's six iron ore mines. It also owns two union mines in Michigan and two in Canada. Holding a monopoly on North American iron ore production with Stelco and USX, Cleveland-Cliffs's present capacity is approximately 28 percent of North American capacity for iron ore production.

The new contract includes a 9 percent wage increase over the next four years. Medical benefits, however, will cost steelworkers and retirees more in the future because the contract enables the company to freeze its insurance premiums in 2008.

USWA locals 4660 and 2705 at the Hibbing Taconite and United Taconite mines in Minnesota approved the contract by a 77 percent majority. The vote was much closer in Michigan, where members of USWA Local 4974 at the Tilden Mine rejected the contract in a 60-252 vote. Miners in Local 4950 at the Empire Mine—whose vote is counted along with the miners at the Tilden mine—approved the contract, resulting in

only a 500-478 approval in Michigan's Marquette Iron Range. Opposition to the contract centered on the mine operator's drive to increase productivity while reducing the workforce. An estimated 175 miners at the Tilden mine of just over 300 will retire this year and no replacements are anticipated.

Tension was high on the Iron Range as the July 31 contract deadline approached. Cleveland-Cliffs, Inc. announced that they were training replacement workers at its non-union mine in Silver Bay. In mid-July, the company installed rows of trailers in its parking lot at the Hibbing Taconite mine. The housing trailers were declared uninhabitable by Hibbing city inspectors. It would have been the first time since 1907 that strikebreakers would be used during an Iron Range mining dispute.

Steelworkers at the Wabash mine in Newfoundland, Canada, also owned by Cleveland-Cliffs, went on strike July 5. USWA members at the Wabash pelletizing and shipping plant in Pointe Noire, Quebec, followed suit. Two weeks later, almost 1,000 workers at the Iron Ore Company of Canada in Newfoundland walked off the job, too. Solidarity rallies of up to 1,000 people have bolstered their confidence. Negotiations with the company were set to resume August 23, with the company continuing to ask for concessions from the Wabash miners.

Health-care workers end strike in Seattle



Militant/Chris Hoepfner

SEATTLE—Hundreds of Service Employees International Union (SEIU) members on strike against Group Health Cooperative march August 27 to the company's headquarters here. The unionists ended the five-day walkout two days later. Workers said they plan to continue such actions. Members of SEIU Local 1199NW struck Group Health (GH) to protest the company's demand that employees start paying up to 3 percent of their wages for health-care premiums and face higher co-payments for visits to the doctor and for prescription drugs.

The 1,700 custodians, medical assistants, and food service and maintenance workers at GH have been working without a contract for a year. "We can't back up any more," Amario Austria, a utility custodian at GH for 14 years, told the *Militant* while picketing at the Capital Hill facility here August 24. "Where will it stop? Group Health is not losing money. With four kids, clinic visits going from \$15 to \$30 and a 3 percent higher premium, this is a wage cut. We're not going to stop until we win, and we know we will win."

—CONNIE ALLEN

Socialists campaign in Alabama mill town

At the end of week one, the international drive to win more than 3,000 new readers to the *Militant* and its Spanish-language sister publication *Perspectiva Mundial* is on target, with 381 subscriptions to the *Militant* and 73 to *PM*.

An example of winning these subscribers was a team of socialists that visited several coal mines along the western slope of the Rockies. Four coal miners subscribed to the *Militant* there and dozens bought copies of the paper. At the August 28–29 United Farm Workers (UFW) convention, in Fresno, California, attendees bought 90 books and pamphlets from a literature table socialists set up inside the UFW meeting hall; 19 also subscribed, 13 to the *Militant* and 6 to *Perspectiva Mundial*.

Printed below is an article sent in by readers in Birmingham, Alabama. It shows the results of effective campaigning for the Socialist Workers Party 2004 ticket, combined with winning new readers to the *Militant* and *PM* and selling books and pamphlets on world politics and the class struggle, like those listed in the ad on page 6.



BY SUSAN LAMONT

SYLACAUGA, Alabama—"I worked in a union place before," said Edwin, 29, who has worked at Avondale Mills here for six months. "There you would get overtime for any work over eight hours, not like Avondale, where you work for 12 hours each shift, with no overtime pay. In companies that aren't union, you're really treated badly. I wish everyone

was for the union."

The textile mill worker told campaigners for the Socialist Workers Party 2004 ticket of Róger Calero for president and Arrin Hawkins for vice president that he liked the campaign's support for workers' right to organize unions. "I like that part of your plan," he said.

Edwin was speaking at a picnic several mill workers organized for Janine Dukes, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate in Alabama. The event took place September 4 at Noble Park here. Dukes is a weaver at the Avondale mill, which is also known as Eva Jane.

Avondale Mills, Inc., is one of the largest textile producers in the country. Its mill here produces denim. It employs 1,200 workers and is located in a part of Alabama that has traditionally been a center for the textile industry in the state. The workforce includes workers who are Black and white, as well as a growing number of Latinos, mainly from Mexico. Sylacauga is a classic company town, with most of the public buildings named "Comer" after the family that founded Avondale.

Before the picnic, socialist campaigners went door-to-door to visit a number of textile workers and others in this town, about 55 miles southeast of Birmingham.

"I know you!" said James, an Avondale worker, who opened the first door socialist campaigners knocked on. He recognized Dukes right away and signed up for a *Militant* subscription. Another Eva Jane worker, Alma, bought a subscription to *Perspectiva Mundial*, the *Militant*'s sister monthly publication in Spanish.

A third worker who subscribed had worked at Eva Jane earlier and now has a job at a nearby quarry.

After an hour and a half of door-to-door campaigning, socialists joined a group of textile workers and family members at Noble Park, who came to meet Dukes and learn more about the socialist campaign. One worker, Carol, 31, who has worked at the mill for two years, helped organize and build the event among co-workers, friends, and family.

Campaign supporters reserved a pavilion in the park in case of rain and arranged an attractive display of campaign literature and signs on the picnic tables.

After Dukes outlined some of the main themes of the campaign, a discussion broke out about the first demand on the SWP platform: "Support workers' right to organize unions and to defend themselves from the bosses' assaults." Despite the company's anti-union propaganda, this demand



Militant/Jim Spaul

Celia Pugh staffs a table with the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and Pathfinder books August 8 at a Latin American cultural festival in Burgess Park, south London.

produces a strong response among workers at Avondale. None of the company's mills are organized.

Conditions at the Sylacauga mill are getting worse, as the bosses try to squeeze more and more out of fewer workers, Dukes said. Like many other textile mills, Eva Jane employees work 12-hour shifts. On many jobs workers get only two 15-minute breaks during the shift. In addition, the bosses are increasing the number of machines workers have to tend.

"They don't pay you enough," said Carol. "Plus we have no breaks, people are losing weight and getting sick."

"The [cotton] dust will kill you," added Edwin.

"They treat you like a slave," said Carol. "The creel hands have to come in half an hour early to get set up on their job, and they don't even get paid for it."

As the meeting ended, Carol said she was already thinking about how to build the next campaign event.

Two workers at the picnic bought subscriptions to the *Militant* and one bought a copy of the pamphlet *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: The Fraud of Education Reform Under Capitalism* (see ad on page 6).

At the end of the day, socialists campaigned at the 6 p.m. shift change, at two of the mill gates. Workers there bought nine copies of the *Militant*, and one purchased a subscription to the newsweekly. A worker who has a job at another company and happened to be driving by also stopped and signed up for a *Militant* sub.

The total for the day was 12 copies of the *Militant* and six *Militant* subscriptions and one subscription to *Perspectiva Mundial*. Campaigners are looking forward to a return visit.

Janine Dukes and Jeanne FitzMaurice contributed to this article.

Militant/Perspectiva Mundial Fall Subscription Drive Aug. 28–Nov. 7, 2004: Week 1 of 10					
Country	Militant			PM	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold
ICELAND	25	7	28%	2	0
AUSTRALIA	55	7	13%	8	0
CANADA					
Montreal	32	9	28%	12	1
Toronto	85	7	8%	18	1
CANADA total	117	16	14%	30	2
UNITED KINGDOM					
London	50	7	14%	12	1
Edinburgh	25	3	12%	2	0
UK total	75	10	13%	12	1
NEW ZEALAND					
Auckland	45	6	13%	1	0
Christchurch	35	2	6%	1	0
N.Z. total	80	8	10%	2	0
SWEDEN	30	3	10%	5	1
UNITED STATES					
Birmingham	35	8	23%	8	1
Twin Cities	105	17	16%	40	3
Craig, CO	50	8	16%	20	1
Des Moines	65	10	15%	25	2
Tampa	40	6	15%	10	0
Los Angeles	150	21	14%	50	16
Philadelphia	95	10	11%	10	0
Houston	75	7	9%	20	0
Omaha	55	5	9%	45	2
Price, UT	50	4	8%	20	6
Chicago	100	7	7%	40	2
New York	250	16	6%	70	1
Atlanta	80	5	6%	20	0
Washington	115	7	6%	21	1
Boston	100	5	5%	40	1
Detroit	50	2	4%	10	2
San Francisco	125	5	4%	35	0
NE Pennsylvania	55	2	4%	15	3
Pittsburgh	65	2	3%	4	0
Seattle	50	1	2%	10	0
Newark	125	2	2%	25	0
Miami	100	1	1%	50	0
Cleveland	35	0	0%	8	0
U.S. total	1970	151	8%	596	41
14-day campaign*	-	179	-	-	28
Int'l totals	2531	381	15%	683	73
Goal/Should be	2500	250	10%	550	55
*14 days of campaigning in New York Aug. 21–Sept. 3 at protests and events leading up to and during the Republican convention					
IN THE UNIONS					
	Militant			PM	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold
AUSTRALIA					
AMIEU	8	2	25%		
UNITED STATES					
UNITE/HERE	50	5	10%	40	3
UFCW	135	9	7%	150	13
UMW	30	1	3%	15	1
Total	215	15	7%	205	17
CANADA					
UNITE/HERE	2	0	0%	1	0
UFCW	6	0	0%	3	0
Total	8	0	0%	4	0
NEW ZEALAND					
NDU	2	0	0%		
MWU	2	0	0%		
Total	4	0	0%		
SWEDEN					
Livs	2	0	0%	1	0

AMIEU—Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Union; LIVS—Food Workers Union; MWU—Meat Workers Union; NDU—National Distribution Union; UFCW—United Food and Commercial Workers; UMWA—United Mine Workers of America.

