

THE MILITANT

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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‘Terrorism’ frame-up by Australia gov’t fails

BY LINDA HARRIS

SYDNEY, Australia—The attempted frame-up of Mohamed Haneef, an Indian-born doctor, on “terrorism” charges by Australian authorities has rapidly fallen apart. Haneef, who worked as a registrar at Gold Coast Hospital in south Queensland, was detained July 2 over supposed links to attempted bombings in the United Kingdom.

Twelve days after his arrest in Brisbane, Haneef was charged with “providing reckless support to a terrorist organization.” The prosecutor claimed Haneef’s cell phone card was found in the burning vehicle used in the failed June 30 airport bombing in Glasgow, Scotland. He asserted that Haneef had lived in England with a second cousin, one of the men in the vehicle.

Both these claims quickly collapsed. As facts contradicting police and government assertions emerged, the magistrate granted Haneef bail. To prevent his release the government then revoked Haneef’s visa and ordered his transfer to immigration detention.

Opposition Labor Party leader Kevin
Continued on page 9

Minnesota meat packers resist company antiunion drive

BY REBECCA WILLIAMSON

SOUTH ST. PAUL, Minnesota—Members of United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW) Local 789, who are fighting for a new contract at the Dakota Premium Foods slaughterhouse here, are standing up to the latest company-backed efforts to decertify their union.

An anonymously written antiunion flyer called an “employees monologue” appeared on tables in the lunchroom when workers went to break August 2. The flyer asked where the union had been for the past five years since the first contract at Dakota Premium was won.

Pro-union workers responded immediately, passing out a statement signed by union steward Miguel Gutiérrez, where he answered a previous flyer that claimed the company treats workers well. Gutiérrez asked who they were talking about. “Those who the supervisor harasses all day demanding that he wants cleaner bones, even when the line speed is extremely fast? Are we talking about the people who ask to go to the
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Utah miners: company disregard for safety led to mine collapse

BY ALYSON KENNEDY
AND CHRIS HOEPPNER

HUNTINGTON, Utah, August 15—“We have to stand up and speak for our brothers trapped underground. Murray is more interested in the coal industry and his costs than the lives of the people and their families,” said Tyler Firm, 22, a coal miner who worked two years at the Genwal (now Crandall Canyon) mine until August of last year.

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—PAGE 5**

“I worked with those miners. Don is my second cousin.”

On August 6, in the middle of a 12-hour shift, six miners were trapped by a collapse in the Crandall Canyon coal mine, owned by Murray Energy Corp. The impact of the collapse, some 1,500 feet underground, registered 3.9 on the Richter scale.

The six men are Brandon Phillips, 24, Carlos Payán, 22, Don Erickson, 50, Kerry Allred, 58, Luis Hernández, 23, and Manuel Sánchez, 41.

Robert Murray, president of the company, contends an earthquake caused
Continued on page 3



Militant/Alyson Kennedy

August 10 vigil in Huntington, Utah, for trapped coal miners drew 350 people.

Organize the mines!

The collapse of the Crandall Canyon coal mine in central Utah, which has trapped six workers 1,500 feet underground since August 6, highlights one fact above all. The only effective way miners can fight for control over job conditions is to organize a union and use workers’ collective power to enforce safety.

Coal mine disasters are not due to

“acts of God” as Murray Energy Corp. claims. Dangerous job conditions are the result of decisions by bosses to squeeze maximum profits out of our labor, including by seeing how much they can get away with cutting corners on safety and health. That’s how capitalism works.

This is the brutal reality, especially
Continued on page 9

Washington prods gov’ts to back Iraq offensive

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, August 15—U.S. diplomats crisscrossed the Middle East the last few weeks, obtaining some modest results in getting governments in the region to cooperate in Washington’s efforts to stabilize the regime in Iraq. The United Nations Security Council agreed August 10 to an expanded role in negotiations with Iraq’s neighbors and competing capitalist forces inside Iraq to try to reduce sectarian fighting.

Iraqi prime minister Nouri Kamal al-Maliki announced plans August 12 to meet with leaders of Iraq’s major political parties. Al-Maliki seeks to resume efforts to pass a package of “reconciliation” laws that could form a governing arrangement between Sunnis and Shiites in Iraq’s capitalist class.

Since March, U.S. officials have held a series of talks with their Iranian and Iraqi counterparts. The talks led to a “working group” on Iraqi security, but U.S. State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said the talks have not yielded “positive results.” Washington has maintained a hostile policy toward Iran. It accuses that government of providing funds, more lethal weapons, and training to Shiite militias in Iraq.

Al-Maliki called for expanded ties between his government and Iran during an August 8 visit with Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in Tehran.

That prompted U.S. president George Bush to say he would have a “heart-to-heart” with al-Maliki.

Washington is also boosting its ties with the Gulf Cooperation Council—Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Qatar—as

a counter to Iran. The Saudi monarchy established the council in 1981 in response to the 1979 revolution in Iran, which overthrew the U.S.-backed shah.

In July, the Bush administration announced plans to give billions of dol-
Continued on page 9

‘Militant’ gets warm welcome in Utah

BY VED DOOKHUN

HUNTINGTON, Utah, August 14—In recent days coal miners and other working people in coal communities in Price, Huntington, and East Carbon bought more than 150 copies of the *Militant* and the special supplement with coverage on the mine collapse in Utah. Of these, 40 copies were bought by miners at the Deer Creek, Horizon, and Dugout mines, where supporters of the *Militant* displayed the headline on a sign “Safety is a union question! No miner has to die!”

Another 14 people subscribed to the *Militant* for the first time and two others renewed their subscriptions. Coal miners who work at mines owned by Murray Energy Corp., which owns Crandall Canyon, spoke of the increased productivity drive and longer work hours they face. Miners said they work seven days a week, often 10–12 hours a day. Many miners cited this as a reason they quit

working for that company and found jobs at other mines.

BY TONY LANE

PITTSBURGH—Supporters of the *Militant* from Washington, D.C., and Pittsburgh took the *Militant* spe-
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Los Angeles day laborers fight curb on seeking jobs

BY MICHAEL ORTEGA

BALDWIN PARK, California—Day laborers here have won a reprieve as they fight a city ordinance attacking their right to seek work. On July 16 a federal district judge issued a preliminary injunction barring enforcement of the ordinance until a trial is held to determine its constitutionality.

The local law, approved by the city council June 6, prohibits workers from soliciting jobs on sidewalks and parking lots if doing so limits pedestrians to less than three feet of walking space. Police in this Los Angeles County town have used it to harass immigrant workers who gather near a local Home Depot.

“Things are much better since we won the injunction,” said Israel, a day laborer here who asked to be identified only by his first name. “Before, the police threatened us with tickets of up to \$500, arrests, and even taking us to immigration. Once the cops came with their guns drawn. Now we are able to look for work without fear.”

One proponent of the anti-day laborer ordinance, city councilman Anthony Bejarano, claimed it was designed to avoid accidents and keep the public safe. “We just want to protect the city’s residents,” he told the Spanish-language daily *La Opinión*.

On June 20 about 300 day laborers and their supporters rallied in front of city hall to protest the ordinance. Among those present were representatives of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, which is providing legal defense for the day laborers, and the National Day Laborer Organizing Network.

“We began to organize against the

racist attacks on our constitutional and human rights,” said Israel. “We’ve decided to call ourselves the Union of Day Laborers of Baldwin Park.”

He noted that as they began to organize, the workers increased their cooperation in seeking jobs. “We don’t compete here,” he said. “If a guy hasn’t worked for a while, and a job comes by, someone will give up a spot for him. If an employer doesn’t pay above a certain minimum, none of us work for him.

“The next step in our fight is to defeat the proposal and to get a clean, safe hiring center.”

Wendy Lyons contributed to this article.



Militant/Wendy Lyons

Day laborers in Baldwin Park, California. They are engaged in a fight to oppose a local ordinance that attacks their right to seek work free from police harassment.

