

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

U.S. workers pay dearly for health coverage; over 45 million uninsured

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 68/NO. 36 OCTOBER 5, 2004

UMWA: Build Oct. 2 union rally in Utah

Back Co-Op miners' organizing struggle

BY ANNE CARROLL

SALT LAKE CITY—"We thank everyone for your ongoing support and invite you to attend and publicize the October 2 anniversary rally we are holding at the UMWA union hall in Price, Utah," said Celso Panduro. A coal miner at the Co-Op mine near Huntington, Utah, and one of the supporters of the struggle to win representation by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) at the mine, Panduro spoke at the end of a September 18 picket here in front of the law offices of Carl Kingston.

A prominent member of the Kingston clan, a wealthy capitalist family that owns

the Co-Op mine, Carl Kingston is the main company lawyer.

The day before the picket, UMWA Region 4, which covers the western states of Colorado, Wyoming, Arizona, Utah, and Montana, sent a letter to the hundreds of union locals and other organizations and individuals who have extended solidarity to the Co-Op miners' union organizing struggle. The letter, signed by Bob Butero, UMWA Region 4 director, invited everyone to attend the anniversary rally.

"The Co-Op miners and the United Mine Workers of America want to thank community activists, local unions, and union members, for their support in the struggle," the letter says. "The Co-Op miners traveled throughout the country and met many unionists. Your continued support and solidarity has been greatly appreciated.

"Beginning at 12:00 noon on Saturday, October 2, 2004, a Co-Op Miners Anniversary Rally will be held at the UMWA in Price, Utah, and we want to invite you to attend. If you can't attend, you can send a message to be read at the Rally. Send information to the United Mine Workers of America Office located at 525 East 100 South, Price Utah 84501. Telephone (435) 637-2037 or Fax (435) 637-9456—Co-Op Miners Anniversary Rally."

"September 22 marks the one-year anniversary of our strike," said Bill Estrada, another Co-Op miner who addressed the crowd following the September 18 picket. "On that day last year, 75 miners at the Co-Op mine in Huntington were fired for union activity. After a 10-month battle, we are now back to work. But this fight is far from over. Because of the solidarity we received, the National Labor Relations Board was forced to rule that the Co-Op bosses illegally fired us and ordered the mine owners to reinstate everyone in July. We need to continue to put pressure on

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'Old Europe' balks at accepting Turkey in European Union; British, U.S. rulers campaign for entry

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

If Turkey were to join the European Union (EU), "the liberation of Vienna in 1683 would have been in vain." This is what EU internal market commissioner Frits Bolkestein, from the Netherlands, said September 6.

The EU official was referring to the siege of Vienna in July 1683 by 200,000 Turkish troops that the Ottoman Empire had dispatched there. The siege was crushed about two months later by a joint force of the Austrian and Polish armies, "thereby saving Christendom from further incursion by Islam," as an editorial in the September 18 *Spectator*, a conservative British magazine, put it.

Bolkestein's racist remarks were largely accepted by EU leaders—especially in the countries U.S. defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld has described as the "Old Europe," led by Paris and Berlin. This reflects the widespread reluctance by the majority of capitalist politicians in the EU to approve Turkey's entry into the European Union, and the outright opposition by many

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Militant/Paul Pederson

Martín Koppel, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate in New York (at microphone), speaks to students September 22 at Borough of Manhattan Community College. Socialists campaigned there all afternoon as part of a "Club Info Fair."

SWP candidate for vice president: 'Back workers' right to unionize'

Socialist Arrin Hawkins speaks at Pennsylvania campus

BY RYAN SCOTT AND NORTON SANDLER

HAZLETON, Pennsylvania—Socialist Workers Party vice-presidential candidate Arrin Hawkins spoke before students in two classes at Bloomsburg University here September 17. She was invited to speak to the history classes by professor Walter Howard.

"Many working people around the country are reacting to speedup on the job, to brutally long work hours, to

unsafe conditions and assaults on our dignity by the bosses in their drive for profits," Hawkins said.

"At the heart of our campaign is championing workers' right to organize unions or to use their unions to defend themselves from these attacks by the employers and their twin parties, the Democrats and Republicans. These assaults will step up, no matter whether Bush or Kerry wins the election."

Hawkins said the Socialist Workers campaign offers a working-class alternative to the two major capitalist parties and other pro-capitalist candidates. "I invite you to

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Iran protests UN agency demand to halt uranium enrichment

Raising pressure, IAEA sets Nov. 25 deadline

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The government of Iran said September 21 it would not heed a call by the United Nations International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to stop uranium enrichment.

Gholamreza Aghazadeh, the head of Tehran's Atomic Energy Organization, told reporters in Vienna that day that Iran had begun converting 37 tons of raw "yellowcake" uranium to process it for use in nuclear centrifuges—the machines that enrich uranium, a process necessary to produce fuel for the nuclear reactors that Tehran is developing to help meet the country's growing electricity generation needs.

"What was decided in the board of governors is unjust for a nation," Aghazadeh said, referring to a resolution the IAEA's board had just passed.

The IAEA "considers it necessary," the resolution that was adopted unanimously September 18 says, "that Iran immediately suspend all enrichment-related activities, including the manufacture or import of centrifuge components, the assembly and testing of centrifuges, and the production of feed material" (emphasis in the original).

The UN agency also called on the government of Iran "to reconsider its decision to start construction of a research reactor."

The resolution said that the agency will bring back a report on whether Tehran has complied with these demands to the November 25 meeting of the IAEA's board of

governors. At that meeting the board "will decide whether or not further steps are appropriate," it said.

Washington and the main powers in the European Union—London, Paris, and Berlin—cosponsored the resolution.

U.S. officials stated that the road is now open for the IAEA to refer Tehran to the UN Security Council for possible sanctions if the Iranian government does not comply with the UN atomic agency's demands. "The is-

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Order back issues of 'Militant' to learn about miners' battle. Free with sub! (see p. 2)

Indonesia gov't mobilizes public opinion behind crackdown on 'terrorist' group

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

Taking advantage of violent attacks on civilian targets by armed groups, the ruling class in Indonesia and its allies in the United States, Australia, and other imperialist powers have scored new successes in their "war on terrorism" in that Southeast Asian country—the fourth most populous in the world.

The September 9 suicide bombing outside the Australian embassy in Indonesia's capital, Jakarta, attributed to Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), is the latest attack the country's rulers have used to win broader acceptance in public opinion for a crackdown against the group, which calls for the formation of "Islamic governments" across the region. Nine people were killed and more than 180 others were injured in that bombing.

Jakarta has won support for more repressive measures against Jemaah Islamiyah from major Muslim organizations and political figures in Indonesia who had been reluctant to do so in the past. Syafii Maarif, the central leader of Muhammadiyah, one of Indonesia's two largest Muslim organizations, joined the government chorus against JI. "If Muslims conduct this kind of uncivilized action, they should question whether they are Muslims or not," Maarif said. "They misuse the religion."

On September 20, former general Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono won a landslide victory in the presidential election, winning 60 percent of the vote.

An article in the September 21 *New York Times* described the White House attitude toward the Indonesian elections: "The Bush administration—particularly Paul D. Wolfowitz, who was ambassador to Indonesia in the late 1980s—has said the success of the elections here in the world's most populous Muslim country shows that Islam and democracy are compatible."

A former security minister in Su-

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Pathfinder supersaver sale p. 6

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Iowa slaughterhouse closes, workers given no advance notice

BY KEVIN DWIRE

TAMA, Iowa—"This is the land of unopportunity," Renee Fenton told *Militant* reporters August 21, as she and three friends sat outside the Crown Point apartments here. She was talking about the shut down the day before of the Iowa Quality Beef slaughterhouse here, which left 540 workers unemployed. Fenton was visiting friends who were preparing to move out of Tama to look for work.

Iowa Quality Beef is a partnership between the Iowa Quality Beef Supply Cooperative and American Foods Group of Green Bay, Wisconsin. Over 900 cattle producers from Iowa and surrounding states had invested in the operation, which opened in July 2003. It was the only cattle slaughterhouse in Iowa. According to press reports, American Foods Group, which operated the plant, now wants out of the partnership.

The *Des Moines Register* reported August 19 that Wythe Willey, a cattleman and lawyer from Cedar Rapids who is chairman of the board of the cooperative, blamed the closing "on bad market and financial conditions in the cattle industry because of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, also known as mad cow disease (BSE)." Willey said the plant has lost \$3.5 million to \$5 million because of BSE. He also called the shutdown temporary and said the plant may reopen in about two months.

The plant closing will also hurt farmers. The shutdown "diminishes competition for cattle, which could mean lower prices for producers," said an article in the *Des Moines Register*, adding that farmers will "incur the added costs of shipping their animals to more-distant markets."

Workers first learned the operation was shutting down "temporarily" on August 18, when kill floor workers were told that it was their last day. Workers on the cut floor then worked the last two days of the week to process carcasses.

Many workers immediately began to prepare to move out of town. "I'm on

my way to Joslin, Illinois," said a worker as he loaded the trunk of his car. "We're going down to try to get an apartment before I start work there." He had been a sanitation worker in the plant. "When we found out the plant was closing, I called my landlord right away to say that we needed to work something out, because we had no jobs and I needed to get my deposit back. The landlord said that he needed 30 days notice. I told him that the company didn't give me notice, how could I give him notice?"

He pointed to several young men standing on the porch of the house they shared. "We all worked sanitation in the plant for a company called Kaiser," he said. "We're all being transferred to other jobs in Dubuque, Waterloo, Dennison, and Joslin. I was a manager here, but they don't need a manager in Joslin, so I'll be a worker like the others."

"The employee handbook says the company was supposed to give 60 days notice about layoffs, but people got no notice at all," said Gabriel Salazar. He and his friends had moved to Tama to work at the plant from Long Prairie, Minnesota, where they had been members of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 789. Salazar said he quit, however, because the bosses had him doing the job of three people. Salazar and other workers interviewed did not know about the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN), which requires employers to provide 60 days notification in advance of plant closings or mass layoffs. News coverage of the plant closing in Iowa has not mentioned the WARN act.

Salazar's friend, Lorenzo Galvan, said that the company had shorted him wages for 14 hours, which the bosses never paid despite saying they would. Several workers told *Militant* correspondents similar stories about not being paid for all the hours they worked. Salazar, Galvan, and Marisol Garcia said they were going to Denison, Iowa, to try to get jobs there.

At a nearby apartment building, *Mili-*

School cleaners fight cutbacks in Australia



Militant/Ron Poulson

SYDNEY, Australia—Over a thousand state-employed school cleaners on a three-day strike from around New South Wales (NSW) joined in a colorful and spirited march on the Sydney offices of the NSW Labor premier, Robert Carr, September 8. The cleaners, organized by the Liquor, Hospitality and Municipal Workers Union, were joined by supporters carrying other union banners. Protesting threats to their job security and hours, they chanted: "What do we want? Current hours! When do we want it? Now!"

"I'm now the only cleaner at a school of 500 students," said Gayle Ross, 44, who has worked for 12 years at Grafton Primary School. "They've squeezed our hours and just let people retire without replacing them." She carried a placard saying, "Labor government attacks workers basic rights." John Robertson, secretary of the NSW Labor Council, was one of the speakers at the rally.

—ALASDAIR MACDONALD

tant reporters talked to several workers. "I'm going back to Mexico Friday," said Umberto López. He hails from a rural area of Zacatecas and says that there are no jobs there. He will be going back to a farm to raise corn and hogs.

Laura Castellanos said that she had worked in the plant under the previous owners, who also shut it down. "They told us we would be rehired when it opened up again, but I wasn't rehired," Castellanos said, adding that some workers are afraid to apply for unemployment because they might lack papers.

Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate in Iowa, Edwin Fruit, who works at the Tyson plant in Perry, Iowa, and is a member of UFCW Local 1149, told workers that "the labor movement needs to come to the defense of the workers here in Tama."

"The labor movement here in Iowa should demand that since the company did not give workers 60 days notice required by the WARN Act and stipulated in the company hand book, it should pay workers wages for the next 60 days and continue their insurance coverage," Fruit said. He also said that all workers should receive unemployment compensation, whether they have papers or not.

"The treatment of workers here in Tama shows why the SWP campaign's demand to support workers' right to organize unions and to defend ourselves from the bosses' attacks is so important. We also demand a massive federally funded public works program to put millions to work at union scale."

Kevin Dwire is a meat packer in Des Moines, Iowa.

Unemployment declines in New York

BY DOUG NELSON

New York City's unemployment rate declined from 7.6 percent in July to 6.7 percent in August, according to the state Department of Labor.

May and August of this year are the first two months that unemployment has dropped below 7 percent in New York since October 2001.

About 117,000 jobs were created since January 2004, as part of an upturn in the business cycle.

Last month's drop in the official unemployment rate, however, was due to a 44,000-person decline in the labor force. The Department of Labor defines "labor

force" as those currently employed, those who are laid-off and waiting to be recalled, or those who are "able, available, and actively looking for work." The jobless who are not seeking work are not counted. The total number of those employed actually dropped by 10,000 in August. So the decline in joblessness last month is largely due to a substantial drop in those actively seeking work.

Since April, the unemployment rate both in New York City and nationwide has been lower every month than it was during the first quarter of the year.

U.S. unemployment still remains above 5 percent, as it has since October 2001.

