

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

'Teamster Power': must read for working-class fighters

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 72/NO. 26 JUNE 30, 2008

Mexico is torn apart by capitalist drug wars

BY RÓGER CALERO

The intensifying warfare in Mexico between capitalist drug cartels and government troops has undermined the functioning of the government in that country, which has the second-largest population and economy in Latin America. Despite the deployment of thousands of police and army troops in the north and central regions, the powerful cartels have acted with increasing impunity, assassinating some top officials and controlling others through threats and bribes.

The government's lack of control has heightened concerns in U.S. ruling circles, leading to headlines such as "Mexico at the Brink" and "Mexico: On the Road to a Failed State?"—and to an increased role for U.S. federal cop agencies in Mexico.

Soon after his inauguration in December 2006, President Felipe Calde-

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Cuban Five conference projects fall actions

BY LAURA GARZA

BRONX, New York—More than 120 people participated in a June 14 working conference to win broader support in the campaign to free the Cuban Five, who have been locked up in U.S. prisons on frame-up charges for nearly 10 years.

The gathering, held at Hostos Community College, drew supporters of the defense campaign from New York and New Jersey, as well as from Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and Hartford, Connecticut. Some participants came from as far as San Francisco, Miami, and Beaumont, Texas.

Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, and René González have been jailed since September 1998. The five Cubans had been monitoring counter-revolutionary Cuban-American groups in Florida that have carried out deadly attacks in Cuba with Washington's com-

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Coal miners go on strike in Montana

Ratify contract after 10-day walkout



Billings Gazette/Larry Mayer

Coal miners at the Absaloka Mine near Hardin, Montana, picket the mine's access road.

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

June 17—Following a 10-day strike, 125 members of International Union of Operating Engineers Local 400 at the Absaloka Mine near Hardin, Montana, accepted a contract proposal yesterday from Westmoreland Resources. This was the first strike since the mine opened in 1974.

The coal reserves on the 15,000-acre mine site are leased from the Crow Tribe.

KTVQ-TV in Billings, Montana, reported that "tribal senator and coal miner Conrad Stewart says 87 percent of the miners are members of the Crow Tribe and when it comes to coal miners around the country—they are some of the lowest paid." Stewart told the station, "We're standing for something bigger than just a strike here—we're looking at

a lifestyle and we're trying to better our futures here."

After working without a contract since March 20, the miners rejected a June 3 "final offer" from the company and set up picket lines on June 7. The miners demanded a three-year contract, as opposed to the company's five-year proposal, better shift scheduling, and benefits and pay comparable to workers at other Westmoreland mines.

Top pay scale for miners at the sister Rosebud Mine nearby is \$25.52 an hour, compared to \$22.25 an hour at the Absaloka Mine. Miners told local media that because of forced overtime they could not get a weekend off without using vacation time. "Miners said they have been unreasonably pressured by supervisors if they stopped

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Flooding in Iowa devastates workers' homes, small farms



Militant/Frank Forrestal

A levee in Des Moines, Iowa, burst June 14, flooding Birdland, a working-class neighborhood.

BY HELEN MEYERS

DES MOINES, Iowa, June 14—The worst flooding in Iowa's history took place this week, with nine rivers in the state going over flood stage level. As of yesterday, 83 out of 99 counties in the state had been declared disaster areas.

Family farmers facing big losses to their crops and other rural residents have been devastated by the social disaster. Owners of agribusinesses are predicting higher corn and soybean prices, which will add to the economic squeeze on working people.

Much of the Midwest, in particular Indiana, Illinois, Minnesota, and Wis-

consin, also faces higher than usual seasonal flooding and damage to agriculture.

In Des Moines an outdated levee—which authorities knew for more than a decade was a disaster waiting to happen—burst in the working-class neighborhood of Birdland.

In a display of solidarity, thousands of working people across the state turned up to help sandbag wherever needed. Boats traveled the streets of flooded towns ferrying residents to safety.