Texas poultry plant uses document check to fire dozens

BY ANTHONY DUTROW

NACOGDOCHES, Texas—The owners of Pilgrim’s Pride, the largest poultry producer in the United States, have launched a campaign against workers at its plants by firing employees on the grounds that they lack proper Social Security numbers. The company’s two eastern Texas chicken processing plants, here and in nearby Lufkin, are among the targets of this assault.

“They’ve been firing about 50 a week for the last three weeks,” said Luis Martínez, 31, who works in sanitation at the Nacogdoches plant.

Pilgrim’s Pride has plants with more than 35,000 workers in ten states, including Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, and Texas; and about 5,000 in Mexico.

The plant here is organized by the United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 408. It has about 2,400 em-

ployees and operates three daily production shifts. The majority of workers in both plants are Latino.

“In my opinion, they also want to weed out those that have been here for 10 years or even more and are making pretty good money,” Martínez said. “As they fire people, they are bringing in about that number to train.”

Company officials say they are taking part in the program by the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement police to get employers to check names, birth dates, Social Security numbers, and immigration status through an Internet-based system.

Workers at Pilgrim’s Pride plants process 44 million birds a week. The company, with revenues of nearly \$6 billion a year, saw its stock rise almost 60 percent over the past year. Lonnie Pilgrim, the 79-year-old co-founder of the company and its senior chairman, has been a prominent promoter of the U.S. government’s “guest worker” program.

Rhonda Strange, who works the day shift as a de-boner, said she was angry about the firings. “It’s not right just letting these people go—a few at a time from each department,” she said. “They’re given no time to get whatever they need to stay here.

“There was a big meeting in the plant with the company and the union there,” Strange said. “Pilgrim told us they were going to let go up to 1,500 workers.

“I’m a union member and so is most everyone in my department,” she said. “We’re worried this is going to affect all of us.” Their contract comes up in September. The union is trying to win a wage increase and other basic demands.

Not all workers in the plant oppose the company’s attack, and some have conflicting views. One U.S.-born worker who asked that his name not be used said, “I think you have to draw the line somewhere with workers that come here illegally.” He added, “But I think they’re going too far with those raids, splitting up families and all. I’m not for that.”

Strange said when she was first hired 12 years ago, Black workers like herself and others born in the U.S. made up the majority of the workforce. Over time, as the bosses cranked up the line speed and sought to drive down job conditions, the company hired more immigrant workers, hoping to create a more easily exploited workforce.

Many of the workers here, however, have participated in protests demanding legalization of undocumented immigrants. On April 10 and May 1 of last year, workers shut down the two Texas plants, swelling the ranks of those who marched in downtown Lufkin for legal status for all immigrants.

Amanda Ulman and Bernardino Flores from Houston contributed to this article.

THE MILITANT

‘Reports on the working-class struggles’

‘Much of our lives are defined by the whims of the people who control our jobs. The ‘Militant’ exposes this system and reports on the specific working-class struggles.’

—Robert Silver
Minneapolis, Minnesota

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Utah miners speak out

Continued from front page

the mine to collapse. Government seismologists say that the mine's collapse registered as an earthquake.

Many miners and mine safety officials say the evidence indicates that intense pressure from a "bounce" forced the mine walls to crash in and the floor to rise up more than two feet.

"It was a bounce," Jameson Ward, one of four miners who escaped the mine, told the *Salt Lake Tribune*. Miners in the area say bounces are common in Utah mines many miles beneath high mountains. Pressure on the coal seam causes sudden outbursts of coal and rock, sending debris flying with explosive force.

Ward, 24, told AP that the bounce and rush of air was so strong it nearly pushed his pickup sideways. The dust was so thick his headlamp was useless.

Murray has denied that the company was "retreat" mining at Crandall Canyon at the time. Federal Mine Safety and Health Administration officials say, however, that on June 15 they approved retreat mining in the area that collapsed.

In retreat mining, pillars of coal that support the roof are mined as the crew retreats from the mined area. Eventually the roof falls. It is considered one of the most dangerous mining operations.

Tyler Firm said, "When I worked at Genwal, we were pulling pillars."

A miner who has been working 12-hour shifts on the rescue effort and asked to remain anonymous for fear of being fired, spoke to the *Militant*. "There were large mined-out areas on the left and right sides of the section where they were retreat mining, which was a dangerous situation," he said. "That's why the mountain came down. I don't understand why they were allowed to mine there."

"Sheriff's deputies are present outside the mine and they keep a close eye on the miners who park their cars near the main road. Miners have been told not to speak to the press," the worker noted.

Earlier collapse in March

In March, two sections of Crandall Canyon had collapsed, according to Associated Press. Mine safety experts "questioned whether the company—and the government agency that oversees its work—should have closed the mine then. Instead, operators moved to another section and continued chipping away," the news agency reported August 14.

The six men currently trapped were working 900 feet from that area. In recent weeks, the floors there had been buckling up from intense pressure, an anonymous source "with intimate knowledge" of the mine told CNN News.

"A member of Manuel Sánchez's family told a Utah paper that he had expressed concern about safety in one part of the mine," CNN reported.

Several miners told the *Militant* that unsafe conditions also exist in the other two Murray Energy mines in the area, Tower and Westridge. Murray Energy Corp. bought the Tower, Crandall Canyon, and Westridge mines from Andalex Resources last year. All these mines are nonunion.

"I quit working at the Tower mine a week and a half before the collapse because of the way Murray runs the mine. We had to work six and seven days a week, rotating shifts every two weeks. You would go to work so completely exhausted that you couldn't think clearly, never mind see your family," Tyler Firm said.

Another miner, Juan Duran, said in an interview that there were safety problems both before and after Murray Energy took over the Andalex mines. In the mine, he said, "I would sometimes [roof] bolt by myself in bad top and dangerous levels of methane gas."

Difference in a union mine

Duran now works in a union mine, "where you are treated differently," he said. "You have better training. There are always two bolters with a third man there to watch our back. And I have not been mandatoried once," in contrast

'Militant' gets warm welcome in Utah

Continued from front page

cial supplement to the coalfields of southwestern Pennsylvania, the West Virginia northern panhandle, and the Ohio Valley. Miners in those areas bought 123 copies of the supplement, 23 copies of the *Militant*, and one subscription. Workers at one mine bought more than 70 copies of the supplement, some of them taking small bundles to distribute to coworkers.

Many working people said they were familiar with coal boss Robert Murray and didn't trust him. Murray Energy owns mines in the area and has bitterly opposed the union. (See articles on page 5.) As one worker told us, "Ask anybody around here. Murray doesn't care about workers and he doesn't like unions."



Militant/Alyson Kennedy

Workers at August 10 vigil at Huntington, Utah, elementary school to support trapped coal miners write messages to miners and their families. From left: former Co-Op miner Bill Estrada, union miner Juan Duran, and Amanda Duran.

with the six and seven days he was regularly forced to work before.

He said that after Murray Energy bought the mines, the pay for long wall miners and mechanics was increased while wages for other miners were cut. Two holidays and a personal day were eliminated. According to Duran, Murray would have meetings with the miners and say, "If you don't give me this much production, I will shut your mine down."

A miner who works for Murray Energy and requested his name be withheld for fear of company retaliation, told the *Militant*, "Now nonunion companies are starting to do whatever they want, because there are so many nonunion mines. Before, they would pay more to keep the union out." Pointing to the mine collapse he said, "They shouldn't have been mining in this."

Of the 12 working coal mines in the area, only two are union, Dear Creek and

Consol, both organized by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA).

Several hundred people turned out in support of the trapped miners at vigils in nearby Huntington on the evenings of August 8 and 10. Benefit concerts are planned here for August 15 and 17 to raise funds for the miners' families.

Bob Butero, UMWA Region 4 director, noted in an August 15 interview the difference between nonunion mines, where workers "don't participate as miners' representatives in investigations" of safety problems, and union mines where such problems "would be discussed with the union."

"If we had the union at Genwal, the miners would have had a choice about going into such dangerous conditions. This is money and greed, that's all," said Mack Isaacson, a coal miner from Helper, Utah.

Bill Estrada contributed to this article.

