

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
‘Stop immigration raids now!’
demand Virginia protesters
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE VOL. 72/NO. 21 MAY 26, 2008

California truckers stop work over fuel prices



Militant/Tom Tomasko
 Truckers picket Port of Oakland May 7

BY JOEL BRITTON

OAKLAND, California—Hundreds of truckers marched through the Port of Oakland May 7, refusing to move cargo in protest of high diesel fuel prices.

At the action drivers handed out a flyer with their demands, which include a doubling the rate they get for transporting a load. They are also demanding a rate increase of 1 percent for every 5 cents the price of fuel rises above \$4 per gallon. Diesel prices are now well over \$4 a gallon in the San Francisco Bay Area, and drivers said they expect it to hit \$7 by July.

An owner-operator with 17 years of experience told the *Militant* that a two-
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In California, SWP candidate for president backs workers fighting racism

BY BETSEY STONE

SAN FRANCISCO—Róger Calero, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, met with carpenters who are fighting attempts by the Apartment Investment Management Company (AIMCO) to sow racist divisions on construction sites, while on tour here May 9–12.

The AIMCO bosses have tried to use Latino workers to drive down wages and push the union out. They have kept Latino and Black crews separate and given Latino workers overtime while shortening the hours of Black workers. Bosses have hurled racist indignities at both Black and Latino workers.

Latino and Black workers have united to call an end to this, organizing a lawsuit and putting a spotlight on what is happening.

“Your fight is setting an example, inspiring other workers who are hearing about it,” Calero told a group of carpenters gathered for a meeting May 12. “The bosses will continue to use rising unemployment and divide-and-rule tactics as a weapon against workers. Your struggle shows how when we fight collectively, these tactics will backfire on them.”

Calero said fights by workers to overcome divisions on the job and to resist the bosses’ attempts to drive down wages and conditions are part of the struggle to transform the unions into fighting in-
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Iowa: protests meet ICE arrest of 390



Waterloo Courier/Matthew Putney

May 12 protest at National Cattle Congress grounds in Waterloo, Iowa, where workers are being held in barns after raid at meatpacking plant by Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

WATERLOO, Iowa, May 13—A hundred angry protesters waving American and Mexican flags demonstrated in support today for 390 workers arrested in an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raid of Agriprocessors Inc. in the town of Postville in northeast Iowa. The youthful and raucous crowd yelled “ICE go home,” “We’re not criminals,” “We will not surrender,” and “*¡Sí se puede!*” (Yes we can) outside the entrance of the National Cattle Congress fairgrounds in

Waterloo.

Double that number demonstrated here yesterday as the Homeland Security buses full of prisoners arrived.

In the largest immigration raid in U.S. history, as many as 500 cops from local, state, and federal agencies descended on the plant May 12. The agents had a criminal search warrant targeting workers for allegedly using false Social Security numbers and civil search warrants for workers ICE says are in the country
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‘Militant’ supporters poised for success in subscription drive

BY OLYMPIA NEWTON

May 14—The eight-week campaign to win new subscribers to the *Militant* is heading into its final stretch. The international effort is slightly ahead

of schedule for an in-full and on-time finish May 18.

While the overall international goal of 2,400 new readers is within reach, we want to make sure that every single local area that took a quota makes its target. About half of all cities are on schedule to date.

“Four *Militant* supporters sold 11 subscriptions and 36 singles at the Rochelle Foods plant gate May 10,” writes Laura Anderson from Chicago. “Some new subscribers had purchased the *Militant* at a previous plant gate sale. One convinced everyone in his van to contribute. ‘We have to know more about what’s going on,’ he said.”

“We had a great weekend,” reports Susan LaMont from Carrollton, Georgia. “We sold 17 subscriptions going door-to-door in Douglasville, Cedartown, and Carrollton.” Lamont also said that supporters of the paper from that west Georgia town teamed up with others from Atlanta to sell
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Fund drive: 1 week and \$14,500 to go!

BY ANGEL LARISCY

With one week remaining in the effort to collect \$100,000 to fund the *Militant* newspaper, supporters in many cities report they have secured contributions and pledges surpassing their local quotas.

Overall, the collection is two percent behind schedule, with \$14,500 remaining to be collected to make the international goal. Local fund directors in Chicago; New York; Twin Cities; Washington, D.C.; and Canada report that their
Continued on page 4

As we go to press...

Minnesota meat packers approve contract

SOUTH ST. PAUL, Minnesota, May 14—As we go to press, workers at Dakota Premium Foods here approved a new contract by 94 to 51. In this round, workers beat back some of the bosses’ worst demands, winning better pay and more union access to the plant.

The company has been on an 11-month drive against the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 789 and its members in the plant.

One of the workers’ central demands—slow the line speed with worker verification—is not addressed in the new contract. The battle will now accelerate over safety issues.

The meat packers of UFCW Local 789 have set an example in their resistance to company attempts to impose onerous working conditions. They deserve the support of the entire labor movement in their struggle to defend life and limb, and for dignity on the job.

The *Militant* will have full coverage of the fight at Dakota and the recent contract settlement in its next issue, as part of spreading the example of this struggle to other packinghouse workers in the region.

—ERNEST MAILHOT

Social disaster unfolds after cyclone hits Myanmar

BY PATRICK BROWN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand, May 12—A social disaster has exploded in Myanmar in the aftermath of a cyclone that ripped through the country May 3. Tens of thousands have died—150,000
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Socialist vice presidential candidate backs Somali immigrants in Sweden

BY DAG TIRSÉN

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—"I am honored to be here today among fellow fighters to bring solidarity and greetings from the Socialist Workers Party election campaign," said Alyson Kennedy, SWP candidate for vice president of the United States, at a meeting of almost 300 people here organized by the Somali Peace and Development Organization.

Kennedy had been invited to address the gathering after she and Ben Joyce, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress in New York's 7th District, met with the organization's executive board as part of a fact-finding tour to Sweden.

Somali Peace and Development formed in opposition to the U.S.-backed Ethiopian invasion of Somalia. The meeting addressed by Kennedy was called to raise funds to send to Somalia.

"My running mate Róger Calero and I are the only candidates in the U.S. elections who, when elected, will immediately and unconditionally withdraw all U.S. troops from Afghanistan, Iraq, and everywhere else in the world," said Kennedy. "We opposed the bombing of your country in 2007 and oppose the continued attacks on Somalia," she said. Kennedy's remarks were translated into Somali, and the translator reminded the crowd that there are more than 1,000 U.S. troops in Somalia today.

In recent months the Somali Peace and Development Organization has been waging a fight against attacks by the Swedish government against Somalis living in Stockholm. Seven bilingual

Somali-Swedish day care centers were closed in February after accusations that local government funds to run the centers had been diverted to finance "terrorism." The day care centers were opened again after protests by Somalis in the area.

Three Swedish citizens of Somali ancestry were arrested, accused of helping transfer money collected by the Somali Peace and Development Organization that the Swedish government claims is being used for "terrorist" purposes. None of the men have been charged, and two are still in jail awaiting trial. One, a bus driver, was released but was immediately fired from his job. One other Somali remains in jail in Norway on similar accusations.

According to Swedish law you can only be detained for two weeks. The court, however, has repeatedly prolonged the detentions. Every time this has happened crowds have gathered outside the court in protest. A meeting in Rinkeby, a suburb of Stockholm, drew more than 300. A range of speakers from the Somali community, as well as journalists, writers, and political activists, condemned the arrests.