Small farmers have been particu-

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Guantánamo prisoners gain right to challenge detentions

BY DOUG NELSON

The Supreme Court ruled June 12 that inmates in Washington's prison camp at its naval base in Guantánamo, Cuba, have the constitutional right to challenge their detentions—a right the U.S. government has denied them since it set up the camp in early 2002 under the banner of the "war on terrorism."

About 200 pending legal challenges filed over the years will now be heard in federal court, possibly this fall. Michael Ratner, president of the Center for Constitutional Rights, which represents many of the prisoners, told the *Los Angeles Times* he expected a "high number" of the detainees will eventually be released.

The 5-4 ruling is the most recent signal that a majority in U.S. ruling

circles has decided that Washington must eventually close the Guantánamo prison, which has become an increasing political liability for it in

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'We're fulfilling our pledge to join workers' struggles'

Interview with socialist candidates

BY BEN JOYCE

Róger Calero and Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidates for U.S. president and vice president respectively, have been campaigning since early January, introducing the working-class alternative in the 2008 elections. In a June 13 interview with the *Militant*, they described some of the workers and youth they have met, the struggles they have linked up with, and the support they have been able to garner for the 2008 Socialist Workers ticket.

"One of the main goals of our tour has been to fulfill the pledge we put forward at the beginning of the campaign, that we would join workers in the struggles they are engaged in today," Calero told the *Militant*. "So far we have been successful in this and we will continue to do so through November and beyond."

Immigrant rights

The candidates described some of the stops they made on the tour. "The first place I went was to an immigrant rights conference in Indianapolis, Indiana, in January, which was organized to protest new legislation targeting undocumented workers, as well as to plan for demonstrations for legalization that were to take place on May 1," said Calero. He pointed out that the demands for legalization of all undocumented workers and for an end to the raids and deportations characterized several of the struggles he has taken part in over the course of the election campaign. The socialist platform champions immediate, unconditional legalization for all.

Both candidates helped build and took part in the May 1 mobilizations, which tens of thousands joined.

"Despite the attacks that undocumented workers face today, they refuse to be seen simply as victims," explained Kennedy. "In Los Angeles, I had the opportunity to join a protest in February against a factory raid where around 150 workers were arrested. Some of the participants in the protest were among those arrested in the plant. They proudly marched with their ankle bracelets displayed, showing no fear. We got a very good response around our demand for legalization."

Kennedy recently returned from a tour stop in Postville, Iowa, where several hundred workers in a meatpacking plant were seized in an immigration raid in May. She described the solidarity that was shown by many workers to those who were affected. "As we drove through the town," she said, "we noticed a large number of homes had red ribbons displayed on them. We found out later that this was to show support for the workers who had been targeted in the raid."

Labor party

The Socialist Workers campaign makes its central demand the call for a labor party, based on a fighting union movement, that can take the struggles of working people into the political arena. "Many workers know that the Democrats and Republicans don't represent our interests," explained Calero. "We get a lot of interest and discussion around



Militant photos by Naomi Craine (above); Seth Galinsky (below)

Above, Róger Calero, SWP presidential candidate, speaks at Los Angeles Trade Technical College April 29. Together with Alyson Kennedy, SWP vice presidential candidate, he has been campaigning since early January, presenting the working-class alternative in the 2008 elections. Right, Kennedy (front, with glasses) joins May Day march and rally in Chicago.



the idea of a labor party that can take on the bosses' candidates in Washington.

"For example, I did a radio interview in San Francisco, and one worker called in to say he agreed with me that the unions should break with the Democrats. I later found out that workers at an apparel warehouse I had visited earlier that day ended up listening to the radio show at work."

Both candidates described how their experiences as working-class fighters appeal to many of those engaged in struggle today.