BY STEVE PENNER

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—*Militant* campaigners here found considerable interest in the paper's coverage of the Utah mine disaster on picket lines of striking woodworkers and library workers, at a rally of hundreds of city workers, and on a table sale in a working-class neighborhood. In a couple of days they sold 29 copies of the special supplement, 28 copies of the *Militant*, and three subscriptions.

"There is no accident in a mine," commented a telephone worker who bought the paper along with the supplement. He had been on strike against the Telus communications giant for four months in 2005, and strongly

agreed with the *Militant's* headline "No miner has to die!" Having a union is essential to defend workers' safety, he said.

BY JACQUIE HENDERSON

HOUSTON—Distributors of the *Militant* sold 17 copies of the special supplement on the mine disaster in Utah and nine single copies of the *Militant* at the Tyson meatpacking plant here August 10.

Holding up a big sign "No Miner Has To Die! Safety is a Union Question," 21 more copies of the *Militant* were sold August 12 outside Alcoa's Sandow mine, in Rockdale, Texas.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

CALIFORNIA

San Francisco

Hear the Socialist Workers Party Candidates for San Francisco Mayor, Sheriff, and District Attorney. Fri., Aug. 24. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5 dinner, \$5 program. 3926 Mission. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

IOWA

Des Moines

Iowa Black-White Prison Ratio Highest in the United States—The Fight Against Racism Today. Speaker: Seth Galinsky, Socialist Workers candidate for city council at-large. Fri., Aug. 24. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 3707 Douglas Ave. Tel.: (515) 255-1707.

MINNESOTA

Minneapolis

Women and the Cuban Revolution. Fri., Aug. 24. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5 dinner, \$5 program. 1311 1/2 E Lake St. Tel.: (612) 729-1205.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

End Israeli Occupation of Palestine! Speaker: Carole Lesnick, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Aug. 24. Dinner, 7 p.m.; program, 8 p.m. 168 Bloomfield Ave. 2nd floor. Tel.: (973) 481-0077.

TEXAS

Houston

Why Hurricane Katrina, Utah Mine Disaster Are Social, Not Natural Disasters. Speakers: Irina McAllister, New Orleans resident; Amanda Ulman, Socialist Workers candidate for Mayor. Sat., Aug. 25. Dinner, 6 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. Donation, \$5 dinner, \$5 program. 4800 W 34th St., Suite C-51A. Tel.: (713) 688-4919.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

No Miner Has to Die! Unionists Respond to Utah Mine Collapse. Sat., Aug. 25. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5 dinner, \$5 program. 5418 Rainier Ave. S. Tel.: (206) 323-1755.

Workers pay high cost for bosses' profits

BY DOUG NELSON

About 5,700 workers died from injuries on the job last year, according to a U.S. Labor Department report released August 9.

More than 4 million workers in private industries were injured or made sick in 2005. Of these, about 950,000 were hurt to the point they could not return to their job. Statistics for last year have not yet been released.

Grossly understated, these figures are based solely on what bosses report. In addition, workers in factories, fields, and mines face many pressures to keep quiet about injuries and illnesses.

Another 50,000–60,000 workers die each year from job-related illnesses.

There were 47 deaths in the coal mining industry last year, more than double the number for the previous year. But this is only part of the picture. One in 20 miners have black lung, a job-related illness that kills an estimated 1,500 workers a year.

Last year 1,226 construction workers were killed on the job, the most for any industry sector. Fishing workers died at the highest rate, about 14 fatalities for every 10,000 workers.

Young Socialists back struggle by Utah miners

BY CHAUNCEY ROBINSON

HUNTINGTON, Utah, August 14—As the efforts here continue to rescue the six miners trapped in a cave-in that occurred at the Crandall Canyon coal

YOUNG SOCIALISTS IN ACTION

mine on August 6, Young Socialists, along with other supporters of the *Militant*, have been campaigning in Utah to speak to coal miners and other workers with the special *Militant* supplement headlined “Safety is a union question! No miner has to die!”

Young Socialists have joined in numerous discussions with coal miners and other working people on workers’ safety and the need for a union. We have been part of various teams to shopping centers and post offices in Huntington, Price, and East Carbon, and to coal mines around these areas, reaching out to workers with the truth of why yet another mining disaster had occurred.

Working people have opened up their homes to us, putting us up during our stay so we can get out the facts and

a working-class point of view.

The teams so far have sold more than 150 copies of the *Militant*. In the discussions, miners have expressed their discontent over the unsafe working conditions and speed-up on their jobs. Despite the declarations by coal boss Robert Murray, many people we spoke to understood that this cave-in was the result, not of an “act of God,” but of the dangerous conditions the profit-hungry bosses have pushed miners to work in underground.

YS members have also learned more about the history of the miners’ fight for union representation in Utah going back to the 1930s. In talking to older miners, some retired and many belonging to the UMWA, we got a sense of a long history of struggle, in which coal miners lost their lives in order to have an organization that truly represented their interests and well-being. This legacy can have an impact today as a younger generation enters the mines, mostly nonunion, in the face of the disaster at Crandall Canyon.

A 22-year-old coal miner, Tyler Firm, who previously worked as a section mechanic at the Crandall Canyon mine, told us, “I wish we did have a

Socialist candidates on the ballot in Philadelphia



Militant/Bob Stanton

PHILADELPHIA—Supporters of Socialist Workers Party candidates, John Staggs for mayor and Osborne Hart for city council at-large, filed petitions here August 1 with the signatures of nearly 4,000 people to place the candidates names on the November ballot. They have since been certified.

—BOB STANTON

union, but there’s no guidebook on how to start one. How do you organize a union? We need to learn. We have to start becoming fearless. It’s only a matter of time before someone else gets hurt.”

Young Socialists will continue our efforts in Utah and across the country

to distribute the *Militant* to tell the truth about what happened at the Crandall Canyon mine, and to join with other workers in struggles against unsafe working conditions and for unions. The socialist perspective we are getting out is essential for working people looking for a way to fight.

Pittsburgh SWP candidate speaks on fight for Black rights

BY CINDY JAQUITH

PITTSBURGH—Socialist Workers Party mayoral candidate Ryan Scott addressed a July 19 meeting protesting the pervasive discrimination faced by Blacks here.

The event drew nearly 50 people and was initiated by OneHOOD, a loose grouping of clergy and community activists. The sponsors noted in their call for the meeting that Pittsburgh was recently declared “America’s Most Livable City.” The reality, they added, “begs one to question: ‘Most Livable for Whom?’”

A recent University of Pittsburgh study found that conditions for Blacks here are generally worse than for African Americans nationally. Unemployment for Black men is 17 percent compared to 8 percent for white males. Nearly one quarter of Blacks in the United States live below the official poverty level; the figure is 34 percent in Pittsburgh.

More than a dozen speakers presented proposals for combating racism, offering a range of views. Some placed their emphasis on ending “Black-on-Black crime,” often blaming Black youth or their parents for violence within the community. A few pointed to the need to educate youth on the legacy of Black rights leaders such as Malcolm X and Martin Luther King.

Socialist candidate Ryan Scott was the only mayoral contender to address the event. Neither Democratic incumbent Luke Ravenstahl nor Republican Mark DeSantis sent representatives to the meeting.

“The problems of unemployment, poor education, and high rates of homicide in the Black community are fundamentally caused by capitalism,” Scott said.

“Pittsburgh is not ‘our’ city. It is a class-divided city, in which Blacks bear the brunt of the attacks on the working class. The capitalist rulers use racism to divide working people, and to su-

perexploit workers who are Black,” he said. The University of Pittsburgh study showed that workers as a whole are worse off in this city in terms of joblessness and income than nationally.

The socialist pointed to the centrality of organizing unions and using them to defend working people, including in the fight against racist discrimination. He also underlined the common interests of working people worldwide and

demanding that Washington immediately withdraw its troops from Iraq and Afghanistan.

“We oppose the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling on school desegregation, an attack that will be used to keep Black students in inferior schools,” Scott said. “We call for defending and extending affirmative action in employment, education, and housing.”