While in Sweden, Kennedy also addressed a protest outside the Swedish parliament demanding legal papers for immigrant workers. Organizers told her that according to some calculations 45,000 undocumented immigrants live and work in Sweden.

Kennedy met with meat packers outside a slaughterhouse area in Stockholm



Militant/Dag Tirsén

Alyson Kennedy (right), Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. vice president, speaks with Somali women protesting discrimination in Sweden at April 26 conference. Amina Said, (center) is the spokesperson for the Somali Peace and Development Organization.

and spoke to a class of more than 50 students at Nacka Gymnasium, a high school.

While in Sweden, Kennedy also brought solidarity to striking nurses on the picket line outside Karolinska hospital in Huddinge outside Stockholm. The 80,000-member Healthcare union struck for a contract with a substantial wage raise. "We strike not only for ourselves but for future generations," bio-technician Birgitta Gillborg-Hellström

told Kennedy. "With these wages, young people will not choose this profession."

This is the first nurses' strike in Sweden since 1995. According to an opinion poll published in *Dagens nyheter* newspaper, 73 percent of those in Sweden support the strike.

"I couldn't believe there was so much love that could be extended to us," Gillborg-Hellström said, referring to the support the picket lines have gotten from passersby.

Immigrants protest harassment in Seattle area on Cinco de Mayo

BY EDWIN FRUIT

PACIFIC, Washington, May 6—As part of an ongoing struggle against racist harassment against Latinos in this small town south of Seattle, activists here organized a Cinco de Mayo protest meeting and march yesterday.

Since last summer working people have organized against local police profiling and arrests of Latinos. Cops have in some cases brought them to the Northwest Detention Center immigration jail in Tacoma, Washington.

In an effort to present himself as trying to improve relations, Pacific mayor Richard Hildreth organized a Cinco de Mayo event this year. But he did so without consulting any of the Latinos in town, which many activists saw as adding insult to injury.

El Comité Pro-Amnistía General y

Justicia Social (Committee for General Amnesty and Social Justice) called a protest meeting and march. El Comité helped organize a successful May Day action in Seattle demanding legalization of immigrants last week. A number of students from Seattle University, members of Chicano Student Movement of Aztlán (MEChA) and an immigrant rights group called NO SIR!, also attended the Cinco de Mayo protest.

Police denied a march permit for Cinco de Mayo and threatened protesters with arrest. Two armed cops came onto the grounds of the church where the protest meeting was being held.

"If you hold a march there will be consequences because you don't have a permit," one cop blurted out, interrupting the meeting where ac-

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THE MILITANT

Independence for Puerto Rico!

The 'Militant' has been a leading voice in the fight to end Washington's colonial domination of Puerto Rico. The struggle of working people on the island to get the Yankee boot off their necks is a fight on behalf of all working people.

Don't miss a single issue!



Protest against FBI harassment of Puerto Rican independence fighters.

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Editor: Olympia Newton

Managing Editor: Cindy Jaquith

Washington correspondent: Sam Manuel

Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Ved Dookhun, Martín Koppel, Paul Pederson, Doug Nelson, Ben O'Shaughnessy

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the Militant's views. These are expressed in editorials.

Minnesota meat packers fight for new contract

BY JULIAN SANTANA

SOUTH ST. PAUL, Minnesota—In their first contract vote May 7, meat-packing workers at Dakota Premium Foods rejected the company’s offer by a vote of 116 to 5. The offer included a

Workers approve contract

— see front-page box

raise of 25 cents per hour going back to July 2007, 25 cents upon ratification, and 30 cents a year for the remainder of the contract until 2011. It also included a clause that would allow the company to raise insurance premiums by 25 percent a year starting in 2009. The company has refused to include anything that would limit the line speed.

Workers saw the vote as a way to tell the company they want a better contract. About 60 percent of those eligible to vote participated. Many others did not bother to cast a vote because everyone was sure of the outcome.

After the vote count Don Seaquist, president of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 789, which represents the workers at Dakota Premium, announced there would be a second contract vote and strike authorization on May 14.

As we go to press, Local 789 members accepted the second contract offer. (See box on front page.)

The May 7 “no” vote led to increased discussions among workers about the next steps in their fight. Workers decided to put out their weekly newsletter, *The Workers’ Voice*, which was distributed at work on May 12, to coincide with a negotiating session between the union and the company.

“Last week, with a 96 percent ‘no’ vote, we told the bosses we don’t accept their insulting contract ‘offer,’” the newsletter said. “We’ve stated over and over the main things we want:

“1) 50 cents a year raise, including 50 cents back pay raise to July 2007 in a four-year contract that includes 2007.

“2) We propose including in the contract that the line speed does not go over 96 cows an hour. Since the company has said the line is kept at 94 to 96 cows, they have no reason not to agree.

“3) No increase in medical costs.”

The Workers’ Voice encouraged workers to vote for strike authorization on May 14 in order to give the union leadership, in collaboration with the membership, the ability to call a strike if necessary. “This tells the company we will not let the negotiations drag out and [that we] want what we deserve,” the newsletter said.

It also pointed to the rising costs of gas, milk, and other basic necessities workers face. “With the approximately \$1 raise over the 5 years of the last contract, we can buy much less today than we could in 2002. Let’s stop going backwards and win a decent raise!”

The Workers’ Voice also reported several examples given by workers of company abuse and worsening working conditions. These included a supervisor pushing a worker, a worker being denied his request to work a lighter job after returning from back surgery, and several recent injuries.

Workers were also outraged at another instance during a power outage on May 8 in which kill-floor workers were forced to wait outside in the cold for more than

three hours without food or drink after working the entire day—more than 13 hours total.

Stephanie Flowers, a young African American worker at the plant, was one of the workers who voted against the company’s contract proposal May 7. She explained that when she was hired last July she hardly knew what a union was but she said the company helped her learn. “The ‘no’ vote showed support for the union and that we are standing up for ourselves. We’re fed up with the treatment,” said Flowers.

Julian Santana is a member of UFCW Local 789 and a kill-floor worker at Dakota Premium Foods. Ernest Mailhot contributed to this article.

Social disaster unfolds after Myanmar cyclone

Continued from front page
homeless.

The devastation has been magnified by the legacy of imperialist underdevelopment of Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, and the brutal military dictatorship that has ruled the country for 46 years.

Imperialist governments are using promises of aid to pressure the military government to carry out political and economic “reforms” to their liking. London, which extracted massive amounts of wealth as Burma’s colonial master from 1886 to 1948, promised a paltry £5 million (US\$10 million). UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon said that food aid provided so far may only be a 10th of what’s needed.

For its part, Myanmar’s dictatorship has impeded the delivery of food and other supplies. It has seized some shipments and dragged its feet on issuing entry visas to foreign aid officials.

The government issued warnings of the coming cyclone a week before it hit. However, the country has no radar system that could have tracked the storm as it moved across the Irrawaddy Delta in the south.

“The wave was up to 12 feet high and it swept away and inundated half the houses in low-lying villages,” the minister for relief and resettlement, Maung Maung Swe, told reporters in Yangon, the capital, May 6. Most of the deaths were in the delta, which is home to more than 6 million of Myanmar’s 53 million people.