Calero worked several years as a meat packer in the Midwest. In 2000, he was part of a union-organizing drive at Dakota Premium Foods in South St. Paul, Minnesota. There, the workers fought a two-year long battle that won union representation. Calero has reached out in solidarity to workers there several times over recent months as they have successfully beaten back an attempt by the company to decertify the union.

Calero was born in Nicaragua and carries a green card. In 2002, he was arrested by immigration cops upon his return from a *Militant* reporting trip to Cuba and Mexico. He was held in jail

for 10 days and the government sought to deport him. With broad support from groups and individuals in support of immigrant and workers' rights, including the union at Dakota Foods, a defense campaign was waged that won his right to live and work in the United States. "Working people fighting for their rights identify with the example of that defense campaign," said Calero. "While you're never guaranteed to win, you only stand a chance if you put up a fight."

Coal miners strike

From 2003 to 2006 Kennedy was a leading militant in a union organizing battle at the Co-Op coal mine outside Huntington, Utah. The miners there, in their majority immigrants from Mexico, fought for United Mine Workers union representation to win safer working conditions, an end to abuse by the bosses, and improved wages, which were between \$5 and \$7 an hour at the time. "Many of the workers that we meet are very interested in and often identify with my experiences at the Co-Op mine," said Kennedy.

She brought that experience to

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THE MILITANT

Only union power can enforce safety!

From the deaths of workers at a construction site in Houston, to the deaths of shipyard workers in Turkey, the 'Militant' points to the bosses' profit drive as the source of the 'accidents' that kill and maim workers. Only workers and their unions can enforce safety.



Shipyard workers in Turkey protest against workplace deaths.

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Editor: Olympia Newton

Managing Editor: Cindy Jaquith

Business Manager: Angel Lariscy

Washington correspondent: Sam Manuel

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

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E-mail: themilitant@mac.com

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Boston Socialist Workers candidate opposes 'Safe Homes' initiative

BY LAURA GARZA

BOSTON—"Our campaign is opposed to the so-called Safe Homes Initiative and to any effort, like this one, to prettify an assault by the police on the rights of working people," said William Leonard, Socialist Workers Party candidate for State Senate in the Second Suffolk District here.

Leonard was testifying at a June 3 public hearing of the Boston City Council's Committee on Public Safety. The socialist candidate, who will be on the November ballot, is a meatpacking worker who has been active in union organizing campaigns and the fight for the legalization of all immigrants.

According to a brochure distributed by the Boston Police Department in public schools and in the community since last fall, the cop-sponsored program "is designed to disarm youth ages 17 and under, by seeking voluntary consent from their parents to allow police to search for illegal firearms" in private homes.

The brochure says the program is based on "referrals" by "a parent who self-reports, by a community based agency, the schools, or police officers

familiar with the youth," as well as anonymous tips.

Acting on a "referral" a three-person unit, which may include a police-approved clergy person, would knock on the selected home and ask the parents if they would like them to search their child's room.

The City Council hearing was considering a resolution urging the police department to add blanket immunity from prosecution to the program or supposedly ensure that the "consent to search" is "voluntary" by making police visits to homes "informational only, with parents asked to call if they would like for a search to be conducted." More than 40 people attended the hearing.