Scott denounced Mayor Ravenstahl’s

effort to increase the number of cops in Black neighborhoods. “We don’t need more cops,” he said. “We need to fight cop brutality, abolish the death penalty, and prosecute and jail killer cops!”

Scott pointed to the example being set today by immigrant workers through their struggles against deportations, cop harassment, and racist discrimination, as well as for better job conditions.

Campaign to free Cuban Five receives coverage

BY PAUL PEDERSON

A federal court in Atlanta will hold hearings August 20 in an appeal on the case of the Cuban Five. As the date nears, the case of the five Cuban revolutionaries, who have spent more than nine years in U.S. prisons after being framed up on “conspiracy to commit espionage” and other conspiracy charges, has received some coverage in the big-business press, which up to now has largely maintained a wall of silence on the case.

“Judge Lenard threw the book at them,” the *New York Times* reported August 5, describing the 2001 federal trial in Miami. Gerardo Hernández is serving two consecutive life sentences. Ramón Labañino and Antonio Guerrero are serving life terms. Fernando González and Rene González are serving 19- and 15-year terms, respectively.

“I reiterate [the charge] was *conspiracy*,” Hernández said in a July 3 interview with BBC. “The government said, ‘Oh wait a minute, all right, they didn’t commit espionage, but they would have tried to commit it some time.’ So that’s conspiracy to commit espionage. But not a single piece of secret information, nothing related to the national security of the U.S., was gathered or transmitted.”

“If you go to the worst espionage cases in U.S. history, those people got life sentences for stealing very secret

and damaging documents for foreign powers,” Hernández said in an interview published July 24 by Reuters. “I got life for stealing nothing.”

In reality, the five men were reporting to Cuba on the activities of right-wing groups that have a history of organizing violent attacks against Cuba with the complicity of the U.S. government.

Adding to the political frame-up, the court also convicted Hernández of “conspiracy to commit murder.” This was for allegedly providing information that the Cuban air force used to shoot down hostile planes that violated Cuban airspace in 1996. But the right-wing group that organized that incursion, Brothers to the Rescue, had announced their plans publicly in a news conference. Its leader, José Basulto, has a long record of sabotage and other attacks against Cuba. In 1962 he boated into Havana harbor and sprayed cannon fire at a hotel.

A July 19 BBC article notes that Adriana Pérez and Olga Salanueva, the wives of Hernández and René González, respectively, “are campaigning to be allowed to visit them in jail” because “for some 10 years the American authorities have repeatedly refused to grant them visas.”

Interviewed by the *Times*, Elizabeth Palmeiro, the wife of Labañino, said that in her efforts to free her husband and his

four comrades, “I feel a mixture of pain, of sadness, of fury, and pride.”

“In Cuba the five men are national heroes,” the BBC acknowledges.

Supporters of the five are organizing a fall campaign of activities from September 12 through October 8 to help win their freedom. To get involved, contact the National Committee to Free the Cuban Five (www.freethethefive.org) or supporters of the *Militant* near you listed in the directory on page 8.

Reception and Forum Atlanta Sunday, Aug. 19, 4-6 p.m.

Come to a forum and reception the night before the Cuban Five appeal hearing. Meet the Five’s attorneys, international visitors, and friends. Admission is free and refreshments will be served. All supporters of this fight for justice are welcome!

127 Peachtree St. NE
(The Candler Building)
Lower Level

Mine boss Murray has long antiworker record

The following excerpts of two Militant articles from May 6 and 20, 2002, recount struggles by union miners at the Maple Creek mine, in southwestern Pennsylvania, against attacks by coal operator Robert Murray on job safety, wages, and union rights. Murray is the head of the company that owns the non-union Crandall Canyon mine, where six miners have been trapped by a collapse since August 6. Forrestal, who worked at the Maple Creek mine from 1999 to 2002, is now working at a Swift meat-packing plant in Marshalltown, Iowa, and is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1149.

Forrestal is currently part of a team of Militant supporters in Utah who are joining with miners there to tell the truth about the unsafe conditions facing miners at Crandall Canyon and about the need to organize all mines into the United Mine Workers of America. He suggested that Militant readers might be interested in the paper's coverage of the struggles reported below.

Coal boss Murray attacks UMWA miners

BY FRANK FORRESTAL
AND TONY LANE

PITTSBURGH—The stakes have been raised in the fight by union coal miners against coal boss Robert Murray, owner of Maple Creek mine in Bentleyville, Pennsylvania. In yet another attack on the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), union members going into work April 14 were told that the company would begin “permanent layoffs of its workforce, effective June 16, 2002.” The information given to the miners is in accordance with the “Worker Adjustment Retraining Notification Act (WARN).” The company says the reason for the notification is the depletion of coal reserves. There are about 375 union workers at the mine organized by UMWA Local 1248.

Murray is the largest independent, family-held coal producer in the United States. His coal holdings include mines in Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Illinois, Ohio, and West Virginia. There are reports that Murray plans to open mines in Utah. Murray-owned mines produced more than 20 million tons of coal in 2000.

In 1995 when the mine reopened, the union agreed to a seven-year contract that now pays about \$3 an hour less than miners earn under the BCOA [Bituminous Coal Operators of America] contract. Miners at Murray are united in demanding that the wage gap, which weakens the entire UMWA, be closed. The seven-year contract expires at the end of the year.

Wages are not the only issue at Maple Creek, as became clear when miners read Murray's proposed amendments and deletions to the contract, which is now tabled. For example, the section on panel rights is deleted, and substantial deletions are made to the employer's contributions to the pension plan. One \$600 lump-sum payment is eliminated.

Years of battle by the union

For several years, union miners have been locked in battle with Murray. In the fall of 1999, the union struck Maple Creek for three days over antiunion moves by the company. In December 2000 the Maple Creek local rejected a proposed contract by a vote of 335 to



Militant/Tony Lane

Miners from Robert Murray's Maple Creek mine in Pennsylvania took part in this July 2001 rally in Powhatan Point, Ohio. They beat back company attempt to flout UMWA contract.

10. The contract proposed an annual 30-cent-an-hour wage increase. Miners demanded that they be paid the same as BCOA miners.

Last summer the union called “Memorial Days” to protest Murray's opening of a nonunion mine in Ohio and his “abuse of hundreds of coal miners who have accepted frozen wages and made other sacrifices to keep the company's operations afloat,” according to a UMWA press release.

Many skirmishes have occurred over health and safety issues, violations of work rules, and unjust firings. Almost every day the company is hit with state and federal violations. Several times the mine, or sections of it, have been ordered shut down. There have been several dangerous incidents of unacceptable levels of methane gas reported in the mine. Maple Creek has one of the highest lost-time injury rates in the industry.

Workers were also fed up with the so-called company “awareness” meetings. In these bathhouse meetings, it was common for Murray to insult miners to their faces, as well as to hear countless slanders against the union. Murray's un-

becoming behavior has become widely known. The Pennsylvania regional office of the NLRB issued a formal complaint last October against Murray and Maple Creek president D. Lynn Shank for “threatening and vilifying Maple Creek miners' representative, the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) and its officers.”

On top of this, Murray has filed numerous defamation lawsuits with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) against the union and leading union officials. Most have been dismissed by the courts. Last fall the NLRB ruled against Murray who charged that the “Memorial Days” taken by miners were illegal.

After seven-year fight, bosses at Maple Creek sign national pact

BY FRANK FORRESTAL
AND TONY LANE

PITTSBURGH—In a big victory for mine workers here, Maple Creek Mining Inc., has signed the 2002 National Bituminous Coal Wage Agreement (NBCWA). This important win for the

union nationally comes as a result of seven years of struggle by members of the mine workers union and their solidarity in face of a company antiunion drive.

Starting in 2003, the contract at Maple Creek will cover the terms and conditions of the national agreement. After living with a wage freeze since 1995, the company will increase wages for miners at Maple by \$3.15 an hour starting next year. For the first time in almost seven years, wages will be equivalent to all other miners covered by the NBCWA.