THE MILITANT

Find out about Utah miners' fight for union

After a 10-month strike, Co-Op miners in Huntington, Utah, returned to work July 12 and have continued the battle for the union from inside. From day one of the strike the 'Militant' has given weekly coverage to this important labor struggle. New subscribers can get two back issues of their choice to find out more about it. Don't miss a single issue!



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The Militant

Vol. 68/No. 36

Closing news date: September 22, 2004

Editor: ARGIRIS MALAPANIS
Business Manager: MICHAEL ITALIE
Washington Bureau Chief: SAM MANUEL
Editorial Staff: Róger Calero, Michael Italie, Martín Koppel, Sam Manuel, Doug Nelson, and Paul Pederson.

Published weekly except for one week in January, June, July, and September.

The *Militant* (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018. Telephone: (212) 244-4899; Fax (212) 244-4947.

E-mail: TheMilitant@verizon.net
The *Militant* website is: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to The *Militant* Business Office, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the *Militant*, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Subscriptions: **United States:** for one-year subscription send \$35 to above address.

Latin America, Caribbean: for one-year subscription send \$65, drawn on a U.S. bank, to above

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Berlin to east German workers: 'Get used to less pay, fewer jobs'

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

Horst Köhler, Germany's president, brought the crisis facing the country's rulers into sharper focus recently. He stated September 12 that working people in the eastern section of the country should resign themselves to lower wages and higher unemployment than those living in the west.

"There were and are everywhere in the republic large differences in living standards," Köhler said in an interview with *Focus* magazine. "If you want to level them out, you cement the subsidized state and place an intolerable burden of debt on the young generation," said Köhler, who was in the past head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). "We must get away from the subsidized state."

Köhler's statements and the results of the September 19 elections in the east German states of Brandenburg and Saxony highlight the economic and social contradictions posed for German imperialism by its effort to swallow and absorb the workers state in the east and reimpose capitalism in the former East Germany. This reality is more and more recognized by the big-business media and many capitalist politicians.

The September 16 *Economist*, for example, warned that "the worst thing that could happen to Germany would be if its two parts started fighting over scarce resources," in an article titled "Getting back together is so hard: Fifteen years after the Wall came down, there are still two Germanies." The London-based magazine continued: "Many of east Germany's problems flowed from the political decision to go for quick unification in 1990. . . . Fledgling companies in the east had to put up with strong trade unions and high wages."

Rather than ushering in a period of greater power for the German bourgeoisie, the reunification of the country has resulted

in its relative weakening in relation to its rivals within capitalist Europe. Flat economic growth, skyrocketing government debt, and persistent high levels of unemployment have been the reality, not the "flourishing landscapes" promised by former chancellor Helmut Kohl at the time of reunification.

Taking advantage of the economic crisis in the east and opposition to the federal government's Hartz IV plan, a broadside attack on unemployment benefits, the far right-wing National Democratic Party (NDP) gained 9.4 percent of the vote in Saxony—enough to get its first seats in any of Germany's regional parliaments since 1968. The German People's Party in Brandenburg, also a rightist party, gained 5.9 percent. The two right-wing parties had agreed not to challenge each other in the two states.

The party of the former Stalinist rulers of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), was the biggest winner in the elections, receiving 28.9 percent of the vote in Brandenburg, the state that surrounds Berlin and is the largest in the east, and 23.4 percent in Saxony.

It is unusual for prominent capitalist politicians to call into question the German government's "Solidarity Pact," which promises to bring basic living conditions in what was previously East Germany up to the level of the rest of the country. But in June, a government commission pointed to this pact as a major factor in the floundering German economy. Since 1990 Berlin has spent \$1.5 trillion in "transfers" to cover unemployment benefits, pensions, and other programs in order to head off social explosions in the economically devastated east.

Some ruling-class voices backed Köhler. The editors of the *Berliner Zeitung* made the point more sharply. "The so-called lev-

eling of living conditions is part of the founding myth of German unity—it is also its biggest lie," they wrote in the week after the president's remarks were aired, in an editorial titled "Köhler was right."

Among bourgeois figures protesting Köhler's remarks was the premier of the east German state of Brandenburg, Matthias Platzeck of the Social Democratic Party (SPD). "I cannot accept the fact that the range in employment can run 5 to 25 percent," he told the newspaper *Bild am Sonntag*. Chancellor Gerhard Schröder distanced himself from the president's comments, stating, "Of course, it's the federal government's job to work each day to create an equal standard of living."

The SPD got trounced in the elections in Saxony, receiving only 9.5 percent of the vote, its worst ever in any regional election. In Brandenburg its share of the vote fell by 7 percent to just above 32 percent. In both states, the opposition Conservative Democratic Union got the plurality of the votes cast and will have to form coalition governments with other parties, perhaps the SPD.

Capitalists in Germany weakened

The Berlin Wall dividing Germany was torn down in November 1989 through the struggles of the people of East Germany against the Stalinist regime. The rulers in Washington and other imperialist centers boasted that the reunification of Germany would give stagnant capitalist economies in Europe a boost. But rather than launching capitalist growth in Germany and the rest of capitalist Europe, reunification has put a lid on it, and become a huge burden for the German rulers.



Getty Images/Michael Urban

Tens of thousands march in Magdeburg, Germany, August 9, in weekly "Monday protests" in many eastern cities against soaring joblessness and Berlin's cutbacks in unemployment benefits and other social programs.

The past 15 years have proven that it is not possible to change the social relations that were shaped by the overturn of capitalist property relations throughout the region, including east Germany, by just pouring in money. Where once revolutionary force by workers and farmers overturned capitalist property relations, however much this revolutionary struggle was limited and bureaucratically restricted by the Stalinist misleaderships, counterrevolutionary force by the capitalists must be used to restore capitalist property relations.

German finance capital has come to resemble a dysfunctional boa constrictor: the west swallowed the east whole but found the indigestion worse than the meal. Moreover, the collapse of the Stalinist apparatuses in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union opened up for the first time in half a century the possibility for collaboration between workers throughout the country.

The German rulers have been compelled to pour a net \$1.5 trillion into eastern Germany since 1990 in an effort to spend their way out of a showdown with workers and farmers in the east. Three-quarters of these funds have gone to cover the costs of pensions, unemployment benefits, make-work projects, and other social programs as part of the Solidarity Pact. Only 25 percent of these funds have been spent on roads, railways, telecommunications, and other infrastructure.

Berlin has had to borrow massive sums to finance this spending. In 1990 government debt stood at \$300 billion. By 1999 it had reached \$900 billion. Today it is about \$1.2 trillion—60 percent of gross domestic product, the maximum permitted in Eurozone countries. Economic growth for 2001–2003 averaged less than 1 percent per year.

Still believing in their "victory" in the Cold War and the dream of an expanding economy that would dominate Europe, the German rulers pushed the European Union to adopt the 1996 Growth and Stability Pact. The accord bounds governments to maintain annual deficits below 3 percent of gross domestic product and to keep their public debt under 60 percent of GDP.

The pact has become an embarrassment to Berlin, however, as the German rulers and their allies in Paris have failed for the last three years to keep their deficits below 3 percent. Only by virtue of their dominating position within the EU have they avoided paying the fines stipulated for the violation of the very rules they insisted on setting. Berlin is now pressing for a formal revamping of the rules because it anticipates further high public debt.

At the same time, Berlin and Paris are proposing cutting off billions of euros in funding for "EU regional development" for less developed countries in Central and Eastern Europe. They are also calling on governments there to raise business taxes, which they claim is luring investment to poorer countries away from Germany

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UN agency to Iran: 'halt nuclear fuel production'

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sue of Security Council referral will be up at the November board meeting and everyone knows it," said John Bolton, undersecretary of state for nonproliferation affairs, speaking from Washington. "We're quite satisfied with that."

Washington has charged that Iran has been secretly trying to develop nuclear weapons, allegedly under the cover of atomic energy generation, and has violated the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

The NPT provides cover for the imperialist powers in Washington, London, and Paris, as well as Moscow and Beijing, to have nuclear weapons but bars other nations from acquiring them. It subjects other governments, in semicolonial countries in particular, to a range of other requirements, including regular reports and inspections of their nuclear research and energy facilities.

The IAEA resolution says it "deeply regrets" Iran's decision to reverse its suspension of enrichment of uranium. It stresses that the continued suspension of uranium enrichment is "necessary to promote confidence" in the peaceful nature of Iranian nuclear programs. "It is most important that Iran suspends all activities regarding enrichment," said German foreign minister Joschka Fischer, a leader of the Green Party and member of the Social Democratic-Green coalition government in Berlin, according to Reuters.

Washington had pressed for an October 31 deadline and for automatic referral to the Security Council—known as a trigger—if Iran is found to be in violation of the NPT.

Washington also sought to make the suspension of enrichment of uranium by Tehran obligatory by pressing to remove language in the resolution recognizing the right of countries to pursue the development of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. According to Reuters, Washington's representatives at the negotiations retreated from that position to win the backing of several governments, including those in Brazil and South Africa, which have uranium enrichment programs of their own. South Africa's representative to the IAEA, Abdul Samad Minty, who heads that country's Council for

the Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction said, "If Iran decides at some point they do not want to suspend their program any more, they have that right," reported Reuters.

Iran's chief negotiator with the IAEA, Hassan Rowhani, said "any resolution that seeks to bind us to suspension (of uranium enrichment) is unacceptable," reported the Islamic Republic News Agency. Rowhani, who is also secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, added that the aim of the suspension announced last year "was to build trust, but the situation today is different from last year since there is no ambiguity regarding our peaceful nuclear activities now."

According to the Associated Press, Rowhani said that Tehran would continue to suspend actual enrichment of uranium but that production, assembly, and testing of centrifuges used in the enrichment process would continue. A Reuters dispatch said that the Iranian parliament has called on the government to ignore the IAEA resolution.

Rowhani said that if Iran is referred to the Security Council it might end the inspections of its nuclear facilities and consider withdrawing from the NPT altogether. "If one day they refer Iran's nuclear dossier to the UN Security Council, that day...Iran will stop implementing the additional protocol and will limit its cooperation with the IAEA," Rowhani said.

Aghazadeh told reporters September 21 that Tehran is not seriously concerned about the possibility of economic sanctions the UN Security Council may impose, noting that Iran has lived with sanctions by Washington for 25 years.

Last October, under intense pressure from Paris, Berlin, London, and Moscow, the Iranian government announced it would agree to demands of the IAEA to allow surprise inspections of its nuclear facilities and sign on to the "additional protocol" to the NPT. As a gesture of good will, the Iranian government also said it would voluntarily halt enrichment of uranium. In exchange, the three EU governments that led the negotiations promised to ease Tehran's access to modern technology and to bloc Washington's efforts to refer Iran's case to the Security Council. In pressuring Tehran

to agree to the unannounced inspections, European Union governments—particularly Paris and Berlin, which were not willing to take Washington's lead on the assault on Iraq—hoped to keep the U.S. rulers at bay. They differ with Washington on how best to advance their imperialist interests in the region vis-à-vis Iran.

This time, however, the main imperialist powers across the Atlantic adopted a much more common approach.

In June Tehran announced that it would resume production and assembly of centrifuges because the three EU governments had failed to keep their promise to have the IAEA investigation closed.

The ability to enrich uranium is essential in the development of nuclear power, as well as in the production of weapons. After extraction from the ground, the element is milled into yellowcake and then converted to uranium hexafluoride, a gas, before being enriched and turned into nuclear fuel for use in reactors. The uranium waste is then stored or reprocessed. This whole process is known as the nuclear fuel cycle. In order not to be dependent on imperialist powers as a fuel source for the country's nuclear power plants, Tehran has said that it needs to have the capacity to enrich uranium.

Washington has chided Iran that given the country'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.

Washington's accusations notwithstanding, Iran's intention to develop its nuclear resources has been no secret over the years. Iran's nuclear power program began in the 1960s, under the regime of the U.S.-backed shah. Work on the Bushehr nuclear power project—an object of imperialist scrutiny today—was begun in 1974 by the German company Siemens. The reactors were viewed as necessary for industrialization of the country. The project was left unfinished after the 1979 revolution that overthrew the shah. Work at Bushehr was resumed with Russian aid in the 1990s.

8,000 farm workers win union contract in North Carolina

BY GEORGE CHALMERS

PHILADELPHIA—After a five-year boycott campaign against the Mount Olive Pickle Company in North Carolina, the Farmer Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) succeeded in signing the first contract covering 8,000 seasonal farm workers. The North Carolina Growers Association (NCGA) brings these workers here every year for the cucumber harvest, as part of a “guest” worker program sponsored by the U.S. government.

FLOC signed the contract with the growers in more than 1,000 farms and also with Mount Olive Pickle Company, the nation’s second-largest pickle company. The agreement with Mount Olive increases wages for farm workers over the next three years.

Under the agreement, the 60 growers who contract with Mount Olive will also receive a price increase for their produce.

This is the largest union contract for farm workers in North Carolina’s history, and the first in the nation for seasonal workers. The victory was the result of “persistence,” union organizer Brendan Greene told the *Militant*. The struggle included pickets at stores, marches, and

wide publicity about the conditions farm workers face at the hands of the growers. Until now FLOC has represented about 4,300 farm workers in Ohio and Michigan. The new agreement gives the farm workers’ union a foothold in the South.