Contamination of drinking water through floods, sewage, and corpses brings with it the threat of cholera and other fatal illnesses. Naing Ko Ko from the New Zealand Office of the National Council for the Union of Burma told the *Militant* that with no resources at hand, people “don’t know what to do about the dead bodies floating in the water—not just people but cattle and pigs and other animals.”

Aid with an eyedropper

Myanmar is rich in natural resources including oil, natural gas, and gems, but has very little infrastructure. Its foreign debt is nearly \$7 billion.

The U.S. government, which maintains investment and trade sanctions against Myanmar, pledged a paltry \$3 million to UN agencies to help with emergency food distribution. Euro-



Militant/Jenny Shegos

United Food and Commercial Workers Local 789 staff member Miguel Gutiérrez speaks about struggle for a contract at Dakota Premium Foods during May Day rally in St. Paul, Minnesota, demanding legalization of immigrants.

pean Union officials announced a similar level of aid.

U.S. president George Bush pointedly announced the aid at a ceremony awarding the Congressional Gold Medal to Aung San Suu Kyi. Held for many years in Yangon under house arrest, Suu Kyi heads the opposition National League for Democracy. The league won elections in 1990, but the junta blocked the new parliament from meeting.

The Myanmar government has insisted that it control aid distribution, hindering the arrival of even these pittance. On May 8—five days after the storm hit—the first Red Cross flight landed. Other flights have followed.

According to a May 9 AP article, “only one out of 10 people who are homeless, injured or threatened by disease and hunger have received some kind of aid in the week since the cyclone hit.” As demand has increased, prices have skyrocketed. The article noted that the price of water had increased five-fold in Yangon, while rice had gone up by 60 percent.

The inaction of the military jun-



ta—which commands an army of 450,000—stands in contrast to its rapid response to last year’s massive prodemocracy protests by students and working people.

“People don’t accept the military regime, but they are afraid of the gun,” said Naing Ko Ko. The officer caste dominates political and economic life in the country.

In spite of the disaster, the government has proceeded with a referendum to legitimize its rule, postponing the vote only in the areas worst affected.

— CALENDAR —

CALIFORNIA

Davis

Panel Discussion on *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution*. Speakers: Prof. Luz Mena, Women and Gender Studies; Prof. Wendy Ho, Asian American Studies, UC Davis; Ana Ochoa, student in Community and Regional Development, participant in UC Davis Quarter Abroad in Cuba; Mary-Alice Waters, editor of the book. Tuesday, May 20. 6:30 p.m. *East Conference Room, Memorial Union, UC Davis.* Sponsors: Asian American Studies, Women and Gender Studies, and Pathfinder Books.

UNITED KINGDOM

SCOTLAND

Edinburgh

Cuba: Present and Future. Speaker: Teresita Trujillo, Foreign Relations Department of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party. Thurs., May 22. Program, 7:30 p.m. Followed by discussion period. *Lecture Theatre 1, Appleton Tower, Crichton St. University of Edinburgh, George Square.*

— MILITANT

LABOR FORUMS —

FLORIDA

Miami

The Food Crisis: Capitalism Is the Problem. Fri., May 23. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 8365 NE 2nd Ave. Suite 206. Tel: (305) 756-4436.

IOWA

Des Moines

Israel and the Palestinians: 60 Years of Occupation and Resistance. Fri., May 23. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 3707 Douglas Ave. Tel: (515) 255-1707.

MINNESOTA

Minneapolis

What Is behind the Food Crisis and What Can Workers and Farmers Do to Fight It. Fri., May 23. 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.

Young Socialists host
U.S. socialist candidates
on European tour

This column is written and edited by members of the Young Socialists, a revolutionary socialist youth organization. For more information contact the YS at 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, New York, NY 10018; tel. (212) 629-6649; e-mail: youngsocialists@mac.com.

YOUNG SOCIALISTS
IN ACTION

BY FILIP TEDELUND

STOCKHOLM—Alyson Kennedy, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. vice president, made fact-finding tour stops in the United Kingdom and Sweden. The April 16–27 visit to the two countries was hosted by the Young Socialists and Communist Leagues. Kennedy was joined by Ben Joyce, a representative of the Young Socialists for Calero and Kennedy from New York City.
“While [British Prime Minister] Gordon Brown is touring the United States to visit with the bourgeois candidates, bankers, and other capitalists, Kennedy and I are here in Europe to learn about the conditions workers and farmers are facing and to share our experiences in the class struggle in the U.S.,” said Joyce speaking at an

April 25 Militant Labor Forum here.
Joyce reported on the recently concluded tour stop by himself and Kennedy in the United Kingdom. In Scotland they met workers from Poland and Romania. In London they joined a demonstration of more than 2,000 restaurant workers from South Asia against stepped-up raids by the British immigration agency.
Members of the Young Socialists in Sweden took off from work and school to be a part of the tour there and helped organize campus speaking engagements for Kennedy and Joyce. On April 24, Kennedy spoke in front of two classes at Nacka Gymnasium high school. In a lively discussion period that followed, one student asked if the Democratic Party’s candidates, Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, would represent the interests of women and Blacks, respectively.
“No, both the Democratic candidates and their opponent John McCain represent the interests of the capitalist class,” responded Kennedy. “There have been women in charge of countries before, such as Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom, who waged war against the miners’ union and carried out other antilabor meas-



Militant/Dag Tirsén

After rallying outside Swedish parliament to demand legalization of undocumented immigrants April 24, organizers went to a café in Stockholm with SWP candidate for U.S. vice president Alyson Kennedy, seated at center right; Ben Joyce, to right of Kennedy, a Young Socialist from New York; and members of the Communist League and Young Socialists in Sweden.

ures.”
She also noted that Obama has distanced himself from struggles in the Black community, such as the fight for justice for the Jena Six, and that he does not support affirmative action, which she and her running mate, Róger Calero, will defend and extend when elected.
While in London, Joyce partici-

pated with young socialists from Belgium, Greece, Sweden, and the United Kingdom to discuss perspectives for building communist youth organizations in Europe. Young socialists there plan to organize a Marxist summer school in London in the coming months and will be participating in a socialist educational conference in Oberlin, Ohio, in July.

Militant Fund: \$14,500 to go

Continued from front page
pledges surpass their goals.
Janice Lynn from Washington, D.C. says that they have pledges totaling \$4,500—\$200 over their quota. “We will work to get additional funds from Militant readers who have yet to make a contribution,” Lynn reports.
“Right now we have pledges for \$4,800, which is \$100 over our goal,” writes Eddie Beck from Carrollton, Georgia. “And we keep running into other people we want to talk to about the fund.”
Two annual fund drives that raise \$100,000 each help cover basic operating expenses for the socialist news-weekly. They make possible reporting trips around the world, from Cuba to Venezuela to Equatorial Guinea to China. The funds help ensure the Militant has enough money to respond to political developments wherever they break while continuing to cover increased expenses for shipping, printing, and supplies.
As a workers’ newspaper, the Militant relies on its readers for financing. Workers, farmers, and students who regularly read the paper know how essential it is for understanding developments in the class struggle.
The spring fund drive ends on May 18. If you have not yet contributed, please send in a donation now. We’re very close to making the goal, and every penny raised will be put to good use.
In order to allow supporters time to send in their contributions, everything received by Tuesday, May 27,

will be included in the final chart. Make checks payable to the Militant, earmarked “Fund Drive,” and send them to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY, 10018.