Pathfinder book sales up 70% in August

BY DOUG NELSON

NEW YORK—Sales of Pathfinder books and pamphlets exceeded \$33,000 in August—70 percent higher than the monthly average sales in the first half of this year. Campaigners for the Socialist Workers Party 2004 ticket reached out with these books to working-class neighborhoods, plant gates, on the job, on campuses, and in social protest actions. SWP supporters also began stepping up sales to bookstores, libraries, and commercial distributors.

One of the sources of the success were the initial large orders for the 51 books and pamphlets offered on steep discount through November 7 as part of the Pathfinder Super-saver Sale (see ad on page 6), which started in August.

Taking advantage of the sale, socialist campaigners from around the country who came here to take part in the protests surrounding the Republican National Convention sold 853 of the discounted books and pamphlets in 14 days of campaigning in the demonstrations and activities throughout New York City.

The top five sellers during the 12-day effort were: *The Working Class and Transformation of Learning: The Fraud of Education Reform Under Capitalism* with more than 130 copies sold; *Malcolm X Talks to Young People* and *The Communist Manifesto*, with more than 50 copies sold; and *By Any Means Necessary* and *The Second Declaration of Havana*, with more than 40 copies each.

The sale's strong start has given a boost to efforts by the communist movement to increase distribution of Pathfinder books and pamphlets this year. The goal adopted at the 42nd Constitutional Convention of the Socialist Workers Party in June was to increase total sales by 10 percent in the last six months of 2004 compared to the first half of the year.

In the first six months, Pathfinder sales amounted to \$112,200. The 10 percent increase means the goal is to reach a minimum of \$235,600 by the end of the year. With just under \$49,000 sold in July and August, \$74,500 remains to reach the annual goal—or a monthly average of \$18,625 between September and December.

"Key to the success of this campaign will be the leadership attention by SWP branches in the United States and communist leagues in other countries, working with supporters of the communist movement in each area to get

orders from independent bookstores, libraries, and campuses," said Norton Sandler, who leads the SWP's work with party supporters around the country.

A couple of SWP supporters set an example on how to reach out to libraries, selling books to 10 branches of a public library in Oakland, and a number in the Detroit area as well. The two have constituted a "library task force" to help others around the country to follow their lead.

The goal by SWP branches to increase their book sales by 10 percent will be a challenge, and will require close attention and consistent, diligent campaigning.

In July party branches fell short of their goal of \$9,460, with a nationwide total of \$6,341.

Statistics are not yet complete for August. With half the areas reporting as this issue went to press, including New York that netted nearly \$3,600 in sales last month, the total for August stood at just over \$5,600. The New York figure for August includes the sales during the 14-day campaigning around the Republican convention, which involved volunteers from across the country.

Maggie Trowe from Boston, one of the few cities where socialist workers made their local goal in July and August, said, "We went over our monthly goal of \$500 the last two months. In July we took advantage of the protest activities around the Democratic National Convention and the transit authority's crackdown on democratic rights, which we campaigned against with a statement from the local SWP candidate.

"In August we took books to New York that we sold during the events around the Republican convention, campaigned in Boston workers' districts that we haven't been to before, and used Militant Labor Forums to promote Pathfinder books."

Tom Fiske from the Twin Cities reported that 14 Pathfinder books were sold at the last Militant Labor Forum, which was well attended. Jacob Perasso spoke on the U.S. rulers' assaults on democratic rights and gave a first-hand report on the Republican convention and the protests surrounding it.

Janice Lynn from Washington, D.C., said that although socialists there sold 100 books and pamphlets in August,

Continued on Page 11

FBI targets water union in Puerto Rico

Agents 'visit' union offices as workers resist Puerto Rico gov't takebacks

BY PAUL PEDERSON

On August 26 agents from the FBI's anti-terrorism unit showed up at the offices of the union at the state water works in Puerto Rico. The probe comes in the midst of efforts by Puerto Rico's colonial government and the managers of the utility to impose a takeback contract on the 4,300 workers the union represents.

Claiming they were investigating alleged union plans to shut down the airport in San Juan, three agents arrived at the offices of the Authentic Independent Union of the Water and Sewer Authority (UIA) during a meeting of its top leadership.

"They wanted to know about the statements supposedly made by Héctor René Lugo about carrying out a strike and taking over the airport," Elba García, executive secretary of the UIA, told *El Nuevo Día*, a San Juan-based daily paper. Lugo is the president of the UIA.

The union said that the spy agency was using provisions in the USA Patriot Act, passed in 2001, to justify the investigation, claiming that interference with airports compromises "homeland defense."

The daily reported that a study prepared by a "consultant" hired by the state-owned company claimed that the union could potentially carry out attacks on the water supply. The study points to the "vulnerability of the Water and Sewer Authority to terrorist attacks, it asserts that the public utility faces a potential risk of contamination of the water supply and destruction of equipment, and it claims that the UIA is a possible instigator of such acts," reported *El Nuevo Día*.

"Our operators live in the areas serviced by the plants that they operate," García



AP/Scott Sady

Workers blockade airport in Puerto Rico July 7, 1998, during 48-hour nationwide general strike, called to protest the government sell-off of the phone company. FBI says any such actions today would subvert "homeland security."

said. "We aren't going to poison our own families."

The study went on to accuse workers at the utility's plants of using and selling illegal drugs, and other offenses.

The campaign to link the union to "terrorism" and smear its officers and members takes place in the context of a deepening assault by the managers of the utility and the government on the union and its gains.

After being sold off in 1995, the water utility returned to public ownership earlier this year amid widespread accusations of mismanagement and after being saddled

with a massive debt. In collaboration with the colonial government, managers at the now state-owned Water and Sewer Authority are seeking to ram through a series of concessions to balance their books on the backs of the workers.

"The union is facing a savage attack against it and its leadership," said Juan Ramos, the president of the San Juan chapter of the UIA in a September 3 telephone interview with the *Militant*. "We have been involved in negotiations for a contract, which expired in July 2003. At the time, the water authority signed an extension. But now they

are refusing to honor that extension."

Ramos said the public utility was demanding the workers agree to pay substantial out-of-pocket costs for their health care. He said the utility had refused to deduct dues payments from workers' paychecks, and was flouting seniority rules.

"The union has been the victim of a smear campaign seeking to brand our leaders as corrupt," Ramos said. "They have accused the leadership of embezzlement of funds from the account for medical benefits."

"It is in this context that the FBI came and visited our office," he said.

FBI vs. Puerto Rico

This is not the first time the FBI has targeted trade unions and other political organizations in the U.S. colony. For decades the U.S. political police has reserved some of its harshest treatment for those fighting for the liberation of Puerto Rico from U.S. colonial rule.

The labor movement has always been one of the principal targets of this police disruption. During an electrical workers strike in 1978, for example, a police agent conducted sabotage against the company. The bosses and the press then blamed the union for the action. In May 2000, the FBI released thousands of previously classified documents on the systematic campaign by the secret police against the pro-independence movement. Then FBI director Louis Freeh admitted that the agency had engaged in "egregious illegal action, maybe criminal action" on the island, but claimed that such activities were a thing of the past.

This is not true. Under the banner of "homeland security" and fighting the "war on terrorism," disruption activities by the political police both on a federal and local level have been increasing inside the United States and Puerto Rico. Both the Democratic and Republican parties have been pressing for greater centralization of federal police agencies, aimed at making them more effective for spying and disruption of unions and other organizations.

The FBI's documented repertoire of political disruption techniques in Puerto Rico have included writing poison pen letters to activists and newspapers slandering members of the independence movement, infiltrating political groups, blaming acts of violence committed by police agents on unionists and independence fighters, and collaborating with local police to frame up—and in some cases assassinate—*independentistas*.

As recently as 1999, the FBI used a paid provocateur, Rafael Marrero, and a string of FBI agents as the principal "witnesses" in its frame-up of pro-independence fighter José Solís Jordán on charges of attempting to blow up a military recruitment center in Chicago. Marrero's testimony was also the keystone for the FBI witch-hunt against independence activists at Clemente High School in Chicago during the same period on charges of stealing money from the school. After an intensive investigation and public hearings by the Illinois state senate, no evidence was produced to support Marrero's lies.

Now, as the bosses and the colonial government in Puerto Rico seek to extract concessions from workers at the public utility, violence-baiting and police intimidation remain the stock-in-trade of the ruling class against the workers movement.

"Like other unions, the UIA has been accused of sabotage," Ramos said. "They have taken things our union president said out of context to justify claims that the union is planning violence and sabotage. These attacks aren't only aimed at us. Recently 37 members of the electrical workers union were arrested for protesting the use of nonunion workers to lay cable at a project run by the electrical company. The bosses called the police and they came in riot gear and arrested the unionists."

Ramos said the UIA and other major unions in Puerto Rico are discussing ways to respond to these attacks on the labor movement. Coordinated protest actions, including a possible strike, are under discussion and will be announced soon. "Nothing will stop us from defending our gains," said Ramos.

Questions posed in the 2004 elections aren't new
Lessons for the struggles of today and tomorrow

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Republican convention

Continued from front page

chief. Kerry has so far tried to say as little as possible about his proposals on Social Security, promising that, if elected, he would not cut benefits for current Social Security recipients. That is also Bush's position.

Speaking near Scranton in northeastern Pennsylvania September 4, the president reiterated a central theme of his convention speech. He said a second-term Bush administration would take steps to foster an "ownership society" as a guarantee of economic security in face of "changing times."