In addition, the union contract at Maple Creek will have a common expiration date at the end of 2006 with the rest of the mines covered under the NBCWA pact. This will help strengthen the bargaining power of the national union.

Antiunion provisions dropped

Also important is the fact that workers at High Quality, where the company will soon begin coal production, will be covered by the same terms. Murray's plan from the beginning was to treat the new mine as separate and not part of Maple Creek. The fight was whether it would be a union mine. This is what he lost and is at the heart of what the miners won.

Another important concession won by the miners has to do with forced overtime. Mandatory work on Sunday has been eliminated and every third week miners will only have to work five days. While this may not seem like much, miners have been working six-day weeks for years.

To capture the scope of the victory for the UMWA, it is useful to step back and look at some of the key highlights of the battle over the last seven years.

After U.S. Steel Mining Co. closed the mine in 1994, it was purchased by Robert Murray, who is today the largest independent coal operator. Murray won deep contractual concessions from the union and reopened

Continued on page 9

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



September 3, 1982

The racist rulers of South Africa have again launched major military raids into southern Angola from Namibia.

Ever since Angola won its independence from Portugal in 1975, both Washington and Pretoria have tried to impose a subservient, proimperialist regime there. These aims were thwarted soon after independence when the new Angolan government requested the aid of Cuban military forces to turn back a South African invasion.

Speaking in Bayamo, Cuba, on July 26, Cuban leader Fidel Castro . . . warned the South Africans, “If they attack the republic of Angola on a large scale and arrive at our defense lines, we are going to fight very seriously with all our means and energy against the racist, fascist South African mercenaries. We already fought those racists and fascists once, and they well know the tenacity, courage, and dedication of our fighters. It would be better for the imperialists to abandon their threats, because they are not going to intimidate us in that way.”



September 2, 1957

The increasing momentum of the Negro people's drive for first-class citizenship can be measured by Martin Luther King's announcement, Aug. 27, in Washington, of a campaign to register five million Negro voters in the South.

Because of terror, fraudulent practices by lily-white election boards and unconstitutional statutes only 1,238,038, or one-fourth of eligible Negroes have been able to register in the South. The task the Southern Christian Leadership Conference has set itself is to register the other three-fourths.

[I]n the past few years in Mississippi, Rev. George W. Lee, a Negro, was shot to death for insisting upon registering. Lamar Smith, a Negro, was shot dead on a courthouse lawn before hundreds for “meddling in politics.” Gus Courts, the lone Negro registered in Belzoni after the lynching of Rev. Lee, was shot and has preserved his life only by fleeing Mississippi.



September 3, 1932

SPRINGFIELD, Illinois, August 25—Forty thousand miners and families, in six thousand cars and trucks, forming an army eighty miles long, were ambushed and brutally attacked at the Franklin County border. The trek-worn miners were about to arrive at their destination when hired killers of the coal operators opened fire about 8 p.m. August 24. From their ambush of brushes and weeds, the murderers permitted some five hundred cars to enter the county and without warning opened fire with machine guns, rifles, shot guns, and pistols.

The killers, provided with torches, ignited gasoline, burning up cars, truck-loads of food and First Aid ambulances.

About 150 men, women, and children were shot down. The number of slain is undetermined as yet. The miners came peacefully and unarmed. They walked right into the jaws of death, only being able to resist with bare hands.

Socialist Workers Party has proud class-struggle record in Alabama

BY BETSY FARLEY

The Socialist Workers Party has a consistent record of involvement in working-class struggles in Birmingham, Alabama. The city is a center of Black rights battles and of union struggles by coal miners, steelworkers, and others.

For nearly 30 years the party has had a branch there. Socialists recently closed the branch and consolidated their forces in Atlanta. They continue to reach out from there to working people throughout the region.

Members of the Socialist Workers Party joined in the civil rights battles in Alabama and throughout the South. During the 1955–56 bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, SWP members helped drive station wagons there, donated in response to an appeal from Black rights fighters there.

In 1966 socialists reported for the *Militant* in Lowndes County, Alabama, on the voting rights struggles there and the formation of the Lowndes County Freedom Organization. This was an independent Black political party that contended with the Democrats and Republicans for county offices.

In 1979 the Socialist Workers Party established a branch in Birmingham, a center of the coal and steel industries, as the party got into basic industry and the industrial unions to carry out its political and trade union work. Coal miners had been part of the successful 1977–78 United Mine Workers national strike. Women were fighting their way into previously “male” jobs in mines and steel mills.

The SWP opened a headquarters in downtown Birmingham. They joined in struggles and fielded candidates for public office. They distributed the *Militant* at mine portals, factory gates, on campuses, and in working-class communities, as well as on the job in mines and plants.

One antiracist battle was in defense of Tommy Lee Hines, a Black man who was mentally retarded and was framed up on rape charges in Decatur, Alabama. In 1979 party and Young Socialist Alliance members joined protests to demand justice for Hines. Civil rights fighters waged a campaign against armed attacks by Ku Klux Klan thugs backed by local cops.

Birmingham forum marks move to strengthen socialists’ work in South

BY KARL BUTTS

BIRMINGHAM—Thirty supporters and friends of the socialist movement attended a special Militant Labor Forum here July 28, marking steps to strengthen the political work of the Socialist Workers Party in the region. The Birmingham branch is closing and many socialist workers there are moving to Atlanta to build the party and the Young Socialists. Workers and youth from both Birmingham and Atlanta participated in the meeting.

The speakers noted the rich history of the party’s involvement in the class

Two socialists were attacked that year while selling the paper to workers at the entrance to U.S. Steel’s Concord coal mine. They were badly beaten by a company-inspired goon squad. The party campaigned and won support for the right to sell the *Militant*.

Socialist coal miners in Alabama were part of organizing the Coal Employment Project, which fought to get women hired in the mines and defend their rights on the job in face of company-promoted bias.

Socialist workers were part of successful unionization fights at the Haverpride Farms poultry plant and at Trinity Industries, a rail car plant. The 1988 strike that won recognition of the Steelworkers union at Trinity brought together young and veteran workers, Black and white.

Socialist workers in the Jim Walter mines were part of the fight by UMWA miners to push back the company’s assaults on job safety. The underground mines in Alabama are among the deepest shaft mines in North America. They have some of

New Orleans: workers speak out on social crisis

BY JACQUIE HENDERSON AND STEVE WARSHALL

NEW ORLEANS—“Look at this,” Alma Hayes exclaimed as she pulled the city bus to a stop in the Lower Ninth Ward and stared at the miles of rubble and exposed house foundations. “My route takes me all through the city and it is the same story almost everywhere,” she said. “All these people with no place to live and not a single level of government has lifted a finger to help them out.”

Billboards herald the “rebirth” of New Orleans and the big hotels and downtown casino report record profits. But many working people face huge obstacles in trying to return to live and work here since the social disaster precipitated by Hurricane Katrina two years ago. “None of those apartments suffered much damage and yet people are not allowed to live in them,” Hayes said, as we passed by hundreds of empty public housing units. “The hospitals are closed.

“And just look at all those nasty little

struggle in Alabama, both in the 1960s and since the SWP established a branch in 1979 (see article on this page). These include battles by coal miners, steelworkers, farmers, and fighters for Black rights. The meeting was addressed by Paul Mailhot and Susan LaMont from Birmingham and Ellie García, chairperson of the Socialist Workers Party in Atlanta.

Almost \$500 was collected for a travel fund to help the party respond to current struggles by working people in the Midwest. Participants bought more than \$300 in Pathfinder titles.



Militant/Susan Ellis

Protesters in Decatur, Alabama, confront cop-guarded Ku Klux Klan, May 1979. Socialists have been part of this and other Black rights struggles in Alabama for more than three decades.

the highest concentrations of methane gas among U.S. mines. Miners have had to fight constantly to force the company to abide by basic safety norms and federal mining law.

In September 2001, an explosion that claimed the lives of 13 miners at the Jim Walter Brookwood No. 5 mine was deadly confirmation of the stakes in this struggle. Socialists in Birmingham took part in miners’ actions and reported on the fight for the *Militant*.