Final stretch in sub drive

'Militant' Subscription Drive
Spring 2008 ♦ March 22 – May 18
Week 7 of 8

Country	Quota	Sold	%
UNITED STATES			
Newark, NJ*	175	169	97%
Los Angeles*	145	138	95%
New York	315	297	94%
Twin Cities	150	141	94%
Houston	90	84	93%
Atlanta	130	120	92%
San Francisco*	135	121	90%
Seattle	115	102	89%
Boston	60	50	83%
Miami	130	108	83%
Washington, D.C.	140	115	82%
Chicago	120	98	82%
Des Moines, IA	140	112	80%
Carrollton, GA	145	115	79%
Philadelphia	85	65	76%
Albuquerque, NM	10	2	20%
Other		16	
U.S. Total	2,085	1853	89%
UNITED KINGDOM			
London*	80	85	106%
Edinburgh	45	46	106%
UK Total	125	131	105%
CANADA	105	87	83%
NEW ZEALAND	65	57	88%
AUSTRALIA	55	47	85%
SWEDEN	25	23	92%
Int'l Totals	2,460	2,198	89%
Goals/Should be	2,400	2,100	88%

* increased quota

Continued from front page
subscriptions at the Sweet Auburn street festival in downtown Atlanta over the weekend.
“Last week, we sold 15 subscriptions,” writes Joe Young from Montreal. “Nine of those were during the tour here of Alyson Kennedy, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for vice president of the United States. Among the subscriptions sold during the tour were three at a picket line of striking teaching aids at McGill University, two to Petrocan workers locked out since last November, two at a demonstration to support the Palestinian struggle, and two at a table at Vieux-Montreal College.”
There are ample opportunities to win new readers to the socialist press: from protests against immigration raids and deportations to actions demanding justice for those brutalized by cops, from truckers in California stopping work to demand relief from high fuel prices to nursing home workers striking for health care benefits in the Bronx, New York.
All out for the final week! Let’s have a great finish! To get involved in efforts to expand the Militant’s subscription base in your area, contact the distributors nearest you listed on page 8.

\$100,000 'Militant' Fund
Spring 2008 ♦ March 22 – May 18
Week 7 of 8

Country	Quota	Paid	%
UNITED STATES			
New York	15,000	13,280	89%
Twin Cities*	5,500	4,722	86%
San Francisco*	13,000	10,970	84%
Washington, D.C.*	4,300	3,610	84%
Los Angeles*	9,500	7,884	83%
Newark, NJ	3,700	3,027	82%
Miami	3,000	2,426	81%
Des Moines, IA	2,000	1,607	80%
Carrollton, GA	4,700	3,697	79%
Seattle	7,000	5,490	78%
Houston	2,500	1,925	77%
Chicago*	8,125	5,955	73%
Philadelphia*	3,300	2,305	70%
Atlanta	4,000	2,768	69%
Boston	2,800	1,710	61%
Other		1,500	
U.S. total	88,425	72,876	82%
CANADA*	5,500	5,520	100%
NEW ZEALAND	3,200	2,818	88%
AUSTRALIA*	2,200	1,830	83%
UNITED KINGDOM			
London	1,000	1,038	104%
Edinburgh	600	540	90%
UK total	1,600	1,578	99%
SWEDEN	1,000	701	70%
FRANCE	260	180	69%
Total	102,185	85,503	86%
Goal/Should be	100,000	87,500	88%

* increased quota

ON THE PICKET LINE

Unionists rally to support striking N.Y. health workers

BRONX, New York, May 3—More than 1,500 members of Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 1199 rallied and marched today past the Kingsbridge Heights Rehabilitation Center, where 220 workers have been on strike since February 20.

SEIU members were mobilized from New York City and the surrounding area to show solidarity with the strikers, who have maintained 24-hour picket lines for 74 days straight.

“Hey, hey, ho, ho, Helen Sieger’s got to go!” chanted the unionists, referring to the owner of the facility. Sieger eliminated health-care benefits, sparking the strike. There has been no contract since 2002. The workers are now fighting for a new contract with health benefits.

“We’re struggling. The government and the labor department have done nothing for us,” said Jeffrey Wojciechowski, a striker who works in the kitchen. “Look what the cops did to Sean Bell,” he added, referring to the 23-year-old Black youth gunned down in a hail of 50 police bullets in November 2006.

Cinco de Mayo

Continued from page 2

tivists were deciding how to proceed. Meanwhile, a dozen rightist counter-protesters gathered near the church with large American flags and signs.

Meeting participants decided to proceed with a strolling sidewalk procession without banners as a way to avoid arrest. Twenty-five adults and a dozen children walked from the New Hope Lutheran Church to the Community Center where the mayor’s Cinco de Mayo event was being held, chanting “*¡Sí se puede!*” (Yes we can). At the community center, they confronted the mayor about the cop’s threats.

Hildredth took his distance from the threats and said he never intended for the protesters to be arrested. “I’ll look into the actions by the police. My only concern was with liability and public safety.”

He pledged to open a dialogue with the Latino community in Pacific. Pacific resident Antonio Flores said, “We have heard this before from the mayor.”

Afterwards, about 40 people gathered at the church to celebrate. A reporter and photographer from the local Univision TV news covered the entire event and reported on it the next evening on Seattle’s cable channel 29.

“The boss needs to be fair,” said James Harding, who works at another 1199-organized facility in the Bronx. “We should not have to be out here.”

—Dan Fein

Namibian zinc miners strike largest mine, refinery

Miners at Anglo American’s Skorpion zinc mine and refinery, the largest zinc mine in Namibia, went on strike May 10 demanding higher wages and an end the discriminatory pay scales between African and white workers.

The workers are demanding wage increases of 14 percent along with travel and housing allowances. Most of them are migrants from northern Namibian villages near the Angolan border.

The union says that workers earn around N\$3,200 (US\$420) per month. Namibian managerial staff earn the equivalent of around US\$2,500, but their white expatriate counterparts make as much as US\$4,000 per month.



Militant/Willie Cotton

Some 1,500 members of Service Employees International Union Local 1199 rally May 3 outside Kingsbridge Heights Rehabilitation Center in Bronx, New York, to support 220 workers who since February 20 have struck the nursing home for health care benefits.

The Skorpion mine, located 15 miles north of Rosh Pinah in southern Namibia, produces 150,000 tons of high-grade zinc per year, which is exported through the southern port of Luderitz.

The price of benchmark zinc on the London Metal Exchange has dropped from an all-time high of US\$4,580 a metric ton in November 2006 to about US\$2,240.

—Sam Manuel

Study: 1 in 99 adults in U.S. behind bars

BY DOUG NELSON

One in every 99 adults in the United States is currently behind bars, according to estimates from a Pew Center study released at the end of February. With about 2.3 million people locked up, the United States has a higher rate of imprisonment than any other country in the world.

According to the most recent statistics available, the U.S. incarceration rate was 751 per 100,000 people in 2006. This figure is based on the entire population, including those under 18. The country with the second-highest ratio, Russia, had 627 per 100,000. Only China, with an estimated 2.5 million prisoners, including those in pre-trial detention and labor camps, has more people locked up than the United States. But China’s population is more than four times that of the United States, making its incarceration rate about 189 per 100,000.