At the heart of these proposals is Social Security "reform," which, under the pretext that the growing number of retired workers will bankrupt the Social Security system in the coming decades, is aimed at undermining its character as a social right for all.

Bush spelled out this argument in his September 2 acceptance speech at the Republican convention in New York. "With the huge baby boom generation approaching retirement, many of our children and grandchildren understandably worry whether Social Security will be there when they need it," he said. "We must strengthen Social Security by allowing younger workers to save some of their taxes in a personal account—a nest egg you can call your own and government can never take away."

The president also claimed credit for having "strengthened" Medicare. In the guise of offering coverage for prescription drugs, however, the bipartisan Medicare prescription drug law adopted by Congress and signed by Bush last year shifts more of the burden for retirees' health care onto retired workers themselves, forcing them to rely more heavily on private health-care companies, and introducing means testing.

On September 3, federal officials announced that Medicare premiums, the monthly expense paid by elderly and disabled patients for routine care, will be hiked by 17 percent. The administrator of Medicare, Dr. Mark McClellan, acknowledged that part of this increase "results from the billions of dollars Medicare is paying insurers to encourage them to offer private plans," the *New York Times* reported September 4.

As part of his package of proposals, Bush is also advocating tax-free "health savings accounts" to provide medical insurance based on individual coverage rather than employer-sponsored plans. Workers would receive tax credits for putting savings in these accounts. Employer contributions into these individual accounts would be possible if workers signed up for the company's health plan, which would likely require large deductions from their paychecks.

Workers would supposedly be able to keep this individual health plan even if they changed jobs. This is a major selling point, because working people who switch employers often lose their insurance or end up with worse coverage. And even if they stay at the same company, they have no guarantee they will receive a pension or health-care benefits, as in the case of Horizon Natural Resources, United Airlines, and other major companies where workers face the loss of their pensions after the bosses declare bankruptcy.

Noting that more than half of the uninsured are small business employees, the president advocated allowing small companies to "join together to purchase insurance at the discounts available to big companies." Nearly 82 million people in the United States—one out of three under the age of 65—lacked health insurance at some point in 2002-2003.

Bush highlighted his call for making permanent the tax cuts instituted over the past few years, as a way to allow people to save money for the future. He coupled this proposal with a pledge to "reform" the federal tax code in the name of simplifying it and promoting economic growth.

In offering these proposals the president touched on the insecurity faced by millions today. "The times in which we live and work are changing dramatically," he said at the Republican convention. "The workers of our parents' generation typically had one job, one skill, one career—often with one company that provided health care and a pension. And most of those workers were

men. Today, workers change jobs, even careers, many times during their lives, and in one of the most dramatic shifts our society has seen, two-thirds of all moms also work outside the home."

Bush added that "the tax code, health coverage, pension plans, worker training—were created for the world of yesterday, not tomorrow. We will transform these systems so that all citizens [can] make your own choices and pursue your own dreams." He appealed to the idea of an "ownership society" where people would be rewarded for their work by becoming "owners," as opposed to drifting into a welfare society where one's income and benefits are dependent on "bureaucrats in Washington, D.C."

Social Security: 'painful choices'

Capitalist politicians and commentators seized on remarks by Federal Reserve chief Alan Greenspan to step up the push for Social Security "reform." Reiterating comments he made earlier this year, Greenspan said August 27 that the country will face "abrupt and painful" choices if Congress does not move rapidly to reduce Social Security and Medicare benefits because of the growing numbers of workers who are approaching retirement.

The Fed chief has made two proposals to "recalibrate" Social Security. One is to raise the retirement age, which now ranges from 65, for those born before 1938, to 67 for those born after 1959. The second change is to cut benefits for future retirees. A third measure, not ruled out by Greenspan, is to increase Social Security payroll taxes or to raise taxes on benefits.

Greenspan suggested beginning this "reform" by cutting the annual cost-of-living adjustment that Social Security beneficiaries receive. Former Social Security Commissioner Robert Ball has proposed beginning with a raise in payroll taxes on higher-paid employees; if such a measure passes, of course, it may be used to pave the way for taxing the benefits of lower-paid workers next.

Liberal economists Peter Diamond of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Peter Orszag from the Brookings Institute have advocated both increasing taxes and gradually reducing Social Security benefits to "compensate" for longer life spans.

The Bush administration's proposal, outlined in his "Plan for Promoting an Era of Ownership," is "voluntary personal retirement accounts for younger workers" that could be invested in stocks and bonds. It promises no cuts in benefits for "current retirees and near-retirees."

Kerry has been silent on the heart of Bush's proposals, saying only he will not cut benefits for current Social Security recipients, which is also the president's position. Both Kerry and Bush, however, have avoided taking a position on proposals by Greenspan and others to cut benefits for future retirees, which is what the real debate has focused on.

Working people won the concessions contained in the Social Security Act—including guaranteed pension, disability, and unemployment benefits, as well as Aid to Families with Dependent Children—through hard-fought battles in the 1930s.

Through the civil rights struggles of the 1950s and 60s these gains were extended with Medicare, Medicaid, food stamps, and cost-of-living protections—that is, automatic adjustment of benefits to make up for inflation. They have become part of the basic living standards of working people. A frontal assault on these gains would carry a big political cost.

In 1982-83, for example, the Reagan administration established a bipartisan commission, headed by Greenspan, to consider proposals for "reforming" Social Security. The administration decided that it was politically too risky to touch the program at the time, however. The commission's proposal to raise the age for full retirement benefits from 65 to 67 was not implemented until two decades later.

Subsequent social security "reform" commissions, like Clinton's Commission on Entitlement and Tax Reform and the one appointed by Bush in 2001, co-chaired by former Democratic senator Patrick Moyni-

han, have also been bipartisan.

The opening salvo was launched by the Clinton administration, which in 1996 dismantled an easier target: the federal welfare program known as Aid to Families with Dependent Children. There was virtually no opposition to this move by the unions and civil rights organizations, which supported the Clinton administration. As a result, the U.S. rulers are now training their guns on Social Security and Medicare, with the current debate opening the way for the attacks that the next administration, whether under Bush or Kerry, will carry out.

Imperialism's 'global war on terror'

Another theme that the Republican candidates are campaigning around is the end of the "peace dividend" and the transformation of the U.S. military and NATO to defend imperialist interests worldwide more effectively under the banner of "fighting terrorism."

In a September 6 speech in St. Paul, Minnesota, Cheney went further than Bush administration officials have usually gone in arguing for the U.S. government's military strategy. He blamed not only the Clinton administration of the 1990s but also the Reagan administration of the 1980s for teaching "terrorists" that "they could strike us with relative impunity" and that "if they hit us hard enough, they could change our policy."

Cheney rattled off a series of attacks on U.S. targets that took place during the two decades before the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. He cited the 1983 car-bombing of the U.S. military barracks in Beirut in which 241 Marines were killed, the 1996 attack on Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, and the attack on the *USS Cole* in Yemen in 2000, among others.

"What were the consequences of these attacks?" Cheney asked. "The answer is, not much. We fired off a few cruise missiles once. Basically, they struck us with impunity and got away with it."

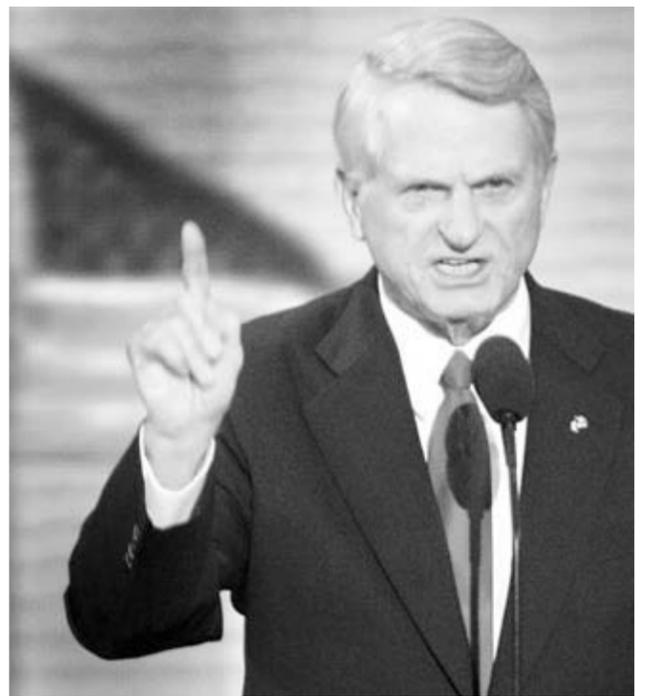
In an earlier speech, given August 6 in East Grand Forks, Minnesota, Cheney elaborated, "In Beirut in 1983, after the Marine barracks were struck, within a matter of months we were totally out of Lebanon. In 1993, after they ambushed some of our troops in Mogadishu, we lost 19 soldiers, within a matter of weeks we were out of Somalia altogether." The first incident took place under the Reagan administration, the second during the Clinton presidency.

Now, under the Bush administration, "that day is gone. It's over with," Cheney said in St. Paul.

In his acceptance speech Bush highlighted the progress the U.S. rulers have made in the global "war on terror" since the U.S.-led invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. In those two countries, he noted, regimes favorable to U.S. interests have been established, and other governments in the region have gotten the message and are more responsive to U.S. demands. "Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders, Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests, Libya is dismantling its weapons programs," he said.

The president presented these imperialist advances in the Mideast and South Asia as proof that a second Bush term would mean "a safer world." Seizing on the unpopular, reactionary policies of forces that Washington has targeted, such as the Taliban, the former ruling party in Afghanistan, he portrayed U.S. foreign policy as favorable to women's rights. Because of the U.S.-led overthrow of the Taliban-led government, he said, "women in Afghanistan are no longer shot in a sports stadium." And "young women across the Mideast will hear the message that their day of equality and justice is coming."