FLOC’s website describes the job conditions farm workers face in the fields. “A serious climate of control,” the union says exists in “the overwhelming majority of farms in North Carolina—from restricting visitors, to intimidating workers with threats of firing, blacklisting, deportation, and threats of violence against workers and their families in Mexico.” This is “far more serious than housing, or even wages and field sanitation violations,” FLOC says, and is “often what prevents workers from leaving to seek other opportunities.”

The growers association, using a federal program, brings in seasonal workers to pick cucumbers. The U.S. Department of Labor issues H2A work visas to these workers to come to the United States for a limited period of time and work in the fields. Under federal regulations, these workers are to be paid at least \$8.06 an hour. FLOC’s agreement with the growers covers only a fraction of North Carolina’s



Militant/Seth Galinsky

Some 275 farm workers and supporters marched April 23, 2003, in Mt Olive, North Carolina. FLOC, the union representing the workers, signed a pact September 16 with the Mt. Olive Pickle Company and a large growers association in North Carolina. The contract covers 8,000 seasonal workers, the first of its kind in the state.

farm workers, many of whom are undocumented workers.

One provision of the agreement FLOC signed allows union organizers to oversee recruiting and hiring in Mexico and to be present where workers are hired to ensure that hiring is done according to seniority and that workers are not blacklisted for union activities.

Through the grower’s hiring program

workers are charged a fee for the visa. Bribery is often used under this federal program to get certain people hired, according to Greene.

After signing the pact with the growers, FLOC started sending organizers to every farm employing workers the growers association brings in as “guests,” to ask them to sign union cards, said Baldemar Velasquez, president of FLOC, in a union press release.

A number of medium and large capitalist farmers have indicated they may opt out of the federal “guest worker” program to avoid having to fulfill the terms of the FLOC contract and instead shift to hiring undocumented workers.

David Rose, who farms tobacco and sweet potatoes, for example, employs 30 workers each year whom he hires through the growers association. Rose says he may switch now to using “illegal immigrants,” like other farmers, according to the *Raleigh News Observer*.

Stan Eury, head of the growers association, said that “no farmer will be forced to cooperate with union organizers,” the *Observer* reported, but he will “encourage farmers to allow union organizers to talk with workers.”

Utah miners build Oct. 2 union rally

Continued from front page

the NLRB to rule that the Kingston family members who work at the mine not be allowed to vote in an upcoming union election.”

The miners asked everyone to sign a petition addressed to the NLRB in Denver, Colorado. At a hearing the labor board conducted in Price in July, the Co-Op miners and UMWA attorneys presented evidence that the Kingston family members work at the Co-Op mine because of their connections to the owners and are thus loyal to the company. For this reason, they argued, these employees—who include managerial and office personnel—should not be allowed to vote in the upcoming union election.

Carl Kingston and Mark Hansen, the attorney for the company union, represented the company’s position that all these people, whom miners say the bosses brought to the mine to defeat the UMWA organizing effort, are legitimate employees and should vote in the union election.

Months later, the NLRB, has yet to make a ruling on who is eligible to vote or set a date for the union election, Estrada said.

The UMWA letter by Bob Butero also asked for letters to be sent to the NLRB. “Please write the NLRB and urge the Board to rule that no Kingston family member be allowed to vote in the union election,” it said.

The Utah Jobs with Justice Co-Op miners solidarity committee organized the September 18 picket. About 30 people took part. They included four Co-Op min-

ers; several members of the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers International Union (PACE) from the Salt Lake area; and a member of the Heat and Frost Insulators Union.

“This event was good,” said Ricardo Chávez, one of the Co-Op miners who took part in the picket line. “We need public support so that the NLRB will move to resolve who votes in the election. We returned to work with the expectation that the NLRB will decide rapidly on the union election. I hope we have everyone with us on October 2. The more people we have there will have an impact on the NLRB.”

“I attended the picket to support the coal miners,” Cory Bushman, a student at the University of Utah, told the *Militant*. “I’ve come to many of the other picket lines for the miners. It is important for people my age to be part of real life situations and not just focus on getting a great job. We can make a huge difference in the future if we are aware of what’s going on.” Bushman said she plans to help post up flyers on the October 2 rally on campus and help get students to attend.

The miners said that they have been spreading the word about the October 2 rally to unionists and other supporters.

“Last week the UMWA local at the Deer Creek mine invited us to attend their union meeting,” said Alyson Kennedy, who was part of the miners’ delegation in Salt Lake City. “After hearing a report on where the organizing battle stands, this local, one

of only two in the state of Utah, voted to make a \$500 contribution to the October 2 meeting. They also are donating 10 UMWA hats and 10 UMWA T-shirts to a raffle that will be held at the rally. They will have a delegation attend and speak.”

The letter from Butero said that messages to the NLRB urging the board to set a date for a union vote and to back the UMWA on who should have the right to vote in the election should be sent to NLRB Region 27, attn: B. Allan Benson, director, 600 17th Street, 7th Floor—North Tower, Denver, CO 80202-5433. Tel. (303)844-3551. Fax. (303)844-6249.

Hotel laundry workers in Los Angeles protest lockout

BY NAOMI CRAINE

LOS ANGELES—When the 17 workers in the laundry room of the downtown Wilshire Grand hotel here reported for work September 16, they were met with the following notice posted at the employee entrance: “Attention laundry employees Local 52 UNITE HERE bargaining unit members: You are hereby LOCKED OUT until further notice. Do Not attempt to enter the facilities” (emphasis in the original). The hotel is using replacement workers through a temporary agency to keep the

laundry operating.

Local 52 represents about 100 laundry workers at several hotels in Los Angeles, whose contract expired September 15. Negotiations were still in process when the Wilshire Grand hotel bosses imposed the lock out. This followed a September 13 vote by 2,800 workers at that hotel and eight other Los Angeles hotels, represented by UNITE HERE Local 11, to authorize strike action if needed in their fight for a decent contract. Among the central issues in the dispute are wages, medical benefits, and workloads. The two union locals are pushing for two-year contracts, which would give them a common expiration date with workers at major hotels in other cities. The companies are demanding five or six year agreements. Hotel workers in San Francisco and Washington, D.C., are also threatening to strike.

A major issue for the laundry workers is a company demand to allow subcontracting, which would undermine the union contract, said a member of Local 52 who works at the Century Plaza hotel and was helping leaflet September 19 outside the Wilshire Grand. One of the hotels, the Sheraton Universal, wants to close its laundry entirely. And the hotel bosses want to impose a wage freeze for six months, followed by 20-cent raises every six months after that. “This is not enough,” the worker said.

The 17 locked out workers are handing out informational flyers to hotel guests and passers-by. Members of UNITE HERE locals 52 and 11 from other hotels, as well as other workers, have stopped by to offer their solidarity.

Ohio forced to tell those on parole, probation they have right to vote

BY HELEN MEYERS

CLEVELAND, Ohio—State election officials here have been forced to notify 34,000 individuals on parole or probation that they can vote in the November 2 election. This is the result of a lawsuit filed by two prisoner-rights groups.

In Ohio those convicted of felonies cannot vote while incarcerated. But they can vote after being released or while on probation or parole. The law says that anyone convicted of a crime is to be removed from the voter rolls, even though those on parole or probation can exercise their right to vote. These laws also have a disproportionate impact on Blacks and other oppressed nationalities. In Ohio, nearly 49 percent of the prison population is Black, compared to 11.5 percent of the

state’s population.

The groups filing the lawsuit had testers posing as convicts contact the 88 counties in the state to see what election offices would say about the right of those on parole or probation to vote. In election offices in 21 counties, the testers were told that felons couldn’t vote until after their probation or parole ended.

In court papers, election officials denied any wrongdoing, but they agreed to send the letters informing those on parole or probation of their right to vote. David Singleton, an attorney with the Prison Reform Advocacy Center who filed the lawsuit, told the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* that the settlement which was reached was important, allowing those who want to vote to meet the October 4 deadline to register.

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'Militant' sub drive week 3: Emulate Iceland!

BY PAUL PEDERSON

At the end of week three of the 10-week international campaign to win over 3,000 readers to the *Militant* and its Spanish-language sister publication *Perspectiva Mundial*, socialist workers and others sold 189 *Militant* and 36 *PM* subs. This is a slight improvement over the second week. But it remains substantially behind the 250 *Militant* and 55 *PM* subs needed weekly on average to meet the international goals. The drive is now one percentage point behind schedule, or 30 *Militant* and 29 *PM* subscriptions short of the mark.

Supporters in a number of local areas have stayed at or ahead of their subscription targets through campaigning for the Socialist Workers Party ticket in the November elections. This includes selling dozens of Pathfinder books and pamphlets on revolutionary working-class politics, like those in the Pathfinder Supersaver Sale (see ad on page 6).

In Iceland, partisans of the *Militant* are well ahead of their target, selling 14 subscriptions to the socialist weekly in the first three weeks—56 percent of their goal. Ólöf Andra Proppé from Reykjavík sent the following note September 21:

"Last Saturday, supporters of the *Militant* set up a cam-

paign table outside a supermarket in downtown Reykjavík. We were campaigning in support of teachers who had called a strike starting the next Monday, and advertising a Militant Labor Forum titled 'Support the teachers' right to strike!' The response was polarized. Many welcomed our support for the teachers and some decided to get a copy of the *Militant*. We got shouts of 'Good work!' and clenched fists showing solidarity with the teachers. Others were hostile towards the strike and said, 'You should be ashamed of yourselves!' We sold 10 copies of the *Militant*, three copies of the Icelandic edition of the pamphlet *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: The Fraud of Education Reform Under Capitalism* and one *Communist Manifesto*.

"Socialists have sold three subscriptions to the *Militant* to workers at a fishnet factory. A worker in his 30s who bought a subscription said: 'I'm so glad to meet you and get this paper. I've been looking for something like this since I came to Iceland.' He also took advantage of the Pathfinder Supersaver Sale and got a copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder*. He later participated in a class on the first chapter of this book, 'A Sea Change in Working-Class Politics.'

"We have sold five of the subscriptions at a mall on the outskirts of the largest working-class district in Reykjavík. People wanted to discuss the upcoming elections in the United States and appreciated learning about the working-class alternative presented by the candidates of the Socialist Workers Party.

"This was also the case at a pre-university school, Menntaskólinn vi Hamrahlí, where socialists set up a table in the lunchroom and spoke on a microphone advertising an upcoming forum on the U.S. elections. We sold one subscription and several pamphlets."

In Des Moines, Iowa, socialists organized a special target week September 4-11 to get a running start on the



Militant/Natalie Doucet

Socialists sell the *Militant* and Pathfinder books at a popular shopping mall in Reykjavík. Through steady sales in working-class districts, plantgates, and at political and other events Iceland is at the top of the chart.

campaign. Edwin Fruit, the SWP candidate for U.S. Senate in that state, took time off from his job at a Tyson slaughterhouse in Perry, Iowa, to campaign. Teams of campaigners set up a table at a September 4-5 conference in Des Moines on the political conflict in Sudan. The event featured John Garang, a Sudanese political figure who is calling for intervention by U.S. and other troops in the conflict in that country. The socialists, who are opposed to such imperialist military intervention, got a hearing from those attending the conference. They sold 27 Pathfinder books and three *Militant* subscriptions.

On September 19, Fruit and a campaign supporter made house visits to a number of Fruit's co-workers in Perry, Iowa. At the home of a fellow worker from Liberia they sold one subscription and a copy of *Thomas Sankara Speaks*, a Pathfinder book containing the speeches of the central leader of the 1983-87 revolution in the West African country of Burkina Faso. As a result of these efforts, socialists in Iowa are on target in their subscription sales goal and have surpassed their September goal for book sales.

Emulating examples like these can help everyone carry out the kind of work that can boost the sub sales pace, which is much needed now.

Militant/Perspectiva Mundial Fall Subscription Drive Aug. 28-Nov. 7, 2004: Week 3 of 10

Country	Militant			PM		
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	%
ICELAND	25	14	56%	2	0	0%
NEW ZEALAND						
Auckland	45	16	36%	1	0	0%
Christchurch	35	12	34%	1	0	0%
N.Z. total	80	28	35%	2	0	0%
AUSTRALIA	55	17	31%	8	1	13%
UNITED STATES						
Craig, CO	50	27	54%	20	1	5%
Houston	75	32	43%	20	3	15%
Twin Cities	105	38	36%	40	7	18%
Price, UT	50	18	36%	20	10	50%
Birmingham	40	13	33%	8	1	13%
Seattle	50	16	32%	10	0	0%
Omaha	55	17	31%	45	3	7%
Des Moines	65	20	31%	25	7	28%
Los Angeles	150	38	25%	50	22	44%
Washington	115	29	25%	21	2	10%
Atlanta	80	20	25%	20	2	10%
Tampa	40	11	28%	10	2	20%
NE Pennsylvania	55	12	22%	15	4	27%
Philadelphia	95	18	19%	10	0	0%
Pittsburgh	65	12	18%	4	0	0%
Boston	100	18	18%	40	3	8%
Chicago	100	17	17%	40	6	15%
San Francisco	100	17	17%	25	3	12%
New York	250	39	16%	70	13	19%
Detroit	50	6	12%	10	3	30%
Cleveland	35	4	11%	8	0	0%
Newark	125	14	11%	25	7	28%
Miami	100	8	8%	50	0	0%
U.S. total	1975	444	23%	596	99	17%
SWEDEN	30	6	20%	5	1	20%
UNITED KINGDOM						
Edinburgh	25	5	20%	2	0	0%
London	50	9	18%	12	1	8%
UK total	75	14	19%	12	1	13%
CANADA						
Montreal	32	11	34%	12	2	17%
Toronto	85	7	8%	18	1	12%
CANADA total	117	18	15%	30	3	10%
14-day campaign*	-	179	-	-	31	-
Int'l totals	2511	720	29%	686	136	20%
Goal/Should be	2500	750	30%	550	165	30%

*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%			
ICELAND						
Hlíf	2	1	50%			
Efling	2	0	0%			
Total	4	1	25%			
NEW ZEALAND						
MWU	2	1	50%			
NDU	2	0	0%			
Total	4	1	25%			
UNITED STATES						
UFCW	135	38	28%	150	24	16%
UNITE HERE	50	12	24%	40	7	18%
UMWA	30	4	13%	15	2	13%
Total	215	54	25%	205	32	16%
CANADA						
UFCW	6	1	17%	3	2	67%
UNITE HERE	2	0	0%	1	0	0%
Total	8	1	13%	4	0	0%
SWEDEN						
Livs	2	0	0%	1	0	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. Hlíf—Union of Unskilled Workers in Hafnarfjörður. Efling—Union of Unskilled Workers in Reykjavík.