Prison terms in the United States tend to be much longer than in many other

countries, a major factor in the higher percentage behind bars at any one time. For example, while a burglary conviction, on average, will get you 5 months in prison in Canada, or 7 months in the United Kingdom, you’ll do 16 months in the United States, the director of the Sentencing Project told the *New York Times* in April.

Another element of Washington’s class justice is locking people up for minor offences such as writing bad checks. The U.S. legal system metes out particularly harsh sentences for drug-related crimes. A portion of the rise in the U.S. prison population can be attributed to the government’s “war on drugs” campaign. In 1980 there were about 40,000 people locked up on drug-related charges; today this number approaches half a million.

The substantially higher rate of imprisonment of members of oppressed nationalities also reveals the class character of the U.S. prison system. About 1 in 15 adult Black men and 1 in 36 Latino

men are behind bars; the rate is 1 in 106 for white men. Among the younger adult population, the figures are much higher—1 in 9 Black men between the ages of 20 and 34 is currently a prisoner.

Incarceration rates also vary widely by state, with the highest rates found in the South. In Louisiana, the state with the highest rate, about 1 in 66 adults are in prison or jail.

The prison and jail population in the United States has nearly tripled in the last 20 years. Between 1910 and 1980 the rate fluctuated between 104 and 209 per 100,000 people, according to a Justice Policy Institute analysis in 2000. As demagogic campaigns to get “tough on crime” began in the late 1970s, the figure began climbing. It reached 460 per 100,000 by 1990 and topped 700 in the year 2000.

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

May 27, 1983

The U.S. Supreme Court has put the deportation case of Héctor Marroquín on its conference agenda for June 16.

In response, the Political Rights Defense Fund, which is organizing support for Marroquín, announced a campaign to use the short time before then to flood the offices of the Immigration and Naturalization Service with telegrams and letters.

Marroquín, now a leader of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance, was forced to flee Mexican repression nine years ago. His request for political asylum, along with the government’s arguments in favor of deportation, comprise a far-reaching case with implications for thousands seeking political refuge here, in particular those from U.S.-backed dictatorships in Central America and the Caribbean.

THE MILITANT
PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE
NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

May 26, 1958

The ominous possibility of democratic rights of the French people being trampled under the military boots of de Gaulle and the insurgent generals in Algeria looms ever larger because the working class, the only force in French society capable of smashing a full-fledged de Gaullist drive to power, is not being mobilized for action by its leaders.

De Gaulle has considerable forces. Yet these forces would be no match against the mighty French working class in a stand-up battle. A determined mobilization of the workers would melt the control of the insurgent generals over the soldier masses doing conscript duty in Algeria and France and pit them against the professional killers, such as the paratroopers, who form but a fraction of the armed forces.

THE MILITANT
Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America [Opposition]
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10014

May 27, 1933

Another revolt accompanied by a wave of terrorism has broken loose in Cuba. The guerrilla outbreaks in the central and eastern provinces of the island are only one, and perhaps not the greatest of the dangers threatening the dictatorship. In the cities and especially in Havana, virtual civil war exists.

“Butcher” Machado is now singing his swan song.

The Roosevelt administration has not yet determined on a definite course. The experiences of Nicaragua and Haiti are too recent to be easily forgotten. They demonstrate the inadvisability—for the imperialists—of intervention, excepting as a very last resort.

Cuba, being essentially a one-crop country, presents an extreme example of economic contradictions which can find no permanent solution under capitalism.

The working class
& the
transformation
of learning

The fraud of
education
reform under
capitalism

—by Jack
Barnes
\$3

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Virginia picket demands: 'Stop immigration raids!'

BY SETH DELLINGER

RICHMOND, Virginia—Chanting “No justice! No peace! Freedom for the 33!,” more than 50 people picketed the construction site of a new federal courthouse here May 9 to denounce a raid by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents two days earlier. The protesters, holding a large banner that read “stop the raids on our families” in English and Spanish, received honks of support from some passing drivers in rush hour traffic.

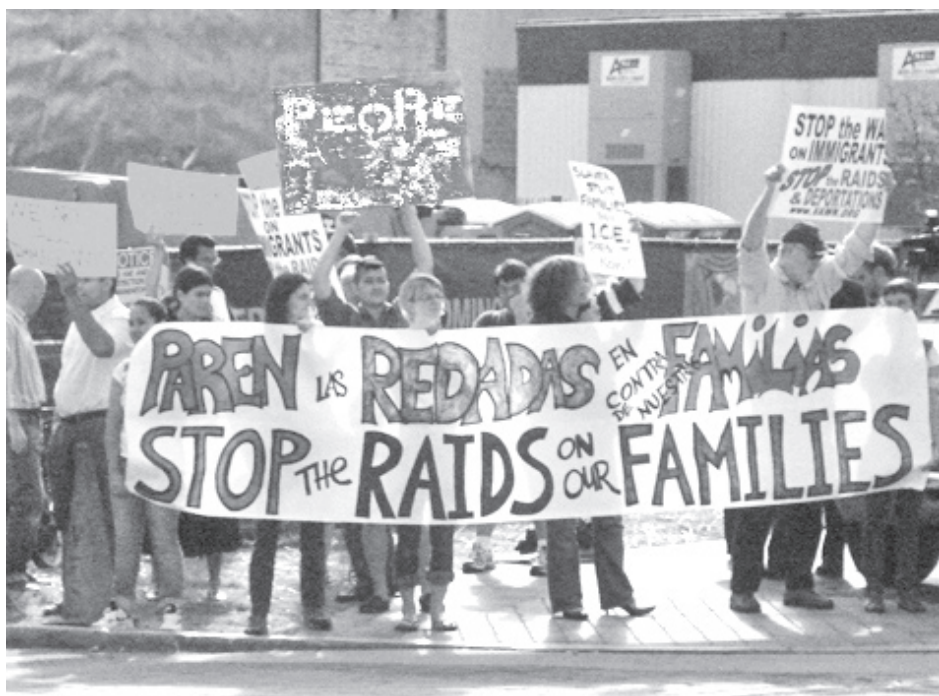
The protest was called by the Virginia Immigrant People's Coalition and included participation by students from nearby Virginia Commonwealth University.

The raid was the third to take place in Virginia in the past two months. Fifty-nine workers were arrested at a resort hotel in Leesburg on April 8, and 43 at a construction site in Manassas in March. In the Richmond raid, 29 men and 4 women from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Peru were arrested for immigration violations.

A worker originally from Honduras, who asked that his name not be printed, said that his brother had been

arrested in the raid. “I haven't heard anything from him since,” he said. “They completely surrounded the site and people started running. They said they were looking for three workers charged with crimes, but instead they made everyone go meet on the second floor and they started arresting people. A U.S. worker helped some of us climb into the ceiling. We stayed in the air vents all day long until they were gone.”

Most of those arrested are being detained in jails in Hampton Roads and Virginia Beach, according to Aaron Samsel of the Virginia Immigrant People's Coalition.



Dozens turned out for May 9 picket at a construction site in Richmond, Virginia, where 33 workers were arrested by immigration cops in a raid two days earlier.

Chinese, Vietnamese immigrant workers pack Boston hearing to defend bilingual ballots

BY KEVIN DWIRE

BOSTON—More than 300 people packed a city council hearing here May 5 to support a law that would make bilingual Chinese-English and Vietnamese-English voting ballots permanent. They sported stickers saying “Support bilingual ballots!” in English, Chinese,

and Vietnamese, and many had headsets on to hear translation into Cantonese or Mandarin.