Taking a mainstream Republican stance, Bush mentioned the question of abortion



Getty Images/Alex Wong

At the Republican convention, Democratic senator Zell Miller launched a virulent attack on Kerry, questioning his ability to be commander-in-chief.

only in passing, saying that "we must make a place for the unborn child." Similarly, he spoke of his support for "the union of a man and a woman" and the Defense of Marriage Act passed by the Clinton administration as a bipartisan position, omitting mention of the campaign by conservative Republicans for a constitutional amendment barring gay marriage.

Attacks on Kerry

Bush portrayed his Democratic opponent as an unreliable waverer in the war on "terror," quoting Kerry's notorious statement that "I actually did vote for the \$87 billion [for the Iraq war] before I voted against it." Throughout the convention delegates mocked Kerry by chanting "flip flop, flip flop."

It was left to other speakers at the convention, however, to launch virulent attacks on Kerry. The day before Bush spoke, both Cheney and Democratic senator Zell Miller from Georgia branded Kerry as soft and having exercised bad judgement repeatedly on questions of "national security."

"Now, while young Americans are dying in the sands of Iraq and the mountains of Afghanistan, our nation is being torn apart and made weaker because of the Democrats' manic obsession to bring down our commander-in-chief," Miller said. Kerry's stance toward "terrorism," he declared, is vacillation "that can only encourage our enemies and confuse our friends."

Cheney mocked the Democratic candidate as being soft on "terrorism." Kerry, he said, "talks about leading a more sensitive war on terror."

For his part, Kerry has continued to argue that he would be a more effective war president than Bush. Since Bush has already been carrying out such a course for four years without running into a major "quagmire," the majority of public opinion has tended to back the current commander-in-chief. Kerry has largely been reduced to raising minor tactical disagreements with the administration's foreign policy and dwelling on his days as an officer in the Vietnam War three decades ago.

Since the Republican convention, Kerry has reiterated his campaign theme that the Bush administration is responsible for the loss of jobs in the United States over the past three and a half years. The latest government reports, however, indicated that employers added 144,000 jobs in August and that the official jobless rate dipped slightly to 5.4 percent, its lowest level since the 2001 recession. While working people still face a decline in real wages, several million out of work, and worsening conditions on the job, the Bush administration has been able to take advantage of the current upturn in the business cycle.

Under these conditions, given the lack of an alternative presented by the Democratic campaign, it is not surprising that Kerry, who had been running neck and neck with Bush in the polls, has now slipped behind the incumbent. Some *New York Times* columnists and other pro-Kerry voices are already analyzing the lessons of past Democratic defeats and adopting a tone that anticipates a Republican victory in November.

'They make the victim look like the criminal'

Below is an excerpt from *Malcolm X: The Last Speeches* edited by Bruce Perry, one of Pathfinder's books of the month for September. The book contains a selection of six speeches by Malcolm X from 1963 to 1965. The excerpt is taken from a speech given at Corn Hill Methodist Church in Rochester, New York on Feb. 16, 1965, entitled "Not just an American problem, but a world problem." Copyright © 1989 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY MALCOLM X

We are living in a society that is by and large controlled by people who believe in segregation. We are living in a society that

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

is by and large controlled by a people who believe in racism, and practice segregation and discrimination and racism. We believe in a—and I say that it is controlled, not by the well-meaning whites, but controlled by the segregationists, the racists. And you can see by the pattern that this society follows all over the world. Right now in Asia you have the American army dropping bombs on dark-skinned people. You can't say



Robert Parent

Malcolm X in New York announcing his break with Nation of Islam, March 12, 1964.

that—it's as though you can justify being that far from home, dropping bombs on somebody else. If you were next door, I could see it, but you can't go that far away from this country and drop bombs on somebody else and justify your presence over there, not with me. [Applause]

It's racism. Racism practiced by America. Racism which involves a war against the dark-skinned people in Asia, another form of racism involving a war against the dark-skinned people in the Congo...as it involves a war against the dark-skinned people in Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and Rochester, New York. [Applause]

So we're not against people because they're white. But we're against those who practice racism. We're against those who drop bombs on people because their color happens to be of a different shade than yours. And because we're against it, the press says we're violent. We're not for

violence. We're for peace. But the people that we're up against are for violence. You can't be peaceful when you're dealing with them. [Applause]

They accuse us of what they themselves are guilty of. This is what the criminal always does. They'll bomb you, then accuse you of bombing yourself. They'll crush your skull, then accuse you of attacking him. This is what the racists have always done—the criminal, the one who has criminal processes developed to a science. Their practice is criminal action. And then use the press to make you victim—look like the victim is the criminal, and the criminal is the victim. This is how they do it. [Applause]....

But again, the press is used to make the victim look like the criminal and make the criminal look like the victim.... This is imagery. And just as this imagery is practiced at the local level, you can understand it better by an international example. The

best recent example at the international level to bear witness to what I'm saying is what happened in the Congo. Look at what happened. We had a situation where a plane was dropping bombs on African villages. An African village has no defense against the bombs. And an African village is not sufficient threat that it has to be bombed! But planes were dropping bombs on African villages. When these bombs strike, they don't distinguish between enemy and friend. They don't distinguish between male and female. When these bombs are dropped on African villages in the Congo, they are dropped on Black women, Black children, Black babies. These human beings were blown to bits. I heard no outcry, no voice of compassion for these thousands of Black people who were slaughtered by planes. [Applause]

Why was there no outcry? Why was there no concern? Because, again, the press very skillfully made the victims look like they were the criminals, and the criminals look like they were the victims. [Applause]

They refer to the villages as "rebel held," you know. As if to say, because they are rebel-held villages, you can destroy the population, and it's okay. They also refer to the merchants of death as "American-trained, anti-Castro Cuban pilots." This made it okay. Because these pilots, these mercenaries—you know what a mercenary is, he's not a patriot. A mercenary is not someone who goes to war out of patriotism for his country. A mercenary is a hired killer. A person who kills, who draws blood for money, anybody's blood. You kill a human being as easily as you kill a cat or a dog or a chicken.

So these mercenaries, dropping bombs on African villages, caring nothing as to whether or not there are innocent, defenseless women and children and babies being destroyed by their bombs. But because they're called "mercenaries," given a glorified name, it doesn't excite you. Because they are referred to as "American-trained" pilots, because they are American-trained, that makes them okay. "Anti-Castro Cubans," that makes them okay. Castro's a monster, so anybody who's against Castro is all right with us, and anything they can do from there, that's all right with us.... They put your mind right in a bag and take it wherever they want, as well. [Applause]

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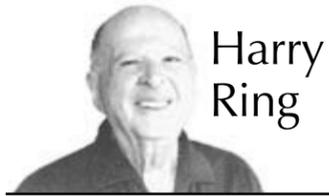
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Grand Hotel—With California lockups becoming increasingly overcrowded, officials



Harry Ring

have shut down 14 “day rooms,” mostly in Los Angeles County. There, people waiting for bail or trial mingle, watch TV, play cards, etc. These small amenities are being cleared out and

bunks crammed in.

Ready-made story—Elena Lappin, a freelance reporter, was assigned by the London *Guardian* to do some U.S. coverage. Arriving at Los Angeles airport, she was arrested, handcuffed, and bussed to the U.S. immigration jail. Why?

The UK is one of 27 nations classified by Washington as “friendly.” But, as Lappin learned, “friendly” journalists must have specially designated visas, not an ordinary one. Lappin was held in a barren cell with two metal benches and a toilet in public view. After more than 20 hours she was shipped

back to London.

Q&A—Why does Washington require accredited journalists from “friendly” countries to carry special visas? Simple. The better to keep tabs on them.

Could he afford the gas?—The Compaq sports arena in Houston, Texas, is being converted into a 16,000-seat outdoor church. Advised Pastor Joel Osteen, “You have to change with the times. If Jesus was here, he’d change with the times. He couldn’t ride around on a donkey. He’d drive a car.”

Must be an exception—Col-

by Cantrell, 22, died of bacterial meningitis in a Tennessee county jail. In the five-day period before his death, he pressed an intercom button at least seven times, pleading for medical help. The sheriff says there was no wrongdoing.

In Tennessee?—“Iraqis visiting Memphis on a civil rights tour were barred from City Hall after the City Council chairman said it was too dangerous to let them in.

“Elizabeth Silverman, the group’s host and head of the Memphis Council for International Visitors, said Council Chairman Joe Brown told her

he would ‘evacuate the building and bring in the bomb squads’ if the group entered.”—News report.

How about guns?—With the video filming of an L.A. cop beating Stanley Miller with a heavy-duty metal flashlight, the department chief announced these lethal clubs would no longer be carried. “There’s a stigma attached to these weapons, and they won’t go away,” Chief William Bratton declared.

In case you missed—You can now send e-mail clippings for the column. The address is: <thegreatsociety@sbcglobal.net>.

SWP beats back red-baiting, gets on Mississippi ballot

Continued from front page

elsewhere. Workers, farmers, and young people took a serious look at the socialist candidates and what their party stands and fights for and many liked what they heard. Even more agreed with the socialists’ right to be on the ballot.

In Meridian, where petitioning started, a team of campaigners was threatened by a Klan member who red-baited them and attempted to prevent others from signing their petitions. Despite the efforts by the ultrarightist to drive people away by hollering they should not be “signing for communists,” a worker and a farmer who witnessed the incident made sure they signed the petition and helped demoralize the Klanner and drive him away instead. (See “Mississippi: 2,200 sign to put SWP on ballot” in July 6 *Militant*.)

After completing the necessary paperwork, signatures were submitted to the individual counties for validation. Toward the end of July, officials from Hinds County, which includes the state capital, Jackson, notified the socialist campaign they had validated only 231 of the 843 signatures

the socialists had collected there. Supporters of the SWP campaign challenged that decision. After a visit to the Hinds County Clerk’s office July 28, the socialists quickly uncovered evidence proving the validity of at least 200 signatures that had been ruled off. The county clerk changed the previous ruling on the spot, certifying 435 signatures. (See “SWP certified on Iowa ballot, confronts Mississippi challenge” in August 10 *Militant*.) That put the total over the state requirement.