N.Y. garment workers strike for wage hike



Militant/Dan Fein

Unionists at the picket line September 15 outside production plant for New York handbag maker Judith Leiber

BY DAN FEIN

NEW YORK—The garment workers strike against Judith Leiber company in Midtown Manhattan remains strong and united. The nearly 190 members of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 342 walked off the job on September 14 in their fight for pay hikes and improved benefits. Workers report negotiations with the company began six days later.

The unionists have conducted spirited daytime pickets in front of the factory where they produce designer handbags that sell for thousands of dollars. No one has crossed the picket line so far, the pickets report.

Strikers on the picket line say it can take up to a week to make just one bag. The most common job is as a "beader," attaching thousands of tiny ornaments to each bag.

"We are on strike for more money and more benefits," said Eliany Cruz, a beader with eight years' seniority who makes \$8 per hour. "The strike is important for us. If we win, we can keep our jobs. They want to outsource our jobs. Of course we will win."

The current four-year contract expired in April, said strikers. The company now wants a one-year agreement.

Sonia Dejesus, a beader with seven years' seniority, said she is currently making \$8.46 per hour. Starting workers earn little more than the \$5.15 per hour minimum wage. "We want more money," Dejesus told the *Militant*. "They

offered just 35 cents an hour more over one year. We also need better vacation and health benefits." Children and spouses of workers are not covered under the health plan in the current contract, strikers said.

Public school teachers walk out in Iceland

BY ÖGMUNDUR JÓNSSON

REYKJAVÍK, Iceland—About 4,300 teachers started a national strike here September 20. The walkout has affected all public schools, attended by 45,000 students between 6 and 16 years' of age. The first day of the strike around 100 teachers took part in the opening of their strike headquarters in Reykjavík.

Strikers said that the main issues in the walkout are their demands for a substantial wage increase, fewer classes in order to have more time to prepare for their classes, and a reduced work load.

The city governments, employers' organizations, and capitalist media have ganged up to undermine the strike, but teachers were upbeat. "Some may have had doubts, but once the strike starts everyone comes together," striker Sigurdur Lyngdal told the *Militant*.

Workers pay dearly for health coverage in U.S.

As health-care costs rise, ranks of uninsured grow to more than 45 million

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, DC—The cost of employee health-care programs rose for the fourth consecutive year, according to a report by the Kaiser Family Foundation and Health Research and Educational Trust released September 9. Drew Altman, the foundation's president, said that the ranks of the uninsured in the United States, already at 45 million, will grow.

The cost of medical plans grew 11.2 percent this year, five times faster than workers' wage increases before adjustments for inflation, the report concluded from a survey of 3,000 companies. The costs in premiums paid by employers for a package that covered a worker and family members increased by 59 percent, it reported. And the portion paid by workers for those plans increased by 57 percent. This development builds on similar trends from the administration of William Clinton.

In response to the rising costs for health-care premiums, small businesses are increasingly dropping medical coverage for their workers. Larger companies press workers to pay a greater share of health-care costs along with establishing so-called health-care savings plans.

This year, the report found, the portion of small companies offering medical coverage to their workers dropped to 63 percent, from 68 percent in 2001.

In 2004, at least 5 million fewer jobs provided health insurance than in 2001, said the Kaiser report. According to U.S. Census Bureau figures released last month, 1.3 million fewer people had company health insurance in 2003 than in 2002.

Rising health-care costs and attacks on Medicare and Medicaid have been part of



AP/Stephen Lance Dennee

Hundreds of teachers listen to Kentucky Gov. Ernie Fletcher defend his proposed cuts to the teachers' state health insurance plan September 15 in Gilbertsville, Kentucky.

the debate in the U.S. presidential elections. At the Republican National Convention in August, President George Bush called for establishing individual 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. These individual accounts would also saddle workers with higher deductibles. Such proposals—along with individual accounts for retirement pensions—are part of preparations by the U.S. rulers for a stepped-up bipartisan offensive against Social Security, Medicare,

and other social gains working people have made through struggle (see "How working people won Social Security as a right for all" in last week's *Militant*).

The Kaiser report said that a growing number of employers were familiar with the individual "health savings" proposal but only 3.5 percent of those surveyed had adopted the plans.

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. During a campaign stop in Des Moines, Iowa, Kerry blamed Bush for ris-

ing health-care premiums. Kerry has proposed to have the federal government subsidize 75 percent of "catastrophic" medical care. His campaign claims that would lower premium cost by \$1,000 a year.

The Kaiser report said that small businesses pay an estimated \$10,217 a year for the average family health-care plan in a preferred provider network, also known as managed care. Workers pay into these plans an average of \$2,691 each.

A growing number of bosses also point to the rising cost of health insurance as a rationalization for hiring less full-time employees and more temporary or part-time workers who don't get medical coverage.

In his acceptance speech at the Republican convention Bush also touted the bipartisan approval in Congress last November of a Medicare "reform" bill that, in the guise of offering coverage for prescription drugs and in the name of reducing costs, shifts more of the burden of health care for retirees onto themselves and their families.

Capitalist politicians offer a variety of "explanations" for the rise in health-care costs that have nothing to do with reality. Bush, for example, says that the proliferation of "frivolous lawsuits" against doctors, hospitals, and pharmaceutical companies is largely to blame. He offers that if re-elected he will push for legislation to restrict such lawsuits.

There are two main reasons for the rise in medical costs. The first is that under capitalism health care is treated as a commodity, not as a right for all guaranteed by the government. Doctors and medical or drug companies are in business to make a profit, not to provide needed care. As the capitalist system slides deeper and deeper into a crisis, doctors, hospitals, and pharmaceutical companies jack up prices to keep up or increase profit rates at the expense of the vast majority of working people.

Secondly, the astronomical increase in the price of medicines produced by pharmaceutical companies is another driving force in rising medical costs. Over the last decade, in an effort to protect their profit margins and market shares, larger pharmaceutical companies have gobbled up weaker competitors. Between 2000 and 2003, Pfizer acquired Pharmacia and Warner-Lambert in a deal valued at \$149 billion. Johnson and Johnson acquired Alza for \$10.2 billion, and Bristol-Myers Squibb acquired Dupont in a \$7.8 billion deal. Glaxo, the largest pharmaceutical company in the United Kingdom acquired SmithKline for \$172 billion.

These companies have used the mergers to strengthen their monopoly. "Pfizer is really staking out its position as a marketing and sales juggernaut," David Webster, a pharmaceutical consultant, told the *Wall Street Journal* commenting on Pfizer's acquisition of Pharmacia in 2002. "They will use their market power to get better deals on products near launch, and that will give them a competitive advantage."

The *Journal* noted that Pfizer's market power as a result of the merger increases the chances that smaller but more competitive biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies will license their "most-promising" new drugs through Pfizer. In this way large companies like Pfizer deflect competition and make billions without developing new drugs of their own.

The monopoly enjoyed by the pharmaceutical companies has also put a break, to a degree, on development of new drugs. New drug applications to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) fell for five straight years up to 2002, according to the *Journal*. Through the first five months of 2002, the FDA received just two new applications. And in 2001 it received 24, less than half the 53 it received in 1996.

The pharmaceutical giants also fight hard to maintain drug patents that enable them to extract super profits. During hearings in May before the National Institutes of Health, Abbott Laboratories Inc. defended its 400 percent price hike for a leading AIDS drug. Abbott executives also told the government agency that it was unnecessary to allow production of cheaper generic versions of

Continued on next page

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

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Penn. speakout protests firebombing

BY JANET POST

HAZLETON, Pennsylvania—"If you stand up and stand together you will find others who will stand with you," Anna Arias from the Pennsylvania governor's Advisory Commission on Latino Affairs said. She was speaking at an event to defend political rights, held here September 18. The Socialist Workers Party campaign hall, where the speakout was organized, had been firebombed in the early morning hours of September 11.

"I condemn what happened here. This is not acceptable," said Arias. "We must let those involved know we will not stand still and let this happen again."

The public meeting was among a number of activities to get the word out about the Hazleton assault and another arson attack on the White House Café in the Black community in nearby Wilkes-Barre. It was organized to ask that protest messages be sent to the Hazleton mayor demanding the arrest and prosecution of the perpetrators and to raise funds for the rebuilding of the SWP campaign hall.

The panel at the September 18 speakout also included Rev. Douglas McKeeby of Trinity Lutheran Church; Amilcar Arroyo, publisher and editor of *El Mensajero*, a local Spanish-language newspaper; and Arrin Hawkins.

Tim Mailhot, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Congress in Pennsylvania's 11th C.D., chaired the meeting. In the arson attack on the SWP campaign hall, he said, a brick with incendiary material attached to it was thrown through the front window, igniting a slow-burning fire and badly damaging the front of the hall and burning campaign literature. The smoke that filled the room rendered the center's book stock unusable.

An alert neighbor across the street noticed what was going on and called the fire department at about 4:30 a.m. Her action prevented the attack from destroying the entire building, which includes apartments upstairs where two families were sleeping.

Earlier that same morning, the White

House Café in Wilkes-Barre, a larger town near Hazleton, suffered severe damage in another arson attack. The perpetrator of that crime also set fire to two houses in the Black community. He was reportedly caught while trying to set a third house ablaze. Michael Boyle, 23, whom the Wilkes-Barre police have charged for these arson attacks, said he tried to burn the African-American-managed café because he "was taught to hate Blacks," according to local TV interviews.

"Attacks like these two take place in the political context of sharpening attacks on working people in this country," said Hawkins at the speakout.

"As the rulers argue over perspectives for defending their declining system in this election year," Hawkins said, "they use civil discourse less and less, resorting more to slander and innuendo. This coarsening of capitalist politics encourages rightists and racists to lash out violently."

During the week following the firebombing here, Hawkins and Mailhot visited White House Café manager Bob Harris and longtime Black rights activist Beverly Collins in Wilkes-Barre to extend their solidarity and thank them for supporting the protest campaign against the firebombing of the socialist hall. Collins joined other area defenders of political rights in issuing a public appeal to urge authorities in Hazleton to find and prosecute those responsible for the arson attack in Hazleton (see lead article and editorial in last week's *Militant*).

At the speakout, which 40 people attended, Arias reported that in the last month there have been attacks on three different apartments of immigrant workers in Hazleton who are Latino. In one of these incidents, someone attempted a forced entry into the house where immigrant workers live. In the other two, rocks were thrown through windows and one was accompanied with a note saying, "Go Home."

"No one has the right to tell anyone to 'Go home,'" Arias said. She told the *Militant* after the meeting that the residents involved in the attacks had decided



Standard-Speaker/Jennifer Kukul

Tim Mailhot, SWP congressional candidate, speaking at September 18 forum.

they would not move.

Rev. McKeeby, who had taken part in a September 13 press conference on the firebombing, spoke on behalf of the Hazleton Ministerium. "This was an attack on ideas," McKeeby said. "In this community we may have different ideas, but we need to be more tolerant in our discussions with each other." The firebombing "could happen tomorrow at a synagogue or at a newspaper," he added.

Amilcar Arroyo told the audience he respected the ideas of the socialist campaign and all those "defending liberties and freedom."

On display in the hall were some of the many support messages and letters to Hazleton Mayor Louis Barletta, which are arriving daily. They included letters from James Lafferty, on behalf of the Los Angeles chapter of the National Lawyers Guild; members of the UNITE local at the Point Blank Body Armor garment plant in Oakland Park, Florida; David Greenleaf, UNITE-HERE union representative; and Jose Sandoval and Sandra Blas, coordinators of Community Volunteers in San Jose, California; David Riehle, President of United Transportation Union Local 650 in Minnesota; Gillian Barker, professor of philosophy at Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania; and Nick Castle, film

maker and member of the Director's Guild of America in Los Angeles.

During the week, working people from Hazleton and neighboring towns continued to visit the campaign headquarters in solidarity. One member of the executive board of the local of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers in Wilkes-Barre visited to show his support and made a contribution toward the rebuilding effort.