“Bilingual ballots allow voters to vote privately,” said Caroline Chang of the Coalition for Asian American Voting Rights, and the managing director of the Chinese Historical Society of New England.

“We don't want the clock turned back,” said Lydia Lowe, executive director of the Chinese Progressive Association, which helped mobilize the turnout.

Chinatown resident Henry Lee said “Every line, every word should be transliterated, including the name.” Transliteration is the practice of writing names phonetically in another alphabet. While ballots appeared in Chinese in 2006, candidates' names were not put in Chinese characters until 2007. Massachusetts Secretary of State William Galvin has opposed transliteration, claiming it could result in confusion.

“Voters already know candidates by their transliterated names,” said Lang, noting that such names are commonly used in the Chinese-language press.

“My party will be proud to have our candidates' names transliterated,” said



Asian immigrants pack May 5 Boston City Council meeting to back a proposal making bilingual ballots permanent.

Laura Garza, who spoke at the hearing on behalf of the Socialist Workers Party. “This is part of forging the kind of unity in our class that is necessary to stand up against the bosses who abuse us.”

Bilingual ballots and an increase in bilingual poll workers were the result of an August 2005 agreement with the city of Boston following a Department of Justice lawsuit. The lawsuit came after an investigation of complaints of violations of basic voting rights, including poll workers who tried to steer voters to vote for particular candidates.

In an effort to maintain these gains, supporters are working to pass a law to ensure the permanent use of bilingual ballots.

Gov't report blames company for fatal Utah mine collapse

BY VED DOOKHUN

A congressional investigation into a fatal August collapse at the Crandall Canyon mine outside Huntington, Utah—which killed six miners and three rescue workers—found management liable for concealing information on a smaller collapse there months earlier.

The Committee on Education and Labor's May 8 report says mine management did not report the severity of a collapse in March to the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA). After the collapse, the company shut down retreat mining in the area.

The same congressional committee sent a letter to the Department of Justice April 29 requesting a criminal investigation to determine whether Laine Adair, general manager of Genwall Resources, which operated the Crandall Canyon mine, willfully concealed the facts surrounding the

March collapse “individually or in conspiracy with others.”

The report claims that had MSHA been informed, the agency most likely would not have approved the company's request to retreat mine in the section where the fatal collapse occurred five months later.

But, according to the Department of Labor's inspector general, MSHA did know about the conditions in the mine prior to the collapse.

A March 31 Labor Department report found that MSHA did not document how it evaluated the company's plan to mine barrier pillars, called retreat mining, or on what basis it approved those plans. Barriers are left behind to support the roof and stabilize the mine after coal has been removed from an area. Retreat mining allows the company to maximize the amount of coal it extracts by removing the support pillars as miners re-

Continued on page 9

NEW FROM PATHFINDER

Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?

by Mary-Alice Waters

“Not only is socialist revolution possible; revolutionary struggle is inevitable. It will be initiated at first not by the toilers, but forced upon us by the crisis-driven assaults of the propertied classes. . . .

“What is not inevitable, however, is the outcome of these coming revolutionary struggles. That is where political clarity, organization, discipline, and the caliber of proletarian leadership become decisive.” —\$5



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Iowa protest against ICE raid

Continued from front page

illegally. A government affidavit says “approximately 76 percent of the 968 employees of Agriprocessors were using false or fraudulent social security numbers in connection with their employment.”

The federal government leased the fairground for several weeks in preparation for the raid. The male workers are being held in cattle barns there, and the women have been taken to local jails, according to a local TV station.

Among the demonstrators were high school and junior high students; workers from the nearby Tyson meat-packing plant; and Black, white, and Latino workers and youth.

The protestors cheered every time passing cars honked in support. Matt Stewart, a worker at Domino Pizza,

parked his car after seeing the action and joined in. What ICE is doing is “obscene,” Stewart said. “They don't even give these workers a process to become legal.”

Agriprocessor's Postville plant, the largest kosher slaughterhouse in the United States, processes both beef and poultry. It is owned, according to *Forward*, a Jewish daily, by the Rubashkins, a family based in Brooklyn, New York.

In a series of articles over the past few years, *Forward* has reported on the working conditions, injuries, and low wages, as well as job actions, including a walkout of several hundred workers in 2007. The New York paper has also reported on the attempts by the United Food and Commercial Workers union to organize the plant and Agriprocessor's antiunion efforts to squash it.

Socialist candidate for U.S. vice president joins picket lines in Montreal

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

MONTREAL, Quebec—Locked-out workers at Petro-Canada warmly welcomed U.S. vice presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy to their union office and picket line May 9. The visit was part of a six-day tour of Montreal by the socialist candidate.

For more than an hour, workers discussed with Kennedy the important issues before the labor movement, with translation between French and English. Strikers wanted to discuss the declining rate of unionization in the United States, the growing weight of immigrant workers and the place of the fight for legalization in the labor movement, and their determination in their own fight against Petro-Canada. Some 260 members of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada, Local 175, have maintained round-the-clock picket lines here since being locked out by Petro-Canada in November.

Kennedy explained the importance that she and her running mate Róger Calero, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, attach to their fact-finding trips to other countries to learn about the conditions of workers and farmers and to let them know about the conditions and struggles in the United States.

A participant in a May 11 Militant Labor Forum here asked Kennedy why the May Day actions for legalization of immigrants in the United States were smaller this year than last.

“What’s important is that tens of thousands of workers have mobilized on May Day over political demands for three years in a row now,” Kennedy said. “There were some 15,000 workers and students—many of them in high school—in the streets of Chicago where I participated. One worker in the country for only two months proudly told me ‘I climbed over the fence.’ This no-fear attitude among a vanguard layer of workers is strengthening the whole working class,” she said.

On April 8 Kennedy participated in a solidarity picket line of striking teaching assistants and their supporters at

McGill University. The 1,100 members of the Confederation of National Trade Unions have been on strike for four weeks to improve their working conditions and raise their wages. Kennedy received enthusiastic applause when she spoke to the crowd.

During her tour of Montreal, Kennedy also spoke to a class at the University of Montreal that will be going to Cuba for three weeks. Kennedy said her campaign uses the Cuban Revolution as an example that a socialist revolution is both necessary and possible. For almost an hour, students raised a series of questions. One asked how Kennedy could speak of a workers and farmers government when farmers are making so much money growing corn for ethanol. Kennedy explained that the countryside is class-divided. Debt-ridden small farmers are being driven off their land by the high costs of feed and fuel, while giant agricultural companies are raking in superprofits. She said that her party is for forging an alliance between workers, small farmers, and other exploited producers.

Kennedy also joined a picket line to defend five Cuban revolutionaries imprisoned in U.S. jails; met with Ricardo Astudillo, a member of the staff at the Bolivarian Center of the Venezuelan

Socialist candidates address May Day rallies



Militant photos by Warren Simons (left), Bernardino Flores (right)

Socialist Workers Party candidates across the United States addressed May Day rallies for immigrant rights in several cities. Left, Martín Koppel, running in New York’s 15th Congressional District, speaks at Manhattan action of 1,600. Right, Amanda Ulman, running in Texas’s 9th C.D., speaks to crowd of 150 in Dallas. The candidates demanded immediate and unconditional legalization for all undocumented workers and an end to raids and deportations. Nearly 40 candidates for federal, state, and local offices in 12 states and the District of Columbia are running on the SWP ticket.