Registrars from 27 counties certified 1,028 signatures as valid, topping the 1,000 registered voters required by the state. These signatures were then filed with the secretary of state in Jackson on August 2. Arrin Hawkins, who was in Mississippi that week for a campaign tour that took her to Tchula and Jackson, was present during the filing.

The seven electors—one more than the six required—for the socialist ticket include two farmers from Tchula, a small town in the Mississippi Delta; a Steelworkers union member from Natchez; and three workers who took part in an earlier strike at the



Militant/Clay Dennison

SWP vice-presidential candidate Arrin Hawkins, right, with David Howard, one of signers of letter below, in his cotton field near Tchula, Mississippi, August 1.

Freshwater Farms catfish plant in Belzoni.

Socialist campaigners faced another major challenge on the road to the September 7 victory.

In early August, an article by Barbara Harris peddling a red-baiting smear against the SWP campaign appeared in the *Jackson Advocate*, a weekly newspaper published in Jackson aimed at the Black community. Titled “Vulnerable Voters Deceived by Socialist Workers Candidate,” the article tried to smear the campaign and block readers from giving the socialists’ platform serious consideration.

Sandler sent a response to this article on behalf of the SWP campaign to Charles Tisdale, editor of the *Advocate*. The paper has not printed the reply. (See “Socialist Campaign Responds to Red-baiting Smear in Mississippi Paper” in September 7 *Militant* for the letter by Sandler and the article by Harris.)

On September 5, Marty Michaels, associate editor of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* in Washington, D.C., sent a letter to the *Militant* with copies to the *Jackson Advocate* and to Herbert Lowe, President of the National Association of Black Journalists, assailing Sandler’s rebuttal and siding with Barbara Harris. *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* describes itself as “the No. 1 news source, in print and online, for charity leaders, fund raisers, grant makers, and other people involved in the philanthropic enterprise.”

“I am writing to express my personal and professional disgust with your recent article ‘SWP campaign answers red-baiting smear,’” Michaels wrote. “To this reader, it appears that everything Ms. Harris writes is factual, and that when her sources are inconclusive she duly notes this.” Michaels concluded by saying, “As Mr. Sandler writes, this type of smear is used against civil rights advocates, democrats, dissidents, and freethinkers of all varieties, as well as socialists and communists. When leveled against a black newspaper in the rural South that has been firebombed and viciously threatened numerous times in its pursuit of civil rights and justice, I can only ask: Have you no shame?”

In an interview, Sandler said the tactic of trying to use the prestige of the civil rights movement to back red-baiting slanders is not new in ruling-class attacks on working-class parties. “The letter to the editor by four supporters of the SWP campaign

from Tchula responding to the slanders in the Harris article, which the *Advocate* has not published either so far, is another strong refutation of these smears,” he added (see letter printed on this page).

These attacks notwithstanding, the Mississippi elections commission agreed that the socialists had met all the requirements and put the SWP ticket on the ballot.

Mississippi election law requires presidential and vice-presidential candidates to meet the constitutional requirements of being at least 35 years old and a U.S.-born citizen. Because Calero is a permanent resident and Hawkins is under 35 years of age, the names of James Harris and Margaret Trowe will appear on the ballot in their place. Harris and Trowe were the Socialist Workers presidential ticket in 2000. They will be designated “independent” on the printed ballot.

“Supporters of Calero and Hawkins are looking forward to campaigning in Mississippi through the November 2 elections and beyond,” Sandler said.

Letter to ‘Jackson Advocate’ from backers of SWP ticket in Mississippi

Printed below is an August 22 letter to the editor of the Mississippi weekly the *Jackson Advocate* protesting the paper’s publication of an article attacking the Socialist Workers campaign in that state as a “deceptive” campaign of “wolves in sheep’s clothing” that targets “vulnerable voters.” The letter is signed by four SWP campaign supporters from Tchula, Mississippi. The original *Advocate* article and a letter answering its red-baiting smears from SWP campaign director Norton Sandler can be found in the September 7 *Militant*.

Dear Editor,

We, the undersigned, are sending this letter to protest slanderous and false attacks by Barbara Harris, published in the August 5–11 edition, against the Socialist Workers campaign of Róger Calero for President and Arrin Hawkins for Vice-President of the United States. We are disappointed with the *Advocate* for printing this.

The most revealing fact about the article, which appeared on the front page of the *Advocate*, is its title, “Vulnerable Voters deceived by Socialist Workers Candidate.” The assertion that signers of the petition to get the socialist campaign on the ballot are *vulnerable* and *deceived* is not only arrogant, it reveals Harris’s clear bias against the socialist campaign. What is it that makes the 2,100 workers, farmers, and young people who signed the petition vulnerable or deceived? Is it the fact that they are workers, farmers, and young people, or are they vulnerable because Ms. Harris disagrees with their right to expand the political debate?

Harris’s article is not good reporting. Thousands of copies of the campaign leaflet were distributed to signers of the petitions all over the state. Campaign information was sent to the *Jackson Advocate* as well as other newspapers in Mississippi. The leaflets included a biography of each candidate, including their ages and where

they come from. The Socialist Workers candidates are representative of the working class today. The literature also contained some of the key planks of the Socialist Workers platform. Instead of using this material Harris makes it seem like the only way she could find out facts about the campaign was by contacting the FBI (hardly a friend of workers and farmers) as well as other unnamed sources.

The method used by Harris is called red-baiting. Instead of raising her differences with the socialist campaign, Harris pretends there is some sinister unnamed conspiracy taking place. What is her proof? Harris states that the campaign “claims to support raising the minimum wage to union scale, a very popular issue with the working class and those entering the workforce.” In short, merely raising demands that working people need and want is suspect.

If Harris wants to inform the workers, farmers, and young people of Mississippi she would be better served to broaden the debate in politics, not limit it to the choice between Democrats and Republicans. No matter whom they choose to vote for, the 2,100 people who signed petitions giving the socialist candidates the right to ballot status did so because they want a real discussion of the problems facing working people.

Workers and farmers need a higher minimum wage. We need to stop farm foreclosures, defend affirmative action, demand a federally funded public works program to put millions to work at union scale, and we need the U.S. out of Iraq immediately. These demands are not out of order for a national election campaign. Yet they are not being discussed by either the Democratic or Republican candidates. We think that they are ideas that working people must discuss.

Barbara Bell
Joan Hogan
R.C. Howard
David Howard

The SWP 2004 ticket is on the ballot in the following states:

- 1) District of Columbia
- 2) Colorado
- 3) Florida
- 4) Iowa
- 5) Louisiana
- 6) Mississippi
- 7) New Jersey
- 8) New York
- 9) Utah
- 10) Washington
- Pending**
- 11) Minnesota
- 12) Nebraska
- 13) Vermont
- 14) Wisconsin
- Denied**
- 15) Delaware

Self-determination for Chechnya

Working people should oppose the crackdown by Moscow on the independence movement in Chechnya in the aftermath of the bloody raid by Russian troops in the Caucasus that resulted in hundreds of deaths. They should also expose Washington shedding crocodile tears for the victims in Beslan, with the aim of providing more rationalizations for imperialism's "global war on terrorism."

As a Chechen leader pointed out, at the heart of the matter are Moscow's policies, which "have made such tragedies not only possible but unavoidable." He was referring to the Russian government's 10-year war to crush the movement in Chechnya for national self-determination.

The independence struggle in Chechnya is a just one. If successful, it will strengthen the working class in Russia and the region. The revolutionary workers movement has always championed the right of oppressed nations to self-determination as a precondition to building genuine unity on the basis of equality among all the toilers.

There is an especially bitter irony to the Kremlin's anti-Islamic crusade that has reached its sharpest point in Chechnya over the last decade. One of the very first decrees the workers and farmers government in Russia issued in December 1917, just after the triumph of the Bolshevik-led revolution, was an "Appeal to all toiling Muslims of Russia and the East."

Without lending an iota of credence to any notion that Islam or other religious beliefs or institutions are progressive, the Soviet Republic declared: "All you whose mosques and shrines have been destroyed, whose beliefs and customs have been trampled on by the czars and the

Russian oppressors! Henceforth your beliefs and customs, your national and cultural institutions are declared free and inviolable. Build your national life freely and without hindrance. It is your right. Know that your rights—like those of all the peoples of Russia—are defended by the full force of the revolution and its organs, the soviets of workers', soldiers', and peasants' deputies."

A few years later, at the 1920 Baku Congress of the Peoples of the East, leaders of the Communist International joined with other revolutionary fighters—from inside the borders of the former czarist empire and beyond—in calling on all Muslim toilers in the region to join in a "holy war for the liberation of all humanity from the yoke of capitalist and imperialist slavery, for the ending of all forms of exploitation of man by man!"

More than eight decades later, we can confidently say that for militant workers around the world, reaffirming this clear pledge by the Bolsheviks to oppressed and exploited toilers who are Muslim, or who hail from parts of the world where the Islamic religion predominates, is not a remote or external matter. The campaigns against "Islamofascism"—from the Silk Road, to the Middle East, northern Africa and the imperialist world—which are part of capitalism's "antiterrorism" drive, are a case in point.

The Chechens and other oppressed peoples in the Caucasus will continue to resist the Great Russian chauvinism that was reimposed on them by the regime of Joseph Stalin with the degeneration of the Russian Revolution, and that continues to this day. Working people should back the Chechens' just struggle for national self-determination.