Socialist workers in Alabama have also worked in defense of the Cuban Revolution, such as helping build

speaking engagements for visiting revolutionaries from Cuba.

They have championed the fights by Black farmers in the region to keep their land and against discrimination. Often these struggles have overlapped with union battles such as the strike of Titan Tire workers and catfish workers in rural Mississippi.

These are some of the struggles by working people in Alabama that the Socialist Workers Party has been part of for more than three decades. It is a proud history. And socialist workers and Young Socialists are pledged to continue to be part of these struggles.

trailers. Almost two years since Katrina and people are still stuck in them, getting sick while they wait forever to see if they can get some help rebuilding their homes. FEMA is still trying to hide from that,” she said, referring to the 76,000 trailers that continue to serve as “temporary” housing for people throughout the Gulf Coast.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) delayed testing the trailers for formaldehyde, a known carcinogen, for more than a year after complaints that residents were becoming ill, the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* reported July 20. In a recently exposed 2006 memo, the paper said, a FEMA lawyer cautioned against testing. He wrote, “Once you get results and should they indicate some problems, the clock is running on our duty to respond to them.”

“I lived in one of those for a year,” Sh’tarra Ohillia, a student at Southern University at New Orleans, said in an interview. “Apartments are so expensive now, but my baby was just getting too sick in that trailer. The whole SU campus is still in trailers.”

Many workers came to New Orleans from other states or countries to find jobs doing cleanup and reconstruction jobs. They not only confront inferior housing, high rents, closed hospitals, and lack of other basic services. Many have complained that contractors sometimes do not pay them after long days cleaning up the hurricane-damaged areas.

Mike Ware, a construction worker who moved here from Indiana shortly before Katrina, said, “I found myself with nothing after the storm passed. I literally lived out of a tool shack for three months.

“Then I got work over in Marrero,” he recounted. “I’d carpool there every Monday with a group of six guys from

Mexico, stay in trailers during the week, and then come back here on Saturday.

“We really fixed up those trailers—brought up our own microwaves, TVs, VCRs, stereos, and other things,” he said. “Then one Monday we came back and it was all gone – the trailers and all our stuff—taken by the bosses along with all hope of getting paid.”

“Yes, sometimes you end up working for free,” Samuel Galán, a Guatemalan-born day laborer said as he stood with half a dozen other workers on the median strip at Broad Avenue and Martin Luther King, waiting for trucks to come by and offer them work for the day.

“And now you’re lucky if you even work four days a week,” said Galán. “And the pay is down from before.”

In the spring of 2006 Rick Tompkins went to New Orleans to take a job offer hauling trailers for FEMA. “The first week I worked there the government shut the job down,” he said. “Apparently they were writing checks to all kinds of people who weren’t doing any work, leaving none for us workers.

“After that I did cleanup work, but we had to fight to get paid from that contractor, too. I just stayed there just until I made enough to get back to Houston.”

“This is why we are going to have the Tribunal,” Hayes said. The organization she belongs to, Safe Streets/Strong Communities, along with the People’s Hurricane Relief Fund and other local groups have called an international tribunal on hurricanes Rita and Katrina from August 29 to September 2. The Tribunal will charge the U.S. government with criminal mistreatment of hurricane victims.

“We’re all going to testify and we are going to take it through these streets with an anniversary march on August 29,” she said. “Tell everybody to come down for that.”

New Zealand, Australia imperialists pressure Fiji

BY PATRICK BROWN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand, August 11—The New Zealand government tightened sanctions against Fiji in early July. The sanctions, which restrict travel by Fijian representatives, ramp up measures imposed earlier by the governments of New Zealand and Australia.

The two imperialist governments are stepping up pressure on the administration of Voreqe Bainimarama, who led the military overthrow of Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase last December.

At the same time, the Fiji government has faced union protests by nurses and other public employees demanding an end to wage cuts imposed in March.

Along with the official sanctions, government officials in New Zealand and Australia have issued repeated warnings against travel to the island nation. This has placed pressure on earnings from tourism and added to Fiji's economic crisis.

Posing as champions of "restoring democracy" in Fiji, the imperialist rulers of Australia and New Zealand are pressing to reassert their influence and reimpose stability in a country marked by political upheaval for two decades.

Right-wing forces have carried out several coups in Fiji, two in 1987, led by Brigadier Sitiveni Rabuka, and one in 2000, led by businessmen George Speight. These were directed against Labour Party-led governments, opposing their stance in favor of racial equality. The leaders of those coups blamed the country's social problems on Indo-Fijians—descendants of indentured workers brought from India by the British colonialists to work the sugar plantations between 1879 and 1916.

The 2000 coup developed into a long-running stalemate, which ended when military chief Bainimarama moved against both the Labour government and the rightists led by Speight who had taken government leaders hostage. Later that year Bainimarama installed Qarase as prime minister.

The two leaders were quickly at odds. When Qarase pushed ahead with controversial measures, including a bill to give amnesty to leaders of

the 2000 coup, Bainimarama carried out his military takeover.

The military leader insists his government is on a different course from those who led the 1987 and 2000 coups. In speeches he has attacked the racially based electoral system, skewed toward privilege for the chiefs and against Indo-Fijians. He has pledged to make Fiji more friendly to businessmen and clean out corruption associated with the previous regime.

Such positions have won some sympathy from many Fijian working people, especially Indo-Fijians.

The new government's actions have exposed the divisions among ruling-class forces in Fiji. When the Great Council of Chiefs refused to recognize the interim government in April, Bainimarama withdrew its funding and closed its offices. Chiefs in Ba, a province in the more developed western region, then declared their support for the government. The government reinstated the council in early August.

Since the takeover, soldiers and police have been accused of killing three people, roughing up political opponents, and suspending the travel rights of others. Fiji's *Pacific* magazine reported July 20 that the previous day "the military and police carried out a full-scale crowd control and

Chicago: daily rallies protest cop brutality



Militant/Jorge Lertora

CHICAGO, August 10—Ashunda Harrison, right, addresses rally of 300 in North Lawndale, a Chicago neighborhood, to demand justice for her nephew Aaron Harrison. The 18-year-old Black youth was shot to death by police on August 6. Daily rallies have been held to protest the killing. The Cook County medical examiner said Harrison was shot in the back. Witnesses say police chased Harrison, who was unarmed, into the alley and shot him. The police claim he had a gun.

"It may not be your son today but it may be tomorrow," Ashunda Harrison said. This is the second death at the hands of Chicago cops this week. Gefery Johnson died a few days earlier after the police shocked him several times with a taser gun.

—ROLLANDE GIRARD

riot drill" in Suva, the capital.

Despite this threatening move, more than 1,000 members of the Fiji Nursing Association stopped work July 24, demanding an end to a 5 percent wage cut on public employees. With teachers and other government employees walking out August 2, a total of about 14,000 workers were on

strike.

A couple of days later, the teachers returned to work. The nurses returned to work August 10, after the government refused to improve its offer of a 1 percent wage increase. Another labor organization, the Fiji Trade Union Congress, had earlier accepted the same offer.

Gov't disregard for safety led to bridge collapse

BY TOM BAUMANN

MINNEAPOLIS, August 12—On the evening of August 1, the I-35W bridge, a major roadway in this city that crosses the Mississippi River, collapsed during rush-hour traffic. Many cars and a bus on the bridge fell into the river. To date, nine people have been confirmed dead and about 100 injured.

The bridge was the most heavily used in the state, transporting an estimated 140,000 vehicles a day.

As early as 1990, federal inspectors rated the overpass as "structurally deficient" due to significant corrosion in the bearings. In a 2005 inspection, the bridge received a rating of 50 on scale of 100 for structural stability.

I-35 was a truss bridge, with a 458-

foot-long steel arch supporting it to avoid putting piers in the water. These types of bridges are more susceptible to collapse if they are not well maintained than suspension and other bridges, according to engineers.