SWP national campaign treasurer John Studer pointed out that the next weeks will be crucial in building the broadest campaign possible in demanding that the city public officials act to rapidly arrest and prosecute those responsible. At the time of the speakout, Mailhot reported that no word has been received from the local police on the progress of the investigation. "In fact, police officials still have not released the premises to insurance adjusters to allow estimate of the damage and replacement of the broken glass display window," Mailhot said.

On September 16, an article by L.A. Tarone appeared in the Hazleton *Standard Speaker* questioning whether the arson attack was politically motivated. "It was definitely arson—no doubt about it," acting police chief James Schellhamer is quoted in the article as saying. "But there's no evidence that it was politically motivated." The article refers to incidents of cars being torched in the past year in the area, raising the possibility that the firebombing of the socialist campaign center was simply another act of vandalism.

Mailhot sent a letter to the editor in response to this article, which was featured in the paper's September 18 edition. "The message [the perpetrators] are trying to convey is clear: 'Shut up. Keep quiet and stay in your place,'" Mailhot said in the letter. "Such attacks are intended to close down the space for democratic rights and civil debate. They are ultimately aimed at the working class."

During the event, nearly \$800 was raised for the \$3,500 SWP Campaign Hall Rebuilding Fund, launched after the attack. Contributions are being used to purchase wood, sheet rock, and paint to reconstruct the destroyed display area, replace damaged equipment, and replenish the entire stock of smoke-damaged books. Books with minor damage were offered to visitors for a modest contribution.

The Sunday, September 19, edition of the Hazleton *Standard Speaker* ran an article on the speakout, saying that the event was organized by the Socialist Workers campaign "to make it known that they are not going to back down."

Socialist Workers candidate speaks on campus

Continued from front page

join with us in taking this campaign to other workers, farmers, and students," she said.

The Bloomsburg University stop, which was attended by some 40 students and faculty, was part of a several-day campaign swing through this area by the Socialist Workers Party vice-presidential candidate. Hawkins joined other campaigners in talking to workers going in and out of the large Excel meatpacking plant in the area, getting the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and other socialist campaign literature into their hands. She was also part of the line-up of speakers at a September 18 public meeting in Hazleton to protest the September 11 firebombing of the SWP campaign headquarters there and of the White House Café, a Black-patronized restaurant in nearby Wilkes-Barre.

In addition to the defense of the labor movement, Hawkins's exchange with students at Bloomsburg University focused

on the other central demand put forward by the Socialist Workers candidates: supporting the efforts of nations oppressed by imperialism to raise the standard of living by expanding the electrification of their countries, including the use of nuclear energy, free from pressure and intervention by Washington and its imperialist cohorts.

After she spoke a student asked, "Do you agree with George Bush's immigration proposal, which will bring more immigrants into this country?"

Hawkins said the change in immigration law proposed by the White House earlier this year should be opposed. This bill would allow undocumented immigrants who have jobs in the United States to apply for a temporary three-year work visa. They would be able to renew the permit, but would not receive special consideration for permanent resident status or citizenship.

"This legislation, if it is approved,

would create a category of workers dependent on an employer to keep their legal status," Hawkins said. "It's designed to allow the government to tighten its control over immigrants, making these workers subject to deportation once their visas expired and far more vulnerable to deportation in times of economic slowdown or depression."

"We demand an immediate end to workplace raids by immigration cops and deportations like the recent one in this part of the country that resulted in the arrests of workers at the T.J. Maxx warehouse," Hawkins emphasized.

She explained that the working class in the United States today is increasingly international in its composition, "and stronger because of this. Workers immigrating from other countries bring with them class-struggle experience that strengthens the resistance to the employers."

Another student asked, "Has your campaign had as much trouble getting on the ballot as Ralph Nader has in a number of states? I know the Democratic Party has been challenging him in several places. What do you think about third parties in politics—doesn't it take away votes from a party that can be on our side?"

The undemocratic election laws across the 50 U.S. states "are designed to maintain a ballot monopoly for the parties of the employers—the Democrats and the Republicans," said Hawkins. "They are carefully designed to make it very difficult for working-class parties to participate in politics."

In spite of this, Hawkins

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Rising cost of health care

Continued from page 6

the drug before the expiration of its patent rights. The company said that in order to protect its patent it would provide the drug free of charge to anyone who needed it and who did not have health insurance or government assistance.

Abbott's patent on the drug, Norvir, doesn't expire until 2014. Known generically as ritonavir, this drug is an inhibitor that helps suppress the HIV virus that causes AIDS. The drug is distinctive in its group because it enhances the efficiency of other HIV-fighting medicines.

Last December, Abbott raised the price of a single 100-milligram capsule of Norvir, considered to be the most common

daily dosage, to \$8.57 from \$1.71. That drove the annual cost to an individual patient from \$624 to \$3,128. The company rationalized its action by claiming that the price jump reflected the value of the drug, and that the price increase was necessary to fund future drug development.

Abbott received a \$3.47 million government grant in 1988 for research in developing the drug. Company officials claim that the grant was only 1 percent of the more than \$300 million it spent to develop the treatment.

Abbott's worldwide sales of Norvir reached \$95 million in 2003. Total sales of the drug since it hit the market are about \$1 billion, the company said.

What you can do to help:

- Please send a message to Hazleton mayor Louis Barletta, 40 N. Church Street, Hazleton, PA 18201, phone: (570) 459-4910; fax: (570) 459-4966 urging that all possible steps be taken to rapidly apprehend those responsible for the arson attack and to prosecute them to the full extent of the law. Please send copies to the Socialist Workers Campaign, 69 N. Wyoming Street, Hazleton, PA 18201 (E-mail: swpnepa@localnet.com).
- Send a much needed contribution to the 2004 Socialist Workers Campaign, earmarked for rebuilding the fire-damaged campaign office. The funds will go to meet the \$3,500 in expenses necessary to purchase construction materials, office equipment, and books damaged in the September 11 fire.

Marxism and the fight for women's equality

Below is an excerpt from the pamphlet, *Feminism and the Marxist Movement*, by Mary-Alice Waters, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States. It is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for September. The excerpt is from an article first published in the October 1972 *International Socialist Review*. It is based on a speech given at the Socialist Activists and Educational Conference held in Oberlin, Ohio, Aug. 13-20, 1972. It traces how from the earliest days of the modern revolutionary workers movement, Marxists have championed the struggle for women's rights. Copyright © 1972 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

I want to begin by stating what I consider to be the most important generalization we must draw from the record of revolutionary Marxism in relation to the struggle against the oppression of women. It is this: From the inception of the Marxist movement to today, for nearly 125 years, revolutionary Marxists have waged an unremitting struggle within the broad working-class



Militant/Denise McInerney

Supporters of women's rights defend an abortion clinic from rightists in Little Rock, Arkansas, July 1994. Marxism provides a scientific perspective for women's liberation and has championed struggles like these since its inception.

movement in order to establish a revolutionary attitude toward the struggle for women's liberation. They have fought to place it on a sound historical and materialist basis; and to educate the entire vanguard of the working class to an understanding of the significance of the struggles by women for full equality and for liberation from the centuries-old degradation of domestic slavery.

This battle has always been one of the dividing lines between revolutionary and reformist currents within the working-class movement; between those committed to a class-struggle perspective and those following a line of class collaboration. Women's oppression and how to struggle against it has been an issue at every turning point in the history of the revolutionary movement. Our ideological and political forebears, the revolutionary Marxists, both male and female, have led the fight against all those who refused to inscribe women's liberation on the banner of socialism, or who supported it in words but refused to fight for it in practice.

This is very important. Our opponents often try to saddle us with responsibility for the positions taken, not by the revolutionaries within the working-class movement, but by the reformists—by the right wing of the pre-World War I American Socialist Party,

by the Stalinists, or else by the sectarians and ultralefts who refused to recognize the complexity of the class struggle or the need to fight for democratic rights. But those tendencies do not represent *our* tradition. It is precisely against such forces that revolutionary Marxists have battled over the decades.

The first dividing line came as early as the founding of the Marxist movement itself. The *Communist Manifesto* in 1848 boldly proclaimed:

"On what foundation is the present family, the bourgeois family, based? On capital, on private gain.... The bourgeois sees in his wife a mere instrument of production. He hears that the instruments of production are to be exploited in common, and, naturally, can come to no other conclusion than that the lot of being common to all will likewise fall to the women.

"He has not even a suspicion that the real point aimed at is to do away with the status of women as mere instruments of production."

The line of division established here and in all the subsequent writings of Marx and Engels on this subject was that between utopian and scientific socialism. The pre-Marxian utopian socialists—such as Fourier and Owen—were also fervent champions of the emancipation of women.

But their socialism, as well as their theories on the family and women, rested on moral principles and abstract desires—not on an understanding of the laws of history and the class struggle rooted in the growth of humanity's productive capacities. Marxism for the first time provided a scientific materialist foundation, not only for socialism but also for women's liberation. It laid bare the roots of women's oppression, its relationship to a system of production based on private property and a society divided between a class that owned the wealth and a class that produced it. Marxism explained the *role* of the family within class society; and the *function* of the family in perpetuating the oppression of women.

More than that, Marxism pointed out the road to achieving women's liberation. It explained how the abolition of private property would provide a material basis for transferring to society as a whole all those onerous social responsibilities today borne by the individual family—the care of the old and sick; the feeding, clothing, and educating of the young. Relieved of these burdens, Marx pointed out, the masses of women would be able to break the bonds of domestic servitude, they would be able to exercise their full capacities as creative and productive—not just reproductive—members of society. Freed from the economic compulsion on which it necessarily rests, the bourgeois family would disappear. Human relationships themselves would be transformed into free relations of free people.

And finally, Marxism took socialism and women's liberation out of the sphere of utopian yearning by proving that capitalism itself produces a force—the working class—strong enough to destroy it, capable of carrying through the momentous task of abolishing the tyranny of the possessing few over the overwhelming majority of humankind. For the first time, socialists could stop wishing for the new and better society and begin to organize to bring it about.

The struggle for women's liberation was thus lifted out of the realm of the personal, the "impossible dream," and unbreakably linked to the victory of the progressive forces of our epoch. It became a social task in the interests of all humanity. Thus, Marxism provided a materialist analysis and a scientific perspective for women's liberation.

September BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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Christchurch: Gloucester Arcade, 129 Gloucester St. Postal address: P.O. Box 13-969. Tel: (3) 365-6055. E-mail: pathfinder.militant@paradise.net.nz

SWEDEN

Stockholm: Bjulvägen 33, kv, S-122 41 Enskede. Tel: (08) 31 69 33. E-mail: kfstockholm@telia.com

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'Old Europe' balks at accepting Turkey into EU

Continued from front page

others to Ankara's request for admission. Washington and its junior partner across the Atlantic, London, on the other hand, are the main imperialist powers that have been campaigning for Turkey's admittance. In the United Kingdom, both the Blair government and the Tory opposition are adamantly in favor of Ankara's entry into the EU.

The government of Turkey has been trying to join the European Union since 1987. It became a candidate for membership in 1999. Even by optimistic estimates, negotiations for its entry are expected to take up to 10 years to complete, once they begin, according to the London *Independent*.

Bolkestein's remarks not unique

Bolkestein's remarks and stance toward Turkey are not unique in Europe.

The September 22 *Guardian*, a British daily, published an article titled, "In 1683 Turkey was the invader. In 2004 much of Europe still sees it that way."

Author Ian Traynor interviewed several people sipping red wine on a hillside terrace high above Vienna, Austria, where the 1683 clash with the Ottoman troops took place.

"I know one Turkish bloke," said an Austrian social worker the *Guardian* identified as Helmut. "He's got two wives. Neither of them can speak a word of German. He beats them up. He's got two sons as well. They're terrified of him. They're just different from us. We're Christians. They're Muslims. And these Muslims are getting more and more extreme. It's time to make a choice. I'm against it," he said, referring to Turkey joining the EU.

"This is Europe and we're in danger of losing our identity with all these people from Turkey and Africa," added Gerhard, the landlord serving Helmut wine, the *Guardian* said. "We Christians are losing our faith while the Muslims are getting more fundamentalist."

While such views may be on the extreme side of the spectrum of bourgeois politics in Europe, they are expressed in various forms by top political figures.

"Turkey isn't European enough in terms of geography, culture, or history to become a member of the EU, say government leaders, including French Finance Minister Nicolas Sarkozy and Austrian Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel," the Bloomberg News Service reported September 20.

Opponents of accepting Turkey into the EU have begun to mobilize recently, both inside their own countries and within the European Commission.

Austria's ultrarightist Freedom Party, for example, threatened in Vienna September 20 to quit the coalition government if Chancellor Schüssel agreed to Turkish membership. Opinion polls in Austria show two-thirds against admitting Turkey, and only one in five in favor, according to the *Guardian*.

In Germany, opposition leader Angela Merkel of the Christian Democratic Union has been lobbying fellow conservatives in the EU to offer Ankara a loose "partnership" rather than allowing it to join.

France's president, Jacques Chirac, and German chancellor Gerhard Schröder are formally on record in favor of admitting Ankara. But officials in both administrations have expressed open opposition without being called to order by their superiors. The French finance minister is one such example.

And when U.S. president George Bush, while in Turkey in June for the NATO summit, called for admitting Ankara, Chirac shot back: "Not only did [Bush] go too far, but he went into territory that isn't his.... It is not his purpose and his goal to give any advice to the EU, and in this area it was a bit as if I were to tell Americans how they should handle their relationship with Mexico."