The fight for affordable housing

Millions of working people today face a housing squeeze. Rents eat up a growing hunk of our wages. In Washington, D.C., for example, monthly rents average \$877, and more than half of tenants in the city pay at least 30 percent of their income for rent. Many workers are forced to live in cramped apartments with crumbling ceilings, water leaks, and roach and rat infestation. In New York City, more than 40,000 working people live in homeless shelters or on the streets. Similar conditions exist in other cities. As for those who "own" their homes, they are increasingly burdened by rising mortgage payments—in fact, they are owners in name only, making payments to the bank instead of the landlord, and facing the threat of foreclosure. Government policies favor landlords and real estate barons at the expense of working people.

The lack of decent, affordable housing is aggravated by declining real wages, hikes in utility rates, rising medical expenses, and persistent high levels of unemployment despite the current upturn in the business cycle.

What is the cause of the housing crunch? It's not a lack of housing construction—the building industry has enjoyed a boom. But the real estate tycoons find it more lucrative to build luxury high-rises than affordable housing. This leads to workers being pushed out of neighborhoods that become "gentrified" as decrepit buildings are renovated or torn down and replaced with expensive condominiums or commercial offices. Meanwhile, many of us have to either pay more for rent—and less for other essentials—or look for a cheaper and more worn-down place to live.

The housing crisis is a permanent feature of capitalism, both in the United States and worldwide. As long as housing and land are commodities, there will be a shortage of affordable places for people to live. Under the profit system, working people will always be squeezed by rent-gouging landlords, real estate speculators, and loan sharks. Capitalism will keep reproducing all the social relations of class exploitation and its related evils—from unemployment to economic crises, war, racist discrimination, and

housing shortages. And the capitalist government—using its twin parties in the United States, the Democrats and Republicans—will always enforce the interests of the industrialists, bondholders, and landlords.

In response to this crisis, the Socialist Workers Party candidates are calling for a federally funded crash program to build high-quality, low-rent public housing. As part of a mass public works program, this could also create millions of jobs at union-scale wages—which is also key to addressing the housing squeeze.

Also needed is full cost-of-living protection—for the minimum wage, union contracts, unemployment pay, Social Security, and other benefits—to protect working people from rising prices and rents. The socialist campaign calls for increasing the minimum wage to union scale—about what unionized workers in the building trades get—which will raise the wage floor for all workers.

What can be done now, on an emergency basis, to hold down rents? The government should immediately institute a program of rent subsidies so that no household would have to pay more than 10 percent of its rent. This subsidy could be financed, for starters, by taxing the corporations, loan sharks, landlords, and real estate speculators.

In order to take the profiteering, rent-gouging, and speculation out of the business of providing people with a place to live, all apartment houses and rental units should be nationalized and turned into public property, with rents paid to the government, and buildings managed by elected tenants committees. Land should also be nationalized so that it is no longer a commodity, and instead its use can be guaranteed to working people.

As long as the capitalist minority maintains its economic and political rule and the laws of the market prevail, however, working people will face a housing crisis. To address this and other pressing needs, workers and farmers will need to organize a mass movement that can overturn the rule of the billionaire minority, establish a government of working people, and reorganize society based on the interests of the vast majority.

N.Y.: more jobless seeking welfare are rejected

BY DOUG NELSON

NEW YORK—A fiscal brief released August 24 by the New York City Independent Budget Office reported that as a result of the welfare "reform" enacted in the mid-1990s, the total number of New York City residents on public assistance decreased by 61 percent in the last decade, going from 562,943 in December 1994 to 218,591 in June 2004.

According to the report, one factor in this decrease during the first six years from 1994–2000 is the increase in employment as more jobs were created here after the recession of the early 1990s. Since the year 2000 however, welfare benefits have continued to erode while unemployment in the city has continued to rise.

From 2000 to 2003, more than 240,000 jobs were lost, in a city whose population continues to grow, resulting in a steady rise in the number of welfare applicants. During the same period however, the number of people receiving welfare benefits decreased by 38,000.

The Clinton administration ended welfare "as we know it." The legislation, passed in 1996, set a five-year cut off for families to receive federally funded assistance. The federal government instead gave block grants to the states, which are now responsible for giving the diminished welfare payments. As the five-year period ended, the effects

of this legislation are beginning to be felt, resulting in a higher number of people without any jobs or housing and no safety net to prevent them from falling into destitution. The effects will be much more extensive and devastating if a severe financial crisis hits.

Although the last two years have seen a modest increase in the number of people receiving welfare, this figure lags further and further behind increasing demand as more people are denied assistance every year.

The Independent Budget Office report—entitled "Despite Recession, Welfare Reform and Labor Market Changes Limit Public Assistance Growth"—points out that "as the recession hit the city in 2001, the number of applicants for public assistance increased, and along with it the number of applications that were rejected."

The percentage of welfare applications that were rejected rose from 17 percent in 2000 to 27 percent in 2003, the latest available figure.

The 2003 rejection rate is the highest since 1996, the year Clinton signed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, which formally ended Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)—a program that had provided some protection against unemployment for working-class families with children since the passage of the Social Security Act in 1935.

Utah miners

Continued from front page

the other miners. This was the fourth IAUWU meeting since the strike began Sept. 22, 2003. What transpired at this meeting solidified support for the UMWA among miners, including those who did not join the strike. One miner who had not joined the walkout, for example, had filed a complaint for pay discrimination. Grundvig had vowed to fight for this worker against the company. After Grundvig admitted he had done nothing for four months, the miner threw his arms in the air and told Grundvig, "Forget it. Just drop the whole thing."

"How many locals are in your international union?" Alyson Kennedy, another miner, said she asked Ron Mattingly, the so-called international president of the IAUWU, who was present at the meeting. "We have one," Mattingly responded. "Just here at this mine?" asked Kennedy. "Yes," admitted Mattingly.

The other IAUWU officers present were Dana Jenkins and Warren Pratt, vice-president and treasurer of the local, respectively, and Nevin Pratt and Vicky Mattingly, the vice president and treasurer of the "international." All six of these "officers" are relatives of the mine owners, the Kingstons, the miners pointed out.

The IAUWU had posted notices in English and Spanish for this meeting at the mine's bathhouse. The agenda included a presentation on a new contract and questions regarding the UMWA. The miners said Chris Grundvig promised that under a new contract workers would receive six pairs of work gloves and two pairs of steel-toed rubber boots. "And this is immediately in effect," Nevin Pratt reportedly said.

The Kingstons operate a company store at the scale house of the mine, where the bosses sell the miners gloves for \$6.50 a pair, boots for \$65, and hard hats for \$26.

Most of the other mines in the area provide all of this equipment for free, and many provide free bib overalls.

Miner Bill Estrada said that when others demanded to know what the pay increases were in the "new contract," Ron Mattingly responded he didn't think the IAUWU could get higher pay per hour for the miners. Instead this "union" is talking to the company about increasing present bonuses and supplementary pay.

"What we want is pay per hour equitable to the other mines around here," Estrada replied, while other miners at the meeting nodded in agreement. Wages for underground coal miners in the United States average at least \$17 an hour. Estrada said he makes \$5.75 per hour as an underground maintenance worker. The company uses existing bonuses and supplementary pay to discipline workers, Estrada noted. "For example, if workers report an accident, both are taken away," he said.

Juan Salazar and other miners said they demanded that harassment of the women miners by the brother of the mine manager be ended. "We do not tolerate disrespecting women miners," Salazar said. "This is something that has to stop."

After several hours, when Grundvig tried to end the meeting, Kennedy said she asked, "What were you going to say under the agenda point on issues pertaining to the UMWA?"

"Why do you want the UMWA?" Grundvig responded. "They only have one UMWA-organized mine in the state."

The miners said they laughed and replied that they are seeking UMWA representation because they want a real union. "Can you tell us of one UMWA-organized mine where workers make \$5.50 an hour?" they asked. Grundvig admitted there was not one, said Kennedy, "and then Ron Mattingly stood up and exclaimed: 'The UMWA wants to shut this mine down!'"

The miners reported that the mine bosses tried to prevent some miners from attending the meeting. The company union schedules the meetings on a work day.

Bill Estrada was scheduled to work day shift and told his boss he wanted to leave the mine to attend the meeting. His boss, maintenance foreman Cyril Jackson, said no.

"Warren Pratt, an officer of the bogus union, backed up the boss. After a 20-minute argument with Pratt, he finally said he would talk to Jackson," Estrada reported. "Pratt came back and said Jackson said okay, I could go to the meeting."

Other miners reported that the company also threatened to take away their holiday pay if they missed work to attend the meeting. But after so many miners showed up for the meeting, the company backed down on this, too.

About a year ago, the bosses at C.W. Mining, also known as Co-Op, fired all 75 coal miners at the mine here because they were fighting for safety on the job, against company victimization of fellow workers, and for union representation. The miners turned the lockout into a strike and set up picket lines outside the mine. After the miners received widespread support for their struggle from the labor movement, especially in the West, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) upheld charges filed by the UMWA that the workers had been illegally fired. The NLRB ordered the mine bosses to reinstate all 75 miners, and after the majority of the strikers signed a petition demanding a union representation election, the labor board mandated that a vote be held later this year. The company then made the miners an unconditional offer to return to work, and a number of strikers were back on the job as of July 12.

The NLRB subsequently held a hearing in Price, Utah, to determine who will be eligible to vote in the union election. The IAUWU claims it has over 100 members, most of whom are Kingston family members or relatives. The UMWA has argued that these people should not be allowed to vote because of their loyalty to and direct connections with the Co-Op owners. The labor board has not yet announced its ruling on the eligibility question or the date for the union vote.

The miners reported that at a September 5 meeting at the local park in Huntington they discussed building a one-year

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Russia's bloody raid

Continued from front page

how the government handled the situation, Putin defended the decision to storm the school, saying the hostage-takers had begun "shooting children out of boredom," according to CNN news.

"No one has a moral right to tell us to talk to child killers," the Russian president lashed out. "Why don't you meet Osama bin Laden, invite him to Brussels or to the White House and engage in talks, ask him what he wants and give it to him so he leaves you in peace?"