Dan Dorgan, a Minnesota Department of Transportation bridge engineer, told Minnesota Public Radio that in a study conducted from 2004 to 2007, two options were given: either add steel plates to reinforce critical parts of the bridge or conduct more thorough inspections. "We chose the inspection route," he said.

No government officials have accepted responsibility for the lack of action to repair this or other deficient bridges.

The collapse shows the continuing crumbling of infrastructure in the United States and the failure of the federal, state, and local governments

to devote resources to make necessary repairs.

Two recent events in New York City highlighted this problem. On July 18 an 83-year old steam pipe burst in midtown Manhattan, killing one person and injuring 45. Then on August 8, a two-hour heavy rainfall paralyzed the subway system when drainage tunnels were overwhelmed. These incidents have drawn attention to the deteriorating service and lack of maintenance by the companies involved, Con Edison and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, respectively.

The I-35W bridge is just one out of about 77,000 U.S. bridges considered structurally deficient, about 1,160 of which are in Minnesota.

The National Transportation Safety Board says it could be a year before it issues its final report on the cause of the bridge collapse.

Minnesota meat packers

Continued from front page
bathroom and the answer they receive is "at 8:30 a.m. or 11:30 a.m."

A few days after workers distributed his statement, Gutiérrez was sent home for allegedly leaving too much meat on the bones he works on. This attack came just a week after the Dakota bosses, in a company meeting and a subsequent letter to union workers, acknowledged the right of any worker to distribute material in favor or against the union.

This acknowledgement came after management was caught trying to hinder a worker distributing a pro-union flyer. The worker stood up to the bosses, who backed down and later felt com-

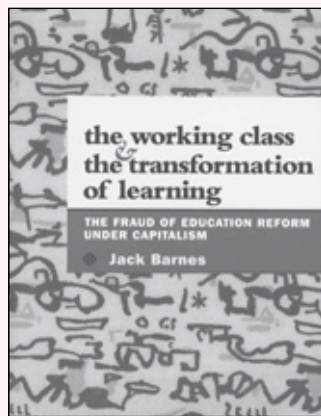
pelled to state in the company letter that "management will not confiscate or attempt to confiscate union campaign materials."

The flyer that bosses had tried to curb was written by union steward Luis Cruz. It urged co-workers to defend the union and support Local 789's contract demands for a 60 cent per year raise and more limits on line speed.

Union supporters have been stepping up their visits to coworkers in their homes, explaining the stakes involved in the fight to defend the union, whether or not a decertification election is held.

Rebecca Williamson is a trimmer at Dakota Premium Foods.

The Working Class & the Transformation of Learning—



The Fraud of Education Reform Under Capitalism

"Until society is reorganized so that education is a human activity from the time we are very young until the time we die, there will be no education worthy of working, creating humanity. That is the historical truth"—Jack Barnes

\$3—Available on line from Pathfinder Press or see locations listed on page 8.

Socialist revolution requires a disciplined party

Below is an excerpt from *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party* by James P. Cannon, a founder of the U.S. Communist Party in 1919 and of the Socialist Workers Party in 1938. It is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month in August. This book is both a manual of Leninist party organization and the record of a significant political struggle within the Socialist Workers Party in 1939–40. In face of the outbreak of World War II, under the pressure of the imperialist war drive, a petty-bourgeois faction split from the party. James Burnham, referred to in the selection below, was a leader of that fac-

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

tion. After leaving the party he became an open anticommunist. He worked for a while for the CIA and later became editor of the right-wing *National Review*. Copyright © 1972 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY JAMES P. CANNON

As long as the real scope of the political and theoretical disputes remained undetermined the talk about the organization question contributed, and could contribute, nothing but confusion. But, now that the fundamental political issues are fully clarified, now that the two



Coal miners in Dixon City, Pennsylvania, discuss strike during World War II. Poster of Uncle Sam on the wall says, "I need your skill in a war job." The miners' action was an important example of working-class resistance to the U.S. rulers' war aims.

camps have taken their position along fundamental lines, it is possible and perhaps feasible to take up the organization question for discussion in its proper setting and in its proper place—as an important but subordinate issue; as an expression in organizational terms of the political differences, but not as a substitute for them.

The fundamental conflict between the proletarian and the petty-bourgeois tendencies expresses itself at every turn in questions of the party organization. But involved in this secondary conflict are not little incidents, grievances, personal friction, and similar small change which are a common feature in the life of every organization. The dispute goes deeper. We are at war with Burnham and the Burnhamites over the fundamental question of the *character of the party*. Burnham, who is completely alien to the program and traditions of Bolshevism, is no less hostile to its "organizational methods." He is much nearer in spirit to Souvarine and all the decadents, skeptics, and renegades of Bolshevism than to the spirit of Lenin and his terrible "regime."

Burnham is concerned first of all with "democratic guarantees" against

degeneration of the party after the revolution. We are concerned first of all with building a party that will be capable of leading the revolution. Burnham's conception of party democracy is that of a perpetual talking shop in which discussions go on forever and nothing is ever firmly decided. (See the resolution of the Cleveland Conference!) Consider his "new" invention—a party with two different public organs defending two different and antagonistic programs! Like all the rest of Burnham's independent ideas, that is simply plagiarism from alien sources. It is not difficult to recognize in this brilliant scheme of party organization a rehabilitation of [Socialist Party leader] Norman Thomas' ill-fated "all-inclusive party."

Our conception of the party is radically different. For us the party must be a combat organization which leads a determined struggle for power. The Bolshevik party which leads the struggle for power needs not only internal democracy. It also requires an imperious centralism and an iron discipline in action. It requires a proletarian composition conforming to its proletarian program. The Bolshevik party cannot be led by dilettantes whose

real interests and real lives are in another and alien world. It requires an active professional leadership, composed of individuals democratically selected and democratically controlled, who devote their entire lives to the party, and who find in the party and in its multiform activities in a proletarian environment, complete personal satisfaction.

For the proletarian revolutionist the party is the concentrated expression of his life purpose, and he is bound to it for life and death. He preaches and practices party patriotism, because he knows that his socialist ideal cannot be realized without the party. In his eyes the crime of crimes is disloyalty or irresponsibility toward the party. The proletarian revolutionist is proud of his party. He defends it before the world on all occasions. The proletarian revolutionist is a disciplined man, since the party cannot exist as a combat organization without discipline. When he finds himself in the minority, he loyally submits to the decision of the party and carries out its decisions, while he awaits new events to verify the disputes or new opportunities to discuss them again.

The petty-bourgeois attitude toward the party, which Burnham represents, is the opposite of all this. The petty-bourgeois character of the opposition is shown in their attitude toward the party, their conception of the party, even in their method of complaining and whining about the "grievances," as unfailingly as in their light-minded attitude toward our program, our doctrine, and our tradition.

The petty-bourgeois intellectual, who wants to teach and guide the labor movement without participating in it, feels only loose ties to the party and is always full of "grievances" against it. The moment his toes are stepped on, or he is rebuffed, he forgets all about the interests of the movement and remembers only that his feelings have been hurt; the revolution may be important, but the wounded vanity of a petty-bourgeois intellectual is more important. He is all for discipline when he is laying down the law to others, but as soon as he finds himself in a minority, he begins to deliver ultimatums and threats of split to the party majority.

August

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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Organize the mines!

Continued from front page

in nonunion mines—from the Murray-owned operations to the Sago mine in West Virginia, where 12 miners were killed by employer greed in January 2006.

In March, two sections of the Crandall Canyon mine collapsed. Instead of closing the mine, “operators moved to another section and continued chipping away,” the Associated Press reported. That’s what can happen when workers lack a union to enforce basic safety conditions.

A number of workers have spoken to the *Militant* about conditions in that mine but asked to remain anonymous for fear of being fired. How can safety problems be addressed when workers can’t freely report or discuss them? But those are the pressures workers are under when they are not organized as a union to fight for safety.

Miners certainly cannot rely on the Mine Safety and Health Administration, which had approved retreat mining at Crandall Canyon, with its known dangers, and refused to shut the mine after the March collapse.