—PAUL PEDERSON

Consulate; and sat down with Hubert Gendron-Blais, Marc-André Faucher, and Jessyka Boulanger—three leaders of the Union Association for Student Solidarity—who described some four decades of student struggles in Quebec as well as the fight this year at the University of Quebec at Montreal to defend

education. In addition Kennedy was interviewed by CKUT radio at McGill University for a program called Labour Radio.

Annette Kouri, Michel Prairie, John Steele, and Joe Young contributed to this article.

Calero extends solidarity to fighting workers

Continued from front page

struments. “Out of such a transformed union movement, workers can forge a labor party that can fight for our broad interests in the political arena,” he said.

At the Whole Earth Festival at the University of California, Davis, Calero addressed a crowd of several hundred around one of the outdoor stages to listen to music and other presentations.

“We are offering a working-class alternative to the Republicans and Democrats, a platform that can unify working people in struggles for what we need,” Calero said. “Working people do not have a voice in the government. We need to fight for a labor party based on a

fighting union movement.”

“You said it, brother,” someone yelled out as Calero described the economic squeeze workers are feeling in response to rising prices, falling wages, and cuts in working hours.

“What does your campaign say about the destruction of the environment?” asked one person at a workshop on the campaign held later during the festival.

“All these problems, whether it’s lack of health care, or destruction of the environment, stem from the system where everything is based on maximizing profits,” said Calero. “For example, the oil industry is run for profit. We need to open their financial books, expose their dirty secrets, their profiteering at our expense and the expense of the environ-

ment, and nationalize the energy industry, taking it out of private hands.

“These are things the unions need to fight for,” he continued. “Not only for the benefit of working people here in the U.S., but in solidarity with people around the world, where millions go hungry while a tiny handful reap superprofits off food speculation.”

Calero also talked with truckers at the Port of Oakland, where drivers protesting skyrocketing fuel prices refused to work earlier in May. He said, as president, his administration would implement automatic cost-of-living increases in workers’ wages and drivers’ rates. “As the cost of diesel, maintenance, and insurance rates go up,” he said, “what truckers receive has to go up to match.”

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Militant/Lea Sherman

Róger Calero, right, campaigns May 10 at a festival at University of California, Davis.

‘To build communism you must build the new man’

Below is an excerpt from *Socialism and Man in Cuba*, the French version of which is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for May. In this article, first published in March 1965, Argentine-born Cuban revolutionary Ernesto Che Guevara takes up the theoretical and concrete tasks and challenges in leading the transition from capitalism to socialism. The pamphlet also includes Fidel Castro's 1987 speech on the 20th anniversary of Guevara's death. Copyright © 1989 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY ERNESTO CHE GUEVARA

I would now like to try to define the individual, the actor in this strange and moving drama of the building of socialism, in his dual existence as a unique being and as a member of society.

I think the place to start is to recognize his quality of incompleteness, of being an unfinished product. The vestiges of the past are brought into the present in the individual consciousness, and a continual labor is necessary to eradicate them. The process is two-sided. On the one side, society acts through direct and indirect education; on the other, the individual submits himself to a conscious



Militant/Laura Garza

Voluntary workers pack bananas in Holguín, Cuba, September 1994. Guevara championed voluntary work brigades as part of transforming individual and social consciousness in the transition from capitalism to socialism. “The pipe dream that socialism can be achieved with the help of dull instruments left to us by capitalism can lead into a blind alley,” he argued.

process of self-education.

The new society in formation has to compete fiercely with the past. This past makes itself felt not only in the individual consciousness—in which the residue of an education systematically oriented toward isolating the individual still weighs heavily—but also through the very character of this transition period in which commodity relations still persist. The commodity is the economic cell of capitalist society. So long as it exists its effects will make themselves felt in the organization of production and, consequently, in consciousness.

Marx outlined the transition period as resulting from the explosive transformation of the capitalist system destroyed by its own contradictions. In historical reality, however, we have seen that some countries that were weak limbs on the tree of imperialism were torn off first—a phenomenon foreseen by Lenin.

In these countries capitalism had developed sufficiently to make its effects felt by the people in one way or another. But it was not capitalism's internal contradictions that, having exhausted all possibilities, caused the system to explode. The struggle for liberation from a foreign oppressor; the misery caused by external events such as war, whose consequences privileged classes place

on the backs of the exploited; liberation movements aimed at overthrowing neo-colonial regimes—these are the usual factors in unleashing this kind of explosion. Conscious action does the rest.

A complete education for social labor has not yet taken place in these countries, and wealth is far from being within the reach of the masses through the simple process of appropriation. Underdevelopment, on the one hand, and the usual flight of capital, on the other, make a rapid transition without sacrifices impossible. There remains a long way to go in constructing the economic base, and the temptation is very great to follow the beaten track of material interest as the lever with which to accelerate development.

There is the danger that the forest will not be seen for the trees. The pipe dream that socialism can be achieved with the help of the dull instruments left to us by capitalism (the commodity as the economic cell, profitability, individual material interest as a lever, etc.) can lead into a blind alley. And you wind up there after having traveled a long distance with many crossroads, and it is hard to figure out just where you took the wrong turn. Meanwhile, the economic foundation that has been laid has done its work of undermining the development of consciousness. To build

communism it is necessary, simultaneous with the new material foundations, to build the new man.

That is why it is very important to choose the right instrument for mobilizing the masses. Basically, this instrument must be moral in character, without neglecting, however, a correct use of the material incentive—especially of a social character.

As I have already said, in moments of great peril it is easy to muster a powerful response to moral incentives. Retaining their effect, however, requires the development of a consciousness in which there is a new scale of values. Society as a whole must be converted into a gigantic school.

In rough outline this phenomenon is similar to the process by which capitalist consciousness was formed in its initial period. Capitalism uses force but it also educates people in the system. Direct propaganda is carried out by those entrusted with explaining the inevitability of class society, either through some theory of divine origin or a mechanical theory of natural law. This lulls the masses, since they see themselves as being oppressed by an evil against which it is impossible to struggle.

Next comes hope of improvement—and in this, capitalism differed from the earlier caste systems, which offered no way out. For some people, the principle of the caste system will remain in effect: The reward for the obedient is to be transported after death to some fabulous other world where, according to the old beliefs, good people are rewarded. For other people there is this innovation: Class divisions are determined by fate, but individuals can rise out of their class through work, initiative, etc. This process, and the myth of the self-made man, are profoundly hypocritical: it is the self-serving effort to turn a lie into the truth.

In our case direct education acquires a much greater importance. The explanation is convincing because it is true; no subterfuge is needed. It is carried on by the state's educational apparatus as a function of general, technical, and ideological education through such agencies as the Ministry of Education and the party's informational apparatus.

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AUSTRALIA

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Protest police brutality!

The 15 Philadelphia cops who brutally punched and kicked three Black men on the night of May 5 should be jailed and fully prosecuted. The beating, captured by a TV news crew, is the latest example of how capitalist justice is meted out to workers by the police daily.

The beating comes on the heels of the acquittal of three New York City cops involved in killing Sean Bell, an African American youth, in a hail of 50 bullets as Bell left his bachelor party. The police barrage seriously wounded two of Bell's friends who were with him.