To win support for its war against forces in Chechnya that demand independence for the southwestern republic, Moscow has stepped up its claim to be fighting "Islamic terrorists."

Washington has backed the Kremlin on this position. "The people who took over the school are terrorists, plain and simple," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said in a press briefing September 8. "Groups that sponsor them are terrorists, plain and simple. They need to be fought, they need to be eliminated, and we stand with Russia very closely as they face that threat of terrorism."

Moscow claimed the 32 people who took over the school were part of a Chechen separatist group linked to "international terrorism" organizations. Providing no hard evidence, the government claimed this "multinational" group has links to al-Qaeda, and that among the hostage-takers were 10 fighters from Arab countries. Hostages who survived the carnage, however, have refuted this claim, saying they saw no Arabs in the school, BBC News reported.

Gen. Yuri Baluyevsky, chief of the Russian armed forces, said the Russian military "will take all measures to liquidate terrorist bases in any region of the world," including carrying out "preventive strikes."

Over the past decade Moscow has launched two bloody wars attempting to crush the independence movement of the

largely Muslim people of Chechnya in the northern Caucasus mountains. In 1994-96 the Chechen fighters defeated a massive armored invasion of Russian troops, humiliating the regime of Boris Yeltsin. Most estimates put the death toll in that war at between 30,000 to 40,000, the bulk of them Chechen civilians. In 1999 Putin launched another war that destroyed most of the territory and placed occupying troops in Grozny, the Chechen capital. At least 5,000 were killed in the invasion and occupation.

Despite the occupation, Chechen forces have engaged in hit-and-run guerrilla actions inflicting both political and military damage on the Putin regime.

The Putin government has a record in handling such incidents with brutal assaults that disregard the lives of the hostages. About 50 Chechen guerrillas, for example, took over a Moscow theater and held 750 people hostage in October 2002. Russian troops raided the theater, ending the takeover and killing 129 hostages and 41 hostage-takers in the process. The deaths resulted from anesthetic gas pumped into the building under orders of Russian officers.

The siege in Beslan was part of a series of recent attacks that have left some 500 people dead, including the downing of two passenger airliners, and a suicide bombing attack in a Moscow subway station.

The Russian government has offered a \$10.3 million reward for information that could lead to the capture of Chechen rebel leaders Shamil Basayev and Aslan Maskhadov, whom Moscow accuses of being responsible for the takeover in Beslan.

In the midst of the hostage crisis, Maskhadov, the former president of Chechnya, publicly distanced himself from the attack and condemned the seizure of the school. "There is no justification for terror against absolutely innocent citizens," he said, while expressing his condolences to the families of the deceased.



Getty Images/Oleg Nikishin

A Russian soldier covers the roof as volunteers survey the area after Special Forces stormed Middle School No. 1 in Beslan, North Ossetia, that had been seized September 1 by an armed group that took 1,181 hostages. The ensuing bloodbath has sparked a crisis for the Putin government, and has generated new debates on struggle for Chechnya's independence.



At the same time, the Chechen leader called "upon the world to condemn the policy that has made such tragedies not only possible but unavoidable." Maskhadov accused the government of Russia of carrying out a "genocide of the Chechen people."

The Putin government has used the tragedy to whip up nationalist sentiments and strengthen its so-called war on terror.

More than 130,000 people attended a government-sponsored rally held outside the Kremlin September 7 under the banner "Russia Against Terror." Tens of thousands rallied in other cities across the country in mobilizations with similar themes, according to the Interfax news agency.

In a September 4 speech, Putin said that Russia had let its guard down after the collapse of the Soviet Union 13 years ago and would now need to rebuild its security

against internal and external enemies.

Despite this campaign, the government has been facing growing criticism. The newspaper *Kommersant* said Putin's emphasis on "international terrorism" serves Moscow and other governments to dodge responsibility for the killings. "It's as if all the children did not die because of a war in Chechnya that has been going on for 10 years, but because international terrorism has been on the attack," it said.

"It is strange that the president neglected the question of Chechnya in his address," said the newspaper *Vedemosti*, trying instead "to shift responsibility to the people who divided up the country in 1991," referring to the disintegration of the Stalinist apparatus that led to the fracturing of the Soviet Union in the late '80s and early '90s.

Pathfinder sales campaign

Continued from Page 5

they fell short of their goal of \$726, reaching just \$458. "We plan to go over \$1,000 in September to make up for the shortfall," said Lynn in a September 3 interview. "We are going to sell books at a hotel workers rally this week and the Baltimore bookfair the following weekend."

Campaigners in Los Angeles sold 90 books, including a large number of titles in Spanish, at the 17th Constitutional Convention of the United Farm Workers, held August 28-29 in Fresno, California. Sixty-one of the books sold were on discount as part of the Supersaver Sale. They included 17 copies of *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*, 9 copies of *The Second Declaration of Havana*, and 5 copies each of *Malcolm X Talks to Young People* and *50 años de guerra encubierta*.

Along with the decision last June to increase book sales by a minimum of 10 percent, volunteers involved in various aspects of the production of Pathfinder books and pamphlets set out to increase their overall efficiency and speed. "This is essential in order to make the Supersaver Sale and broader sales efforts a success," said Maceo Dixon, an SWP supporter in Atlanta.

Ruth Cheney, who is part of the Printing Project steering committee that oversees work of more than 100 volunteers around the world involved in various stages of the production process of Pathfinder books, said that the average number of books and pamphlets produced used to be eight per month. "But in July, we sent 15 titles to the print team, and 20 titles in August," she said. "We are working to shorten the production cycle, which used to be from five or six months, down to about two months. Since June, we turned around six titles in less than a month."

"This week, we really started to see results at the end of the production chain," said Daryl Drobnic, who is in charge of receiving and quality-checking books at the Pathfinder distribution center in Atlanta. "We usually get about two newly printed books each week at the distribution center. This week, we got eight books, including the new Spanish-language edition of *We Are Heirs of the World's Revolutions* by Thomas Sankara and the second printing of *The Stalin School of Falsification*. The first printing came out in June, but sold so fast that we had been out of stock for more than two months."

Washington targets Iran

Continued from Page 12

produce a bomb, you need vast facilities, including thousands of advanced centrifuges, cascaded in a special pattern," the Iranian scientist said. He also noted that in addition to Tehran's agreement to allow unannounced inspections of its nuclear facilities, IAEA cameras record activity in the plant 24 hours a day.

Following the agreement it reached with the European governments last October, Tehran agreed to temporarily suspend enrichment of uranium as a "show of good faith." On July 30, Tehran announced that it would resume plans to enrich uranium because the European governments had failed to keep their promises to get the IAEA investigation closed.

Washington is arguing that given Iran's vast oil reserves the pursuit of nuclear technology can only mean Tehran wants to build a nuclear bomb. Tehran counters that it needs to produce 7,000 megawatts of electricity by 2021 through nuclear power plants in order to meet the growing energy demands of a country of 65 million and to spur economic and industrial development.

In related developments, Iran's intelligence minister, Ali Yunessi, announced recently the arrest of several people charged

with espionage against the country's nuclear programs and sending the information abroad. According to the Iranian News Agency (INRA), Yunessi said that the People's Mujahedeen, an armed group that seeks to overthrow the Iranian government, "played the main role in transferring the information abroad." The group, which is led by the National Council of Resistance of Iran, has been a main source of Washington's "evidence" that Tehran is trying to build nuclear arms. Yunessi said the group made similar claims in a series of press conferences held in the U.S. capital just before the start of a major investigation of Iran's nuclear facilities by the IAEA last year.

The IAEA has also dispatched an "inspections team" to south Korea and will report its findings at its September 13 meeting. Seoul admitted recently that scientists in south Korea had secretly enriched uranium to nearly bomb-grade levels, reported the September 3 *Washington Post*. The program came to light only after south Korean scientists were pressed by IAEA inspectors with questions about certain equipment they had acquired. IAEA inspectors have said the method utilized in south Korea to enrich uranium has no civilian application and is not used in any nuclear energy programs.

Utah miners' union struggle

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anniversary celebration of their struggle. The event will be held at noon October 2 at the UMWA hall in Price, Utah.

The miners reported that a delegation of members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) from Seattle, Washington, will be coming to the event. The ILWU and the King County Labor Council in Seattle are asking unionists to send letters to the NLRB urging it to rule that Kingston family members not be

allowed to vote in the union election.

Messages of solidarity and financial support can be sent to the Co-Op Miners at UMWA District 22, 525 East 100 South, Price, UT 84501. Tel: (435) 637-2037; Fax: (435) 637-9456.

Letters to the labor board can be sent to NLRB Region 27, 600 17th St., 7th Floor-North Tower, Denver, CO 80202-5433 Attention: B. Allan Benson, Regional Director. Tel: (303) 844-3551; Fax: (303) 844-6249.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

ALABAMA

Birmingham

It's not who you are against, but what you are for: A Socialist view of the Republican convention and New York protests. Speaker: Janine Dukes, Socialist Workers candidate for Senate from Alabama. Sun., Sept. 12. 4 p.m. 3029A Bessemer Rd. Donation: \$5/\$2. Tel: (205) 780-0021.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

How Social Security Was Won and How it Will be Defended Fri., Sept. 17. Dinner, 7 p.m.; program, 8 p.m. 307 W 36th St., 10th Floor (use north elevators). Suggested donation: \$5 for dinner, \$5 for program. Tel: (212) 629-6649.

PENNSYLVANIA

Pittsburgh

Support striking nursing home workers. Speakers: Linda Nakutis, LPN and SEIU 1199P strike leader; Jay Ressler, Socialist Workers Party and UMWA Local 1248. Fri., Sept. 17. 7:30 p.m. 5907 Penn Ave., 2nd Floor. Donation: \$4. Tel: (412) 365-1090.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

Participant's report from New York: Socialist Workers campaign for the only working-class alternative in 2004 Speaker: Alan Donald, Young Socialists. Fri., Sept. 17, 7 p.m. 3/281-7 Beamish St., Campsie (upstairs in arcade near Evaline St.). Donation: \$4/\$2. Tel: (02) 9718 9698.