The bosses like to instill fatalism: “nothing can be done—hazards come with mining.” But mine roofs can be secured, worn electrical wires replaced, and

coal dust and explosive gases neutralized. Mines can be shut down until dangerous conditions are fixed. But it takes time and money, and bosses would rather devote these to production and profit.

When workers are unionized they can make a difference in enforcing job conditions. In coal mines owned by Murray in western Pennsylvania and eastern Ohio, the United Mine Workers union waged struggles several years ago that beat back the company’s efforts to undermine safety, cut wages, and weaken workers’ rights on the job (see articles on page 5). And in Utah, the two-year battle by workers at the Co-Op mine for a UMWA local gave a powerful example of how miners could stand up to attacks by the coal barons.

This perspective—captured in the headline of last week’s special *Militant* supplement, “Safety is a union question! No miner has to die!”—has struck a chord among the many working people who, in response to the Utah mine collapse, are discussing the need for unions. Supporters of the *Militant* have been getting an excellent response, and we urge you to help get it into the hands of friends, coworkers, fellow students, and farmers. Order your bundle of the *Militant* and of the special supplement. Help get out the truth!

Quebec Social Forum to start August 23

BY JOHN STEELE

TORONTO, August 9—Momentum is building for the Quebec Social Forum, which will take place in Montreal August 23–26. Organizers expect the political gathering will draw several thousand participants from Quebec, across Canada, the United States, and elsewhere.

The theme of the event is “Another Quebec is marching... Let’s build it together.” It will be a forum for wide-ranging discussions and debate, on questions ranging from fight against imperialist war, to the struggles of Native peoples, to how to fight against environmental degradation.

More than 300 workshops and roundtable discussions have been scheduled. The topics include: “The Immigration System, Foreign Temporary Workers and the Labor Movement in Canada”; “Social Conservatism—Threat to the Right to Abortion in Quebec?”; “Globalization and the Environment”; “The Union Movement—Challenges and Convergence with Social Struggles”; “Six Nations Land Reclamation Against Canada’s Encroachment”; and “The Undocumented.”

The workshops are sponsored by a wide array of organizations such as the Quebec Federation of Women, Alternatives, the League of Rights and Liberties, National Network of Youth Against Racism, Coalition

for Justice for Adil Charkaoui, Aboriginal Women of Quebec, Confederation of National Trade Unions, and Canadian Union of Postal Workers.

Most of the workshops and cultural events will take place at the University of Quebec in Montreal (UQAM)/Émile-Gamelin Park.

The Quebec Social Forum comes out of a series of gatherings of “antiglobalization” forces, called the World Social Forum, that began in 2001 in Porto Alegre, Brazil. In recent years they have taken place in Nairobi, Kenya; Caracas, Venezuela; Bamako, Mali; and Karachi, Pakistan. The most recent such event, held in Atlanta in late June, was attended by about 6,500 people.

The big majority of the participants at the Montreal gathering are expected to come from Quebec. Over the past three months, “Mobilization Caravans” have crisscrossed Quebec to build the event. Organizing meetings have taken place in Joliette, Charlemagne, Quebec City, Sherbrooke, Trois Rivières, Chicoutimi, and other cities.

The event will begin with a mass assembly, and will end with a march through Montreal.

For information on the Quebec Social Forum and how to participate, go to the website www.forumsocialquebec.org or e-mail info@forumsocialquebec.org.

Australia ‘terror’ frame-up collapses

Continued from front page

Rudd repeatedly endorsed the government’s handling of the Haneef case.

Nonetheless, public outrage grew as the truth emerged in the media. Civil libertarians and prominent lawyers spoke out against the government’s actions under the “antiterrorism” laws. Some 400 people attended a rally July 29 here to oppose these laws and demand justice for Haneef.

Charges against Haneef were dropped July 27 for lack of evidence. He was released, but his work visa was not reissued. He left for India, but continues to fight to get his Australian work visa back.

Federal police held Haneef for 12 days for questioning before charging him. This was the first time the new Anti-Terrorism Act has been used to justify prolonged interrogation without charges. The law was amended in 2005 to allow police to detain “terror”

suspects for up to 14 days without charge.

The government is now preparing a massive police and military operation in Sydney for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum to be held here September 2–9. Government leaders from each of the 21 member states, including U.S. president George Bush, will attend the meeting.

A protest against Bush and Howard is set for September 8. Government officials say police will have powers to search people and cars and set up roadblocks and barricades. Authorities have said a concrete fence will be built across the central business district, closing off certain areas of the city. Half the city railway stations will be shut down. Army and police planes and helicopters will fly over the city, naval vessels will patrol the harbor, and more than 4,000 soldiers, police, and security guards will be deployed.

CORRECTION

In the article “7,000 workers shut down forest industry in British Columbia” in the August 20 issue, the name of the plant chair at CIPA Lumber was misspelled. It should be spelled Bob Donick.

Iraq offensive

Continued from front page

lars in new military aid to allies in the Middle East.

U.S. officials have pressed al-Maliki to get legislation through the Iraqi parliament that will assure wealthy Sunnis—who had a privileged position under the Hussein regime—a stake in the government. That prospect appears slim for now as al-Maliki’s government has faced a rash of resignations by cabinet members. Six from the largest Sunni bloc in parliament left the cabinet August 1. This was followed by a boycott by five cabinet members loyal to former prime minister Iyad Allawi. Six other seats, allotted to Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr’s bloc, remain empty because parliament has not approved replacements.

Following the Security Council vote, UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon said the United Nations “cannot shy away” from its responsibility in Iraq because of the violence, the UN News Service reported. The UN staff in Iraq was reduced in October 2003 after bombings at their headquarters in Baghdad and a number of attacks on UN personnel.

U.S. military spokespeople said August 8 that 32 members of the Mahdi Army, al-Sadr’s militia, were killed in fighting in Sadr City, a mostly Shiite district of Baghdad. Three days later, the U.S. military reported 33 al-Qaeda supporters were killed in operations in Diyala.

The U.S. military announced a new offensive August 13 against al-Qaeda and Shiite militias. A growing number of Sunni militias have joined the U.S.-led military effort.

Antiunion record

Continued from page 5

the mine in 1995. From day one it was clear that Murray had every intention of weakening the union. Working conditions in the mine deteriorated rapidly. Grievances piled up, dozens of miners were disciplined, and suspensions multiplied. Many issues involving work rules and safety remained unresolved.

Deterioration of safety

In 1996 a miner was killed in a haulage accident; the following year, a belt repairman was killed in a rib roll. In this period miners worked up to 60 plus hours a week. In the fall of 1999 there were two major rock falls along the main haulage track in the mine, temporarily shutting the mine down. It was a miracle that no one got hurt or killed.

In April of 1999, without any warning, Maple Creek owners ordered the miners out of the mine and told them to clear out their lockers. The union was not informed of the closure and no explanation was given to the miners, a clear violation of the state’s Worker Adjustment Retraining Notification law. The abrupt closing took place after inspectors with the U.S. Department of Labor’s Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) cited the company for serious safety violations. The workers—fuming at this point—were called back to work a few days after this incident.

The battle reached a head in September when miners walked off the job for two days. The strike was over whether the current national Bituminous Coal Wage Agreement or a separate “memorandum of understanding” is the standing contract.

In the wake of the contract rejection in 2000, tensions reached new levels when the union used “memorial days”—where miners do not report to work—to put a spotlight on Murray’s union-busting moves. After the successful memorial days, including a 400-strong rally in Powhatan, Ohio, supported by both the Maple Creek and Powhatan No. 6 locals last summer, Murray filed more lawsuits all of which have gone down to defeat.

Maple Creek miners know that the road ahead will not be smooth. There is concern about the impact the phasing out of Maple Creek will have on jobs and seniority rights when the new portal at High Quality begins production. But miners are in a stronger position today to defend their union and are more confident to meet the inevitable challenges ahead.

Frank Forrestal and Tony Lane are underground miners and members of UMWA Local 1248.

‘Militant’ summer schedule

This issue of the *Militant* is a two-week issue. The paper will resume weekly publication with the issue printed August 30.