In every case where the cops beat or kill workers city officials go into action to paint the victim as the criminal. After the three men in Philadelphia were beaten they were tossed into jail, where they remain, charged with attempted murder and other counts related to a drive-by shooting. No weapons were found on them.

In Bell's case police officials said his blood alcohol level was above the legal limit and claimed he had attempted to run down one of the cops. Several witnesses dispute the claim.

In the wake of the most outrageous cop assaults liberal politicians and other do-gooders advocate civil disobedience or call hearings to discuss how to "reform" the police. The end result is often to diffuse anger and stem protests by working people.

Often they are ways to promote the actions of a "committed few," not to reach out and involve the broadest numbers of working people in public demonstrations that make the rulers pay a high political price for their brutality.

Proposals for police "reform" usually include "sensitivity training," community police review boards, special prosecutors to investigate police brutality, or studies to gather data on racial profiling. Such proposals promote illusions that the cops can be reformed.

They cannot be. Their purpose is to protect and serve the interests of the enemy class—the wealthy bosses who exploit us daily through low wages, rising prices, and production speed-ups resulting in injury and death on the job. Whether they're breaking up picket lines, raiding factories in immigration sweeps, or gunning down Black youth in the streets, police agencies are used to try and intimidate workers and keep us from fighting back.

Only by standing up and refusing to be intimidated can working people win even small concessions from the rulers. The thousands who took to the streets in New York in the aftermath of the Bell shooting forced the capitalist rulers to at least try three of the cops who killed him. It will take actions of that type to jail cops such as Bell's killers and the thugs in Philadelphia.

Philadelphia cops beat 3 Black youth

BY ELLEN BERMAN

PHILADELPHIA—Fifteen cops kicked and punched three Black men here May 5 while the officer in charge watched.

As a cop clubbed one victim seven times another stood by restraining an agitated police dog.

This incident of police brutality was filmed in its entirety by a Fox29 TV news reporter in a helicopter. Within hours, the aerial images of the men being dragged from the car, pushed to the pavement, and assaulted by three groups of cops were aired nationally.

After their beating, Dawayne Dyches, Brian Hall, and Pete Hopkins were arrested and remain in jail for allegedly participating in a drive-by shooting. Their combined bail is \$1 million. The young men—aged 24, 23, and 19, respectively—required medical treatment for their injuries.

As the video gained national and international attention, recently elected mayor Michael Nutter and head cop Charles Ramsey were forced to answer questions about the police's actions.

Nutter called the beating "inappropriate behavior." "We don't know the circumstances," said Ramsey. "The video doesn't tell you everything."

Vowing to conduct a thorough investigation, Ramsey removed 13 cops from street duty, but none have been charged or disciplined.

Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party candidate in the city's 2nd Congressional District, denounced the cop beating, demanding the "immediate jailing and full prosecution of all the cops responsible."

a good time to run an update of the *Militant's* 2004 article.

Ellen Haywood
by e-mail

Campaign talk

Readers of the *Militant* in the U.S. and around the world may wish to know that they can see a recent talk by Róger Calero on the Internet on YouTube, simply by typing his name in there. He talks about his own political history, the current economic crisis, the fight for immigrant

rights, and the need for the working class—we who create all the wealth but never get much back—to have our own political voice. There's a lot of food for thought in his talk.

Martin Marriott
Seattle, Washington

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.

Utah mine report



The Crandall Canyon mine outside Huntington, Utah.

Continued from page 6

treat toward the entrance of the mine, leaving the unsupported roof to collapse.

The Labor Department report found that MSHA had enough information to warrant further inquiries before granting approval to mine the pillars in an area only 900 feet from the site of the March collapse. According to the report, the MSHA inspector did not even examine the collapsed site before approving the new plan.

The Labor Department report also states that MSHA could not show that the process was free of influence by the mine's owner, Robert Murray.

In a related development, family members of seven of the nine victims and two of the miners injured in the rescue filed suit in March against Murray Energy Corp., its consultants, and two utility companies partly owned by Murray Energy. The lawsuit claims the decision by Murray Energy management to mine coal from the barrier pillars demonstrated "greedy determination to mine the easily accessible coal without regard to safety."

Also in March, MSHA fined Murray subsidiary UtahAmerican Energy \$420,000 for safety violations involving explosive hazards at its Tower mine north of Price, Utah. The company shut down the Tower mine and offered to transfer miners to other mines operated by Murray Energy in Ohio and Illinois. The Tower mine, which employed 200 people, is the deepest in the country.

Utah Energy was also fined for safety violations at its West Ridge mine, Murray Energy's third mine in Utah.

Truckers stop work

Continued from front page

week strike by drivers in 2004 at the Port of Oakland won a 10 percent increase in the rates paid to drivers to move loads and a 10 percent fuel surcharge to partially compensate for higher diesel prices.

Drivers are also demanding increased payments for driver assistance, maintenance costs, and for transporting hazardous materials.

Truckers told the *Militant* that the companies that hire them to haul cargo often skim off a big portion of the rates paid by large retail companies to have their containers transported. This is money that could alleviate the crushing burden on the owner-operators, whose costs are rising—from insurance, to maintenance of truck engines, to costs of tires and fuel. Truckers said that they get 5–6 miles per gallon of fuel, a new tire costs \$400, an oil change \$230, a rebuilt engine \$11,000, and registration with the state \$3,000.

Several drivers told the *Militant* that it is illegal for them to strike because each owner-operator is considered "a company." One driver said that in the aftermath of their 2004 strike three spokesmen "were sued for a million dollars."

During the most recent action, Oakland police closed Shoreline Park to prevent truckers from parking there and threatened to ticket drivers parking near lunch trucks, forcing them to park outside the port area and then walk back in order to demonstrate at the entrances to the big shipping terminals.

Many of the drivers in this latest action are immigrants from Latin America and the Punjab region of India, with many African Americans as well.

According to workers at the Burlington Northern Santa Fe rail yard in the port, the truckers ended their strike by May 9.

N.Y. politicians hold hearing on police 'reform'

BY VED DOOKHUN

NEW YORK, May 12—A congressional committee conducted a hearing on "police accountability" at the Customs House here today.

The hearing, organized by Representative John Conyers, focused on reforms that could overhaul police departments in New York and nationwide, which many capitalist politicians point to as the way to end "excessive-force deaths."

The hearing comes after last month's acquittal of three undercover cops on trial for the killing of Sean Bell, 23, in a hail of 50 bullets. The shooting and the subsequent acquittal led to protests around the city. Today's hearing is the latest attempt by politicians to calm down the outrage over the case and quell any street protests.

Among the reforms recommended by academics and activists were community-based boards with the power to hire and fire police, withholding federal funding to police agencies that did not address "misconduct," and a permanent statewide prosecutor to investigate police brutality cases.

One proposal was for the creation of a national database to track racial profiling and the use of "excessive force."

LETTERS

Fuel prices

In looking for more facts to better understand and discuss skyrocketing gas prices, I searched the *Militant's* back issues and found the June 28, 2004 article, "What's behind the soaring price of fuel?" very useful. The article drew some of its facts from the 2004 Consumer Federation of America (CFA) report. The CFA released a new report in March 2008 that has interesting facts about the role of speculation, the fall in value of the U.S. dollar, and the relationship between prices of gasoline and crude. It would be