In France, the most vocal opponent of accepting Turkey into the EU is Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, "the architect of the new European constitution, which some claim is specifically designed to keep Turkey out," as the *Guardian* put it. Last year, the former French president declared that Turkish membership would signal "the end of the EU."

Not only conservatives, but many Social Democrats are at best skeptical. "Turkey must reform its penal code or have its EU accession rejected, warned German Martin Schulz, the Socialist leader of the European

Parliament," said a September 21 news item by Xinhuanet, a Chinese news service. It quoted Schulz saying, "We cannot even contemplate the possibility of accession talks with Turkey until these reforms are in place."

Turkey's slim prospects for EU entry

This mobilization of bourgeois public opinion against Turkish membership into the EU took place as Turkey's prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, was preparing a trip to Belgium. As this issue went to press, Erdogan was on his way to Brussels for meetings with EU officials, starting September 23, on whether they would set a date to begin talks on Ankara's application to join.

The prospects are not bright.

A spokesman for Günther Verheugen, EU commissioner for enlargement, said September 21 that "accession negotiations cannot start" because the Turkish parliament had shelved a vote on reforming the country's penal code along lines acceptable to the European Union. At the center of this dispute, capitalist politicians in the EU say, is an attempt by Erdogan's party to pass a law that would make adultery a crime punishable with up to two years imprisonment.

The EU does not have a right to "involve itself in [Turkey's] internal affairs," Erdogan replied. "We are Turkey and the Turks. We'll make our own decisions, in our own parliament."

The same day, incoming European Commission president José Manuel Barroso said that Ankara had not done enough to start talks on EU membership.

The EU-prescribed penal code that was under consideration by the Turkish parliament would reportedly lengthen sentences for people found guilty of torture, rape, or "honor" crimes against women committed by family members. The reform was shelved when a feud broke out within the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) after one wing insisted that a law criminalizing adultery be included in the code.

Behind the façade of concern for human rights by EU leaders, however, there are other, more substantial reasons for balking at the prospect of Turkish membership.

"The EU farm commissioner, Franz Fischler, warned Tuesday that Turkey's accession to the EU would open up a swathe of problems and difficulties for the bloc's agricultural policies," said an article in the September 22 *International Herald Tribune*. "Fischler, who has warned that the EU must have a 'Plan B' as an alternative to opening talks with Turkey, said the majority Muslim state's sheer size was cause for much concern."

With nearly 69 million people, Turkey would be second only to Germany in population in the European Union if it were admitted to membership. At the same time, Turkey is a semicolonial nation with a foreign debt equaling more than a quarter of its gross domestic product and inflation that exceeded 18 percent last year. In 2001, agriculture still accounted for 40 percent of total employment. Turkey's membership in the EU—which subsidizes farm products and uses this policy to dump cheap agricultural goods onto the markets of semicolonial countries, destroying the livelihoods of peasants there—would undermine the European Union's protection of capitalist agriculture in the more powerful member states.

"Turkey is an ally of Europe in every respect, save perhaps if you are a French maize-grower or a metal-basher in Germany's rust belt," said the *Spectator* editorial. "This perhaps is the subtext to the outbursts of Mr. Bolkestein and others: they fear the loss of European protectionism. We say that if the entry to the EU were finally to undermine the Common Agricultural Policy, then that is one more reason for supporting Turkey's entry."

Anglo-American campaign

"To its credit, the Blair government—together with the Tories—has supported Turkey's application for membership of the EU," the *Spectator* continued. "Ministers should go one step further and do as they would if the British National Party had made a cheap remark about Turkish Muslims: say that there is no place in the European Commission for bigoted remarks such as those made by Frits Bolkestein. He should leave and Turkey should join."

The conservative British magazine also



Getty Images/Sean Gallup

Ajse Koese, a Turkish immigrant, works at the AEG/Electrolux washing machine assembly plant in Nuremberg, Germany, in January 2002. Thousands of Turkish immigrants are part of the industrial working class in Germany today.

said: "The admission of Turkey to the EU would send a powerful signal to moderate Muslims that the war against terror really is that and nothing more. Snub the Turks, on the other hand, and we will appear to be refighting the religious wars of the Middle Ages.

"President Bush, that alleged Islamophobe, realises this, which is why in June he took the trouble to visit Turkey to praise its democratic and social reforms and to encourage its entry to the EU."

While in Ankara in June, Bush praised Turkey as "a Muslim country and at the same time a country which embraces democracy," and added, "As Turkey meets the EU standards for membership, the European Union should begin talks that will lead to full membership for the Republic of Turkey." This was the remark that so infuriated Chirac.

The *Spectator* said that the Blair-Bush course is the only way to solve conflicts around the national question, such as in Kurdistan or Cyprus, in a way that favors Anglo-American strategic interests and imperialism in general. "Start a dialogue on Turkey's entry to the EU and those reforms

will continue, along with the work towards a solution in Cyprus. Refuse the dialogue and there is a serious risk that the country might retreat into Islamic fundamentalism."

The Bush administration is in fact using the imperialist "war on terrorism" to impose bourgeois democratic forms around the world—from Indonesia to Pakistan and Yemen—and to settle every national question in a way that serves U.S. imperialism's strategic interests.

Speaking at the United Nations General Assembly September 21, Bush made a coherent argument for this course regarding the Palestinian national liberation struggle.

Bush praised the Anglo-American wars on Afghanistan and Iraq the last three years and claimed that "these two nations will be a model for the broader Middle East" following the U.S.-led occupations.

He then said, in a not-so-hidden attack on the Arafat leadership of the Palestinian National Authority, "Commitment to democratic reform is essential to resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict. Peace will not be achieved by Palestinian rulers who intimidate opposition, tolerate corruption, and maintain ties to terrorist groups."

Pennsylvania campaigning

Continued from Page 7

said, the SWP presidential ticket is on the ballot in 13 states and the District of Columbia, the largest ballot effort by the socialists since 1992. Delaware is the only state where, in an undemocratic move, the SWP ballot submission was rejected by state authorities.

Hawkins said the Socialist Workers Party opposes the undemocratic challenges to Nader's ballot status. At the same time, Nader is a pro-capitalist politician who acts as a pressure group on the Democratic Party to somehow make this imperialist party more "progressive." His American nationalist stance has led him to carry out maneuvers with the rightist Reform Party and to court backers of ultrarightist Patrick Buchanan, who recently authored an interview with Nader that appeared in the June 21 issue of the *American Conservative*.

Some who advocate voting for the Democrats argue it's necessary to "defeat Bush" at all cost, that is, to vote for Kerry, said Hawkins. But the only way to "defeat the Bush agenda," as they put it, is to organize working people to fight for our interests independently of the twin capitalist parties.

"The SWP is providing a clear working-class alternative to the Democrats and Republicans and to this so-called independent candidacy of Nader and his running mate Peter Camejo," Hawkins said.

A woman who approached the socialist candidate after the meeting said how much she appreciated the fact that Hawkins linked the dismantling of welfare by the Clinton administration with the mounting bipartisan campaign by the Democrats and Republicans to further gut the ability of those at retirement age to collect a federally funded and guaranteed monthly Social Security check.

A number of students found the campaign literature interesting, purchasing

the *Militant* and books the campaigners brought with them.

Pennsylvania SWP campaign

In Pennsylvania the Socialist Workers Party is running Brian Taylor, a Pittsburgh-area coal miner, for U.S. Senate; Martha Ressler for Congress in the 14th Congressional District; Tim Mailhot for Congress in the 11th C.D.; and Kristofer Barkanic for State Assembly in the 116th District. Mailhot spoke to a September 22 meeting of students at Bucknell University in Lewisburg.

Campaigners in Pennsylvania are circulating a statement by Senatorial candidate Taylor solidarizing with the struggle by coal miners at Horizon Mines in West Virginia, Kentucky, and Illinois. It reads in part, "Union brothers and sisters at Horizon Natural Resources—members of United Mine Workers of America (UMWA)—are under attack. Mine bosses and the courts that do their bidding, with a stroke of a pen, gave Horizon the right to declare bankruptcy and terminate the union contract. Retired and actively working miners—some with as much as 20–30 years' seniority—stand to lose the pensions they are entitled to and the lifetime medical coverage for themselves and their families!

"This union-busting government intervention is a direct assault on our right to organize unions to defend our wages and working conditions against the bosses' attacks. Federal bankruptcy judge William Howard made his ruling on the basis that Horizon's six union mines were an "unattractive" sale to potential buyers if they had the obligation to pay what is owed to the 3,300 miners.

Taylor added in the statement, "It is a clear example of how under capitalism the interests, needs, and profits of the tiny wealthy class is priority one—every time—while we the workers are thrown to the mat."

How to defeat 'Bush Doctrine'

The Bush-Wolfowitz team in the White House is making new gains for imperialism's "global war on terrorism."

To the delight of its allies in the United States, the ruling class in Indonesia is successfully mobilizing public opinion behind a crackdown on Jemaah Islamiah, a group that seeks to establish "Islamic governments" there and in the region. And when Bush administration officials say that the result of the recent Indonesian elections show that Islam and bourgeois democracy are compatible, they get a hearing in the largest Muslim country in the world.

In the debate over Ankara's quest to join the European Union, the White House and its junior partner in London take the side of the majority Muslim Turkey. In doing so, the Anglo-American alliance continues to make headway in solidifying a "New Europe" against their competitors in the French-German bloc in the EU, who more and more seem to tolerate overt anti-Muslim prejudice.

The Bush administration keeps stressing that the U.S.-led invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan and the establishment of regimes favorable to U.S. strategic interests there are at the root of their successes. Subsequently, they point out, the Libyan government gave up its nuclear weapons program without a military confrontation. And the Pakistani regime arrested a top scientist who allegedly sold nuclear technology and material abroad. Islamabad is now on better terms with Washington.

Contrary to accusations by its liberal critics, the White House is not conducting an anti-Islamic crusade. It is arguing more forcefully that being a majority Muslim country and establishing bourgeois democracy with strong ties to "America" are not contradictory. It is trying to convince the ruling classes in India and Pakistan to stop fighting each other and instead join Washington to combat the "terrorists." In the process, the Bush administration is seeking to settle every conflict that has to do with national self-determination—from Kurdistan to Kashmir, Palestine, and Ireland—in a way that serves the interests of capitalism and imperialism.

Why is the U.S. government and its allies among capitalists from Indonesia to Yemen getting a serious hearing for this course, despite the simmering war in Iraq?

Inside the United States, Vice President Cheney has made the most coherent and clear case for the so-called Bush Doctrine. He and other partisans of the administration's course have described it as a break from the approach of previous governments going back to Nixon in the 1970s who would "cut and run" from "terrorism" if adversaries hit hard, or treated such attacks as police matters, rather than the warpath the sitting president has charted.

In the absence of any serious alternative to this course within the ruling class, the Bush Doctrine has gained majority support among America's wealthy rulers and thus in public opinion. John Kerry and other Democratic Party politicians have supported the basic war policies followed by the White House, raising only tactical disagreements over how to carry them out. This is one of the main reasons that Kerry appears

to be headed for defeat in November.

Internationally, the Bush Doctrine is getting traction to a large degree because of the character of many of the organizations targeting "America" and its allies.

Jemaah Islamiah is a reactionary group that has carried out bombings of civilian targets repeatedly. No wonder that Jakarta is convincing many Muslim organizations that had been reluctant to back government crackdowns against the group in the past to go along now, or even to demand harsher punishment, after the bombing at the Australian embassy there.

In the same vein, the kidnappers in Iraq who take hostages and behead them while making demands against the Anglo-American occupation have nothing to do with defending the interests of the toilers.

And the recent actions of the hostage-takers at a school in Beslan, southern Russia, offer no way forward for the people of Chechnya, who have fought a just national liberation struggle, or for other working people or oppressed nations. The gratuitous, conscious slaughter of several hundred children that resulted from the actions of this armed group can't be finessed. Any "national liberation" movement whose political course is exemplified by actions such as these has a thoroughly reactionary, anti-working-class character.

Because of Stalinist betrayals from North Africa to the Mideast and Southeast Asia, there is a complete absence of revolutionary working-class organizations in these countries. The political vacuum thus created has been filled by bourgeois nationalist organizations—like Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in Palestine, or the National Salvation Front in Algeria—that have nothing to do with defending the interests of working people.

At the same time, the claims by Republicans or Democrats that Washington stands for bringing democracy and freedom to the world are bogus. It is true that compared to living under the Saddam Hussein regime, there is more space for working people to defend their interests in Iraq today, and elsewhere in the Mideast. Revolutionists need to take full advantage of this. But class-conscious workers don't therefore support democratic imperialism. The broad trends toward secularism, for women's rights, and in opposition to capital punishment and torture around the world that the *Militant* has described, for example, are the results of struggles by working people, students, and middle-class layers in the semicolonial world and internationally. They are products of the anticolonial revolutions of the last century, not imperialist benevolence. Washington and its allies will wield them as long as they serve to advance imperialist interests—but only so far.

U.S. imperialism's biggest enemy is the economic catastrophe capitalism is leading humanity toward and the resistance to its effects by workers and farmers. Only by joining this resistance and offering a working-class alternative to the parties of capitalism, such as that presented by the Socialist Workers Party ticket in the 2004 elections, can we defeat the "Bush agenda" and the program of Kerry too.