U.S. gov't targets Iran energy program

Calls for UN sanctions on Tehran for not "fessing up" to nuclear weapons plan

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Washington has seized on the latest report by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on Tehran's nuclear programs to press the United Nations body to refer Iran's case to the Security Council for possible sanctions. The U.S. government insists that Iran is using its program to build nuclear reactors for electricity generation as a cover for making nuclear arms.

The IAEA report reportedly cites delays by Tehran in providing some information the UN agency has requested, but stops short of saying there is conclusive evidence that Iran is pursuing development of nuclear weapons. The IAEA will debate what action, if any, to take against Tehran at a September 13 meeting of its board of governors.

U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell, en route from Panama City, Panama, told reporters that he would begin talks the next day with the foreign ministers of France and Germany and Britain's foreign affairs secretary to press for referring Iran's nuclear program to the Security Council. "Our view is that it should have been referred to the Council long ago," Powell said. Powell was in Panama attending the September 1 inauguration of that country's new president,



Reactor at nuclear power plant in Bushehr, Iran under construction. Iran needs substantially greater power sources to extend electrification to growing population.

Martín Torrijos.

"We still believe that the Iranians are not 'fessing up to everything,'" Powell said. "They still have a program that, in our judgment, is a nuclear program designed to de-

velop, ultimately, a nuclear weapon."

If Washington is successful, the Security Council could impose a range of economic and other sanctions against Iran. "We're looking at the range of possible actions of

a political, economic, diplomatic and other nature that might be taken," said Powell.

The *International Herald Tribune* reported that British foreign secretary Jack Straw, French foreign minister Michel Barnier, and German foreign minister Joschka Fischer met September 3 to discuss how to deflect Washington's initiative.

Paris, Berlin, and London differ with Washington on how best to advance their imperialist interests vis-à-vis Iran. Last October, under heavy pressure from these three European imperialist governments and Russia, Tehran agreed to allow unannounced inspections of the country's nuclear facilities by the IAEA. The European governments pressed for the concession from Tehran as an alternative to more aggressive moves by Washington.

Powell called Straw, Barnier, and Fischer the day before their meeting. The *Herald Tribune* reported that diplomats involved in the discussion described the conversation as Powell giving them a "stern message" that it was time to stop offering Tehran "carrots" and to move toward threatening sanctions.

Jack Straw said the IAEA report contained "clear reservations about the nature of Iran's nuclear program."

Asked whether Tehran should be taken to the Security Council, the German foreign minister said, "That could become a subject, but the consequences of that action would have to be very carefully considered," reported the *Boston Globe*.

Dutch foreign minister Bernard Bot, whose government holds the European Union's presidency, issued a statement September 3 expressing the EU's "concern over Iran's nuclear plans." Bot said the EU wants to "send out a very strong signal... that we're in business, that we have given every opportunity, also in the past to keep the dialogue going." Bot said the EU was "pessimistic" about developments in Iran's nuclear program.

The IAEA report focuses on the decision by Tehran to begin enrichment processing of 40 tons of uranium, which the imperialist "experts" at the IAEA claim is enough to make five nuclear bombs. Uranium enrichment, however, is also necessary for producing nuclear plant fuel for energy generation.

Ali Akbar Salehi, Iran's former envoy to the IAEA, said the nuclear agency had been informed of plans to enrich uranium "a long time ago." Salehi said that the equipment being used in the Natanz plant in Isfahan does not have the capacity to enrich uranium to a grade that could be used for weapons. "To

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Australia: film sparks debate on right to choose

BY JOANNE KUNIANSKY

SYDNEY, Australia—On August 8 the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) aired a film on abortion called *My Foetus*, by British filmmaker Julia Black. ABC's decision to screen the film on television has provoked heated debate here on the question of a woman's right to choose abortion, as it did in the United Kingdom, where it was first shown in April. Although billed as a "documentary," it is being used by opponents of women's rights to campaign for restrictions on the right to abortion.

Leading up to the film showing, the *Australian*, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the *Melbourne Age*, and other dailies ran a flurry of news articles, film reviews, opinion pieces, and letters to the editor reflecting both anti-abortion and pro-choice views. The question of abortion was also featured on ABC's Radio National and the television program *Lateline*.

In an August 5 piece in the *Sydney Morning Herald* titled "Abortion is science's grim story," columnist Miranda Devine repeated one of the main false arguments peddled by opponents of women's right to abortion: "that fetuses are humans cannot be denied, thanks to technology." Devine claimed to be exposing "the lie so long at the heart of the abortion debate—that it is not about killing the smallest humans."

In a response in the August 7 *Herald*, titled "Women are more than wombs," Adele Horin wrote, "The debate whipped up by the BBC documentary *My Foetus* has given the anti-abortion lobby oxygen to re-ignite old campaigns... It is putting the focus on the fetus. But it is important never to lose sight of the woman, and her circumstances, at the core of the abortion issue."

Horin said, "Forced motherhood should not be the punishment for failed contraception or a contraceptive lapse, or for being human. Women are more than their wombs. And the state can't tell them what to do with their bodies. It can't force them to have a child they don't want."

Anti-abortion rights forces have used the film showing to advance their campaign, with federal health minister Anthony Abbott of the Liberal Party leading the charge. Abbott is well-known for his anti-choice stance. In a speech at Adelaide University last March, students booed him when he called the rate of abortions performed in Australia a "national tragedy." Some chanted, "Get your morals off our bodies!"

"An objectively grave matter has been reduced to a question of the mother's con-

venience," Abbott told students. In the current debate, he suggested further attacks on the right to abortion, saying that "a political constituency may even be starting to emerge to ban abortions after 20 weeks."

Black, who asserts that she is still pro-choice and that she had an abortion at 21, says she made the film while pregnant. In the publicity leading up to the film's airing here she said, "As my pregnancy progressed I began to question my views on abortion." She added, "In the past I had always dismissed the anti-abortion movement as extremist. But I could no longer do that. I needed to listen to what they had to say because, if I had sworn allegiance to the pro-choice movement without question, then perhaps others had too."

Claiming that the "secrecy around abortion had to be lifted," Black's film shows an abortion performed by manual vacuum aspiration on a woman at four weeks' pregnancy. It also includes images of aborted fetuses that are 10, 11, and 21 weeks old and states, "However shocking, repulsive and confrontational they are, they represent the reality."

The camera lingers on the image of the

21-week-old aborted fetus, then moves to Black's very pregnant belly, and then to her three-dimensional ultrasound at 34 weeks' pregnancy. In the voiceover, as these images appear, the filmmaker says, "It looks like a baby." What the sequence suggests is that abortion, particularly late-term abortion, is murder.

Black says, "I challenge the pro-choice movement to help me and others resolve the emotional contradiction that surrounds abortion when you look at the facts." Black's film, however, leaves out the facts concerning the lives of women and their right to control their bodies, which is central to their ability to participate fully in society.

In Australia, one in three women will make the choice to have an abortion in her lifetime. Of the more than 70,000 abortions performed each year, 95 percent are performed in the first 14 weeks of pregnancy.

The Women's Abortion Action Campaign in Sydney, which defends the right to choose, is sponsoring an October 13 public meeting on this subject at University of Technology in Sydney.

New Zealand gov't presses to deport Algerian

BY TERRY COGGAN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Protests have been held in a number of New Zealand cities to demand the release of Ahmed Zaoui, an Algerian citizen seeking asylum here. The Labour Party government has jailed him without charges for 20 months.

Some 150 people marched to the Auckland Central Remand Prison August 7 in support of Zaoui's fight for freedom. The march followed a meeting and concert where students at Auckland University who have formed a defense committee spoke about the facts of the case.

The Refugee Status Appeals Authority (RSAA), a government agency, granted Zaoui asylum in August 2003, but he remains imprisoned under a Security Risk Certificate. This is the first use of such a document, created by 1999 legislation that increased the powers of the immigration police. The certificates allow the detention and deportation of immigrants based on secret evidence. Government officials claim Zaoui poses a possible "threat to national security."

A decision on whether he will be deported or released is awaiting the outcome

of a review of the certificate.

Zaoui was elected to Algeria's parliament in 1991 as a member of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) until the Algerian military staged a coup and his party was outlawed. Officials in New Zealand have attempted to link him to the Islamic Armed Group (GIA), a split-off from the armed wing of the FIS that they brand "terrorist."

The government is publicly attempting to undermine the decision of the RSAA. In its report, the authority had declared that convictions in French and Belgian courts that Zaoui had on his record for "criminal association" were "unsafe."

Prime Minister Helen Clark said in a radio interview, "Those convictions would in the normal course of events never see him get permanent residence in New Zealand. But the complication is that the Refugee Status Appeals Authority chose for its own reasons to simply dismiss out of hand the French and Belgian convictions."

The government is also appealing a court decision that the inspector general of the Security Intelligence Service (SIS), the secret police, must take Zaoui's human rights into

account as part of the review of the Security Risk Certificate. The government's case against Zaoui suffered a blow when former SIS inspector general Laurie Grieg resigned after making comments against Zaoui and immigrants in the media. Grieg had said in an interview that if it were up to him, Zaoui would be "outski" on the next plane.

In July, the High Court rejected a bid to transfer Zaoui to a non-"custodial" institution. His lawyers had argued that he should be released to a refugee center or into the care of the Catholic Church because of the length of his imprisonment and his deteriorating mental and physical state. They cited one incident when Zaoui was stripped to his underpants and locked in a cell while a video camera tracked his movements.

The actions in defense of Zaoui came on the same day that the government deported Iranian asylum-seeker Saied Ghanbari, who left behind his wife and three children. Ghanbari had lived in New Zealand for eight years. The latest figures report the government deported 1,205 people last year, an increase of nearly 500 percent over the previous 12 months.