Indonesia

Continued from front page

karnoputri's administration, Yudhoyono campaigned on a platform of fighting harder against "terrorism" and turning around the country's steep economic decline that has accelerated since the 1997 "Asian crisis." An estimated 40 percent of the population of 220 million are either jobless or underemployed.

Prior to the election, several Muslim organizations called for the government to take repressive action against those accused of "terrorism." Amien Rais, one of the leaders of the protests that brought down the Suharto dictatorship in 1998, said there should be speedy executions of those convicted of the bombings. "I find it revolting that when they are proven guilty they are still given the chance to appeal," he said. Other Muslim organizations have also condemned the bombing of the Australian embassy and have called for "strong punishment" of the perpetrators.

The stance taken by these organizations is in contrast to past protests against government crackdowns on those accused of such attacks.

There was widespread outrage in Indonesia and hundreds rallied in Jakarta in November 2002, for example, after the Australian government carried out a series of raids on the homes of Indonesians in Australia. The cops claimed they were looking for individuals linked to JI, which it charged with the bombing of a night club on the Indonesian island of Bali a month earlier. The bombing killed more than 200 people, many of them tourists. The Indonesian government protested statements by Australian officials that Australian troops might be sent to Indonesia to join local forces in fighting "terrorism."

But Jakarta responded meekly to announcements by Australian officials on September 20 about plans to create "counter-terrorism flying squads" that would be part of Prime Minister John Howard's "Southeast Asian terror offensive." While the *Australian*, a daily paper published in Australia, pointed to the Philippines and Thailand as likely destinations for such hit-squads, it said Howard "insisted that Indonesia would be the main focus of the new counter-terrorism offensive." An Indonesian foreign ministry spokesperson replied that while Jakarta "respected the right of countries to determine their own defense policies, Indonesia preferred to stress diplomacy."

Jemaah Islamiah

The program of Jemaah Islamiah calls for the creation of "Islamic governments" across the region, followed by the formation of a South East Asian Islamic state. This would include Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei, Malaysia, and the south of Thailand and the Philippines. Like those of other bourgeois nationalist formations such as Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in Palestine, and the Salvation Front in Algeria, JI's program and activity, which includes bombings that often target civilians, have nothing to do with defending the interests of the toilers of the region.

These groups have been able to step into the political vacuum left as a result of Stalinist betrayals of the struggles of workers and farmers. In Indonesia, the strategy of the pro-Beijing Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) of supporting the bourgeois nationalist Sukarno regime led to a devastating defeat for working people without a battle. Despite having millions of members and supporters, the PKI relied on the government to organize resistance to Suharto's 1965 military coup—a resistance that never materialized. The PKI strategy blocked workers and peasants from fighting Suharto's bloody takeover. The dictatorial regime slaughtered hundreds of thousands of workers, destroying the PKI itself in the process.

As in the Middle East, the U.S. government has made gains posturing as a defender of "democracy" in battle against repressive regimes such as that of former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein and "terrorist" groups like JI.

Washington maintained an official policy of neutrality in the Indonesian elections. U.S. officials used the occasion to push their worldwide campaign that bourgeois democracy is possible and desirable in the world's most populous Muslim country.

U.S. deputy secretary of defense Paul Wolfowitz played a prominent role in the days leading up to the election. In an op-ed column in the September 16 *New York Times*, Wolfowitz presented a government attack on the rights of a journalist as "a threat to the freedom and democracy that Indonesia has enjoyed since the collapse of the Suharto government six years ago." He also noted that Yudhoyono, who subsequently won the election, was more likely than the sitting president to push for dismissing the charges of "criminal libel" against the editor of *Tempo*, one of the most popular news magazines in Indonesia.

The Defense Department official knows what he's talking about in regard to the Suharto government: he was the U.S. ambassador to Indonesia for three years under the Reagan administration when Washington was supporting the dictator there and served for three-and-a-half years before that as secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs.

Washington backs off charge of bio-arms in Cuba

BY DOUG NELSON

The U.S. government has backed off its charge that Cuba is developing biological weapons, according to an article first published in the September 18 *New York Times* that has since been reprinted in other major dailies. "The Bush administration," the article said, "has conducted a new assessment of Cuba's biological weapons capacity and concluded that it is no longer clear that Cuba has an active, offensive bio-weapons program, according to administration officials."

A 1999 National Intelligence Estimate and other previous reports and statements by U.S. government officials had accused Havana of developing biological weapons—a claim that the Cuban government has consistently denied.

Cuban government representative Luis Fernández told the press in March 2002—when Washington first publicized this charge—that the accusation was a "big lie and a big slander." He noted that the Bush administration had produced no evidence to back up its claim.

Cuban officials have also explained that Washington maintains the largest stockpile of biological and chemical weapons of any county in the world, and it has used them against the people of Korea, Vietnam, and Cuba. Havana released a statement April 28, 1997, for example, providing evidence that the biological agent *Thrips palmi* was dropped from a U.S. crop-dusting plane the previous October, devastating crops in western Cuba.

U.S. undersecretary of state for arms control Richard Bolton had said in 2002 that Cuba had an "offensive biological war

research and development effort," and that it provided "dual-use biotechnology to other rogue states."

"Dual-use" technology is the term imperialist powers use for facilities that could be used to produce a range of products, from vaccines to lethal chemicals.

Bolton's "evidence" in 2002 was that Cuba has advanced biotechnology research and production facilities and that Cuban president Fidel Castro has visited countries Washington considers "rogue states," including Syria and Iran.

"Administration officials said that the new assessment had been prepared at the request of the State Department for a report it will be making to Congress and that it had adopted tougher standards because the past assessment on Iraq had been proved wrong," the *Times* said.

Leaving the door open for new slanders against Cuba on this charge, the article quotes an unnamed "intelligence official" as saying: "There is still much about Cuba that is cause for concern, including the production and export of dual-use items and cooperating with countries on the State Department's list of state sponsors of terrorism."

It is true that Cuba has made significant advances in biotechnology and medical research. The Cuban government exports many vaccines and other fruits of this work around the world. The *Times* article acknowledged the accomplishments of Cuba's work in this field, stating that Havana "has a major drug and biotechnology program... that has been widely praised by scientists and physicians."

Berlin to workers in the east: 'Get used to less'

Continued from Page 3

and France. The German finance minister complained earlier this year that with its payments for "regional development" Berlin is "sponsoring" the loss of jobs in Germany.

"When the people of Eastern and Central Europe joined the EU in May, they thought they were embarking on a project designed for the mutual European good," said an article in the September 10 *International Herald Tribune*. "But they are discovering it is a competitive world even within the EU's sheltering borders." Since the mid-1990s unemployment has remained higher than any time since the 1930s, with the greatest weight falling on the eastern part of Germany. In the east, 20 percent of the workforce is jobless, according to government figures, while more than 8 percent is out of work in the west.

Factory owners are taking advantage of workers' uncertain job prospects to push through concession contracts with their unions. Siemens workers will now be working 40 hours per week instead of 35, with no increase in pay. DaimlerChrysler won \$600 million in wage cuts after threatening to shut down operations at its Stuttgart plants.

The SPD-Green Party coalition government in Berlin has responded to Germany's economic stagnation with a series of measures aimed at making workers and farmers pay for the crisis. Hartz IV, named after government advisor and Volkswagen executive Peter Hartz, will reduce both the amount of unemployment compensation workers receive and the length of time they will be eligible to receive it.

Protests against Hartz IV have been largest in the east.

Popular mobilizations prevent deaths in Cuba from Hurricane Ivan...

BY ARNOLD WEISSBERG

HAVANA—Following the impact of Hurricane Ivan, the United Nations International Secretariat for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) cited Cuba as a model for hurricane preparation. “The Cuban way could easily be applied to other countries with similar economic conditions and even in countries with greater resources that do not manage to protect their population as well as Cuba does,” said ISDR director Salvano Briceno.

The UN agency noted the low number of deaths in Cuba as a result of recent storms, citing the fact that Hurricane Charley last month caused four deaths in Cuba, compared to 30 in Florida.

Hurricane Ivan, which hit the Caribbean island’s western tip September 12–13, caused no deaths in Cuba compared to 34 in Grenada, an island with less than one percent of Cuba’s population. Dozens also died in Jamaica and at least 42 deaths have been caused by the storm in the southern United States.

These figures are not the result of sheer luck.

Hurricane Ivan did spare Havana and the most populated sections of the country, which minimized destruction. But the storm did cause significant damage in the western province of Pinar del Rio and the Isle of Youth. Towns were flooded. As many as 20,000 houses were destroyed. Roads were torn up, crops blown away, and trees and electrical lines downed. Yet, not one person was killed.

As Ivan approached, solidarity became the watchword. The Cuban government and the country’s mass organizations began to carry out longstanding plans for hurricane preparation. “No one will be discouraged, whatever the hurricane may bring,” said Cuban president Fidel Castro on national TV before the storm reached Cuba. “The first priority is to protect life, health, and resources. Then immediately begin rebuilding.” He went on, “We have the kind of training, and the culture of cooperation that has allowed us to reduce to record low levels the number of deaths, and that’s what’s most important.”

Through the civil defense groups, trade unions, the Federation of Cuban Women, the Communist Party, the Union of Young Communists, and other organizations, hundreds of thousands of ordinary Cubans

volunteered to help evacuate people, protect vital equipment and farm machinery, store thousands of tons of food in secure locations, and take simple steps like trimming trees that could threaten power lines.

The government evacuated nearly 1.9 million people in preparation for Ivan. Three-quarters of them were lodged with family or in other private housing. The rest were accommodated in about 2,500 shelters. People were often evacuated along with their household possessions. “We are very happy,” said one young mother in a shelter in a September 13 interview with Tele Rebelde TV. “Behind the buses in which we were evacuated came a caravan of trucks with our televisions, refrigerators, and mattresses.”

One shelter had 238 evacuees, including five pregnant women. There were also 14 doctors and seven nurses providing medical attention.

In addition, across the country the government set up 1,725 kitchens for feeding evacuees and volunteers. This involved more than 6,000 culinary workers in Havana alone, many of whom worked 24 hours at a stretch, cooking with firewood and kerosene when there was no gas.

Schools got special attention, with volunteers—in many cases including schoolchildren—moving furniture, TVs, and computers to safe locations. When the threat passed everything had to be put back. “I carried the table, it was a little heavy, but I want classes to start again,” said nine-year-old Mario Raúl, a student at the Carlos Hernández primary school. “I like my classes.”

Television and radio reporters were all over the island. Their stories helped viewers and listeners understand both what had already been accomplished and what remained to be done. One story featured a factory that makes roof sections, with the workers explaining that they would make extraordinary efforts to produce these vital parts. The nightly TV discussion show “Mesa Redonda” (Round Table), which usually runs for an hour, was for three nights turned into an open-ended question and answer session on preparations for and response to the hurricane. Cuban president Fidel Castro and Cuba’s top meteorologist José Rubiera were the featured speakers.

In a country so highly electrified, the loss of power is a serious problem. 1,500 electrical workers from eight provinces were working in Pinar del Rio immediately after the

dangerous place to seek shelter. In the end, the brunt of the storm passed east of New Orleans.

The storm also devastated farms on its path northeastward across the country. In the South, cotton, peanut, and pecan growers were hit especially hard, particularly in Georgia. Many small farmers will need federal assistance to stay in business.

“All the fruit has been blown off and half of our trees have been uprooted,” said farmer Tim Tucker of Uriah, Alabama, according to the Associated Press. “If we replant it will be 10 years before they produce pecans.” His cotton crop was blown flat and his barn collapsed, trapping about 30 head of cattle in the rubble.

While insurance companies are complaining of the billions of dollars in claims that have been filed, tens of thousands of workers, farmers and small business people—many who had inadequate or no insurance—are bearing the worst of the economic devastation caused by the storm.

Some 90 percent of the houses in Grenada were reportedly damaged. The government of the Cayman Islands, a British colony that lies between Cuba and Honduras, is appealing to cruise ship companies to send them luxury liners to house people left homeless by the hurricane. Ninety five percent of building roofs were destroyed there.

Over 700 die in Haiti as deforestation results in devastating floods from storm



AFP-Getty Images/Thony Belizaire

People walk in flooded streets of city of Gonaives, northeastern Haiti, September 21, as tropical storm Jeanne devastated the north of the island. Massive deforestation in Haiti as a result of decades of imperialist domination is a major reason for flooding, which has resulted in thousands of deaths this year. So far, the latest flood has left at least 700 dead. More than 1,000 are still missing, and 250,000 have been left homeless from this preventable social disaster.

storm passed to restore power as quickly as possible. Many of these workers had barely recovered from their enormous efforts to restore power after Hurricane Charley.

Agricultural workers went into action in an attempt to harvest whatever crops were ready before the hurricane struck. However, thousands of tons of fruit, tobacco, and other crops were lost. Tens of thousands of cattle and sheep and 1 million chickens and turkeys were moved to safe locations.

On Saturday, September 11, as Havana was watching and waiting, a uniformed man with a clipboard came to the door. He

was checking up on household pets. Where people were evacuated, so were their pets. As a Cuban animal lover explained to me, “The little animals might have fleas, and in the shelters there are little children, and old people, and having the pets with them could be a health hazard, so they animals go to a special shelter, with a veterinarian.” The sea-turtle reserve on the Isle of Youth reported saving 178 of the animals.

As of September 16, some areas of Pinar del Rio province remained under water. There has been no estimate of the total damage yet.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

Asbestos Kills! Make James Hardie Industries Pay! Speakers: Barry Robson, president Asbestos Diseases Foundation of Australia; Ron Poulsen, Communist League Candidate for Watson, House of Representatives Fri., Oct. 1, 7:00 p.m. 3/281-7 Beamish St., Campsie (upstairs in arcade near Evaline St.). Donation: \$4, students and unemployed: \$2. Tel: (02) 9718-9698.

ALABAMA

Birmingham

How Social Security Was Won and How It Will Be Defended Sun., Sept. 26, 4 p.m. 3029A Bessemer Rd. Tel: (205) 780-0021.

FLORIDA

Tampa

Chechnya’s Independence Movement vs. Moscow. Sat., Oct. 2, 7:30 p.m. 1441 E. Fletcher Ave. at 15th St. (2nd floor, entrance in rear of shopping center). Donation: \$4, students and unemployed: \$2. Tel: (813) 910-8507.

MICHIGAN

Detroit

Venezuela: Defeat of Proimperialist Recall Aids Confidence of Workers and Peasants Speakers: Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party candidate, Michigan 13th C.D. Fri., Oct. 1, 7:30 p.m. 4208 W. Vernor St. (Between Scotten & Clark, southwest Detroit). Tel: (313) 554-0504.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Behind the U.S. Rulers’ Debate on Military Strategy Speaker: Martin Koppel, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate, Fri., Sep. 24. Dinner, 7 p.m.; program, 8 p.m., 307 W. 36 St., 10th floor (use north elevators). Donation: \$5 for dinner, \$5 for program. Tel: (212) 629-6649.

PENNSYLVANIA

Hazleton

U.S. and Other Imperialist Hands off Iran! Support the Right of Poor Countries to Expand Electrification! Speaker: Ma’mud Shirvani. Sat., Sept. 25, 7:30 p.m. 69 N. Wyoming St., Hazleton. Tel: (570) 454-8320.

... while 120 die in capitalist U.S. and rest of Caribbean as working people are left to fend for themselves

BY CLAY DENNISON

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama—Hurricane Ivan left widespread destruction in its wake as it battered Grenada and the Windward Islands, Jamaica and western Cuba with winds upwards of 150 miles per hour before slamming into the Gulf coast of Alabama early on September 16. In the United States and capitalist countries in the Caribbean, working people were left largely to fend for themselves in the face of this superstorm. Seventy people were reported killed by the storm throughout the Caribbean. At least 50 more storm-related deaths have been reported in the United States.

There were no deaths in Cuba, as working people and their government organized massively to defend the population from the hurricane’s onslaught (see article above).

Hundreds of thousands of people were ordered to evacuate from the stretch of coast between New Orleans and western Florida before the storm hit. The mayor of New Orleans said that about 100,000 residents of that city, who depend on public transportation, could not evacuate. City authorities did nothing to organize transportation for them. He advised them to “vertically evacuate” to the higher floors of tall buildings to avoid flood waters. Weather forecasters noted that the higher floors of buildings are hit with faster winds in a hurricane and are a

—LETTERS—

‘Fahrenheit 9/11’

Thanks for your thorough treatment of Michael Moore’s prowar screed “Fahrenheit 9/11” in the September 14 issue. After viewing Moore’s pro-Kerry, ultranationalist film, it occurred to me that his other “documentaries” suffer from some of the same political problems. His “Bowling for Columbine,” which liberals also love, was really just a two-hour plea for gun control, which is not exactly in the interests of workers. And “Roger and Me” appears to be pro-worker, but it really just portrays workers as helpless victims while conspicuously avoiding a deeper criticism of the capitalist system. Just like Bush, not capitalism, is presented

as the problem in “Fahrenheit,” GM, not the entire system, is faulted in “Roger and Me.” So much for the “great champion of the working class,” Michael Moore.

Keep up the good work. More articles on movies and other cultural issues would be great.

Mike Hunt
Minneapolis, Minnesota

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

Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Port workers in New Zealand strike to end proliferation of temp jobs

BY PATRICK BROWN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Port workers staged a four-day strike here in early September, shutting down the country's largest container port to demand a halt to the expanding use of casual labor in loading and unloading ships.

The September 8–12 stoppage by 260 members of the Maritime Union of New Zealand (MUNZ) took place during contract talks. In the negotiations, union representatives have proposed a formula for granting permanent status to the growing number of workers kept on for years as casual workers on call.

The day after picket lines came down, 250 workers attended a stop-work meeting and voted to empower union negotiators to issue notice of another seven-day strike if necessary. "We are going to mediation and will get a feel then of what will happen," said Denis Carlisle, MUNZ Local 13 president.

The strike was part of a long-running battle by workers against the port companies' increased employment of casual labor. Their efforts to defend their union against the employers' divide-and-rule attempts were at the center of a previous strike in 2001.

"In our industry we have identified numerous full-time permanent stevedoring jobs that have in some cases been there for years. Yet the employer, Ports of Auckland Ltd., has refused to promote these [casual] workers," said Carlisle in a leaflet handed out by pickets to passers-by, entitled "Why



Militant/Felicity Coggan
Port workers, members of the Maritime Union of New Zealand, picket September 11 in Auckland during four-day walkout against increased company use of casual labor.

We Are on Strike."

These workers "live on the end of a telephone, not knowing from day to day whether they will be required to work," he said.

In a later release, Carlisle rejected claims by the Ports of Auckland that only a small minority of the workforce is temporary. "A very high number of our members on

the ground are casual, insecure workers," he said.

Strikers on the round-the-clock picket lines, who turned up for picket duty according to their work shifts, explained that the company categorises some part-time workers as permanent. There are several dozen "P-24" workers, said one. These workers are "guaranteed three eight-

hour shifts a week, and then they are on call for more."

One such P-24 worker told Militant reporters that he averages more than 40 hours a week. "There is enough work to make full-time positions," he said, even allowing for the "highs and troughs in the industry"—a reference to the bosses' claims that changes in freight patterns, which involve fewer ships of greater capacity, mean that they need a larger pool of workers on call.

Len Prasad, who has been a casual worker on the ports for almost six years, said that although he "will often get over 40 hours a week, there is no security. It's life by the phone." Prasad explained that not only do casuals miss out on sick pay and other benefits, they also receive significantly lower wages.

"Casualisation is just cheap labour" read one of the picketline placards. Another stated, "Nobody should be at anybody's beck and call." A high percentage of motorists passing by on the busy waterside street honked their horns in support.

A highlight of the strike was a solidarity rally on the morning of the strike's third day, during which several representatives of the Maritime Union of Australia were greeted with a Maori welcome by strikers and supporters.

Leading up to the strike, the capitalist media in Auckland buttressed company arguments about the need to continue "restructuring"—in particular, stressing the competition it faces from the smaller Port of Tauranga.

In an interview published in the August 28 *New Zealand Herald*, Port of Tauranga chairman Fraser Mackenzie referred to his company's assault on port unions and working conditions. "Tauranga closed the port for 35 days in 1989 to get a satisfactory labour arrangement," he said.

Although the Tauranga port has taken some business and investment away from its Auckland rival, the latter port remains dominant on a national scale, handling two-thirds of the country's imports, one-third of its exports, and 45 percent of all inbound and outbound containers. The company's after-tax profits in the year to June rose by 20 percent. The striking unionists pointed to this reality to back up their fight for an end to casualisation of the ports, not just in Auckland but around the country.

Terry Coggan contributed to this article.

Canada: iron ore miners strike for better pay, benefits

BY BETTY BURKE

MONTREAL, Quebec—More than 1,000 unionized miners at the Iron Ore Company, Canada's largest producer of iron ore, have been on strike since July 19. The workers are members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA).

Iron Ore Co. is located in Labrador City, a town of 7,700 in western Newfoundland, and is owned by international mining giant Rio Tinto, based in London. The 250 Steelworkers employed by Rio Tinto at the port in Sept-Isles, Quebec, also joined the walkout.

Two weeks earlier, 300 iron miners went on strike at the nearby Wabush Mines and Wabush pelletizing facility in Pointe Noire, Quebec. Wabush Mines is owned in part by Stelco and Dofasco, two of Canada's largest steelmakers, along with the U.S. firm Cleveland-Cliffs Mining. The workers there are also members of the USWA.

The unionists at Rio Tinto and Wabush Mines are both fighting against company concession demands.

"Rio Tinto wants to strip health care and pensions, freeze wages, and introduce a form of psychological profiling of workers as a basis for discipline," union spokesman Wayne Fraser said, according to an article in the *Montreal Gazette*. "Who in their right mind would accept a deal like that?"

After the strike vote was taken July 19, approximately 800 workers at Iron Ore Co. showed their determination to win a decent contract by staging an impromptu parade through the middle of Labrador City.

At Wabush Mines the company is demanding an increase in contracting out jobs, the introduction of job "flexibility," the hiring of more temporary workers who won't have any rights under the contract, and the extension of the probation period.

Labrador City and Wabush, which are now amalgamated towns, were built as company towns around the iron ore production facilities. The majority of businesses in the area provide products and services to the mining companies. A railway carries the iron ore over 400 kilometers to Sept-Isles where it is then loaded onto ships in the St. Lawrence River. Workers at the two struck companies produce about 60 per cent of

Canada's iron ore exports.

Workers staged two previous strikes against Iron Ore Co. in 1996 and 1987. Both walkouts lasted one month.

The current strikes against these companies occur at a time when the prices of iron ore are at a high point. Iron Ore Co. continued shipping stockpiled ore from its operations in Sept-Isles.

On September 3, strikers at Iron Ore Co. rejected by a vote of 53 percent a contract offer that had been unanimously recommended by the union negotiating committee for the three striking USWA locals. The *Canadian Press* reported that Pat McCue, vice president of USWA Local 5795, one of the three striking locals, said the new offer contained none of the concessions in the original contract proposal and included

"modest" increases in the pension plan and varying wage raises.

But the offer just wasn't good enough, one worker who wished to remain anonymous, told the *Canadian Press*.

In the same article, Jim Skinner, president of the USWA local at Wabush Mines, said that the rejection by the workers at Iron Ore Co. would make it easier for the unionists at Wabush Mines to get a decent contract. "It's going to make it easier and much better for both the unions to be together and take on these companies," he said.

In a company press release after the September 3 vote, Iron Ore Co. chief executive Terry Bowles said the rejection "now places our future in jeopardy." Company spokesperson Michael Filion declined to comment on how the strike has affected shipments.

U.S. farmers file new suit against racist discrimination

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association, Inc., filed a new class-action lawsuit here September 9 against the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), charging racial discrimination. Thomas Burrell, president of the farmers' group, announced the suit just before the beginning of a workshop on farmers at the annual conference of the Congressional Black Caucus.

The \$20 billion lawsuit charges the USDA with discrimination in loans, processing of credit applications, and failure to promptly investigate racist discrimination complaints of farmers between January 1997 and August 2004. Plaintiffs in the suit include BFAA, Inc., 13 individual farmers, and a class of nearly 70,000 farmers.

James Myart, attorney for the farmers organization, told the *Militant* the suit was filed to address the ongoing racist discrimination farmers have faced since the settlement of *Pigford v. Glickman*. Daniel Glickman was secretary of agriculture in the Clinton administration. In that case, a federal court issued a consent decree in 1999 to settle out of court a similar class-action lawsuit by tens of thousands of farmers. In

that settlement, the government agreed to give each of the farmers who could provide minimal evidence of discrimination between 1981 and 1996 a \$50,000 tax-exempt payment, debt forgiveness, and preferential treatment on future loan applications.

Even though the farmers' organizations leading the fight to defend their land and right to farm rejected the consent decree, the judge in *Pigford* approved it on April 14, 1999.

Myart described the consent decree as a "total failure." He pointed to a joint report by a farmers' organization and the Environmental Working Group, which said that of the 94,000 farmers who sought restitution under the 1999 settlement, about 13,000 were approved and 81,000 were denied. Of that number, 7,800 were turned down because they supposedly failed to meet deadlines. On its web site, the USDA says that as of September 4 it had processed 22,113 claims. Of these, it has denied 8,612.

Over the past year, BFAA Inc. has held meetings of thousands of farmers and their supporters in cities throughout the southeast. At those gatherings farmers and their successors filled out surveys and gave testimony documenting the government's

failure to implement the consent decree, giving examples of being told they could not file complaints because the deadline had expired, and of having claims denied because of "insufficient documentation" or failure of attorneys to meet deadlines. In some cases, farmers described how they were awarded a favorable ruling but never received compensation. In other cases farmers received compensation, but banks and seed and fertilizer companies to which they were in debt immediately seized the funds.

Among the participants in the September 9 workshop was Vernon Parker, USDA Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights. This post in the USDA was created by the Bush administration. Parker is among those being sued by the farmers' group. During the workshop, he declined to answer questions regarding the BFAA Inc. suit.

Representatives of the Congressional Black Caucus made available to the audience letters from other USDA officials declining invitation to participate in the workshop. Since its founding, the caucus has been composed almost exclusively of Democrats. Prominent Democratic Party politicians backed the 1999 consent decree settlement.