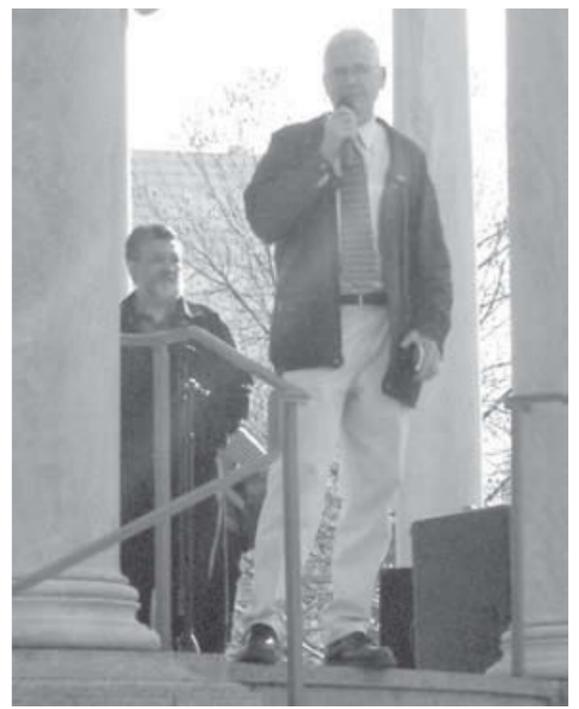
In a briefing last year, the Massachusetts American Civil Liberties Union questioned whether the consent on which the Safe Homes program rests is "knowing or genuinely voluntary." The ACLU noted, "Even assuming that language is not a barrier to understanding, few people are able to say no when confronted at their door by three police officers and possibly a member of the clergy." Carol Rose, Massachusetts ACLU executive director, spoke

in favor of the resolution.

"I have been beaten by the police. I have had my car blocked in by the police. I am totally against the Safe Homes Initiative," Yvonne Desmond of the Association of Black Social Workers said at the hearing. "Constitutional protections are so iffy for people in the Black community that someone has to pretty much sign in blood that they will do no harm."

Speaking in favor of the cop-backed program and against the resolution, Talia Riveira of the Black Ministerial Alliance said, "I would rather get the gun out of the hand of the kid than let the kid play with a gun and kill himself."

SWP candidate Leonard, who is running in a district that includes neighborhoods targeted by the program, noted that "working people are expressing their opinion about this program by not calling the police."



Militant/Bev Bernardo
William Leonard, Socialist Workers Party candidate for State Senate, Second Suffolk District, addresses a May 1 rally for immigrant rights in Boston.

In the guise of a "voluntary" program to uphold "safety," Leonard said, it seeks to legitimize the ability of cops to barge into private homes and victimize working people, trampling on the right to privacy and the Fourth Amendment right to be free from arbitrary search and seizure.

"As the world financial crisis deepens and the wealthy rulers of this country expand their wars of plunder, working people will need all our rights even more to defend ourselves, to fight back against the attacks by the employers and their government, to build our unions and not fear that the police will be knocking on our door asking to come in," the socialist candidate said.

Montana coal miners strike for 10 days

Continued from front page
for a breather," the *Billings Gazette* reported.

On June 11, Westmoreland proposed a second contract offer that included a three-year contract. This was overwhelmingly rejected and the miners continued their strike. George Golie, union negotiator for Local 400, told the *Billings Gazette* that "Westmoreland brought a shorter contract to the bargaining table Wednesday, but it wasn't enough. We went over the latest contract offer proposal from Westmoreland Resources, and it was rejected by a large margin. It was a very, very large margin."

A third contract proposal was made by Westmoreland after union and company representatives met with a federal mediator. On June 16, the miners approved this proposal and returned to work the next day.

According to the June 17 *Gazette*, the three-year contract includes a modest pay raise, with back pay to March. The *Gazette* reported that Golie said the contact does not bring

miners up to pay parity with Rosebud miners.

"The new contract calls for 12-hour shifts, extending the average workday for miners from two to four hours, depending on the job," the *Gazette*

continued. Golie told the *Gazette* that the new terms should, however, make work schedules more predictable.

In 2007 the Absaloka Mine produced a record 7.4 million tons of coal.

Turkish shipyard workers walk off job

BY SETH GALINSKY

Shipyard workers in Tuzla, Turkey, held a one-day strike June 16 to protest long working hours and other conditions that have led to a rising number of on-the-job deaths. Eight days earlier, Ihsan Turan was killed after a damper fell on him.

Eighty-two shipyard workers in Tuzla have died from on-the-job accidents in the last five years—25 in the last year alone.

In Tuzla, a port in the Istanbul region, there are 43 shipyards, most of them privately owned, accounting for 90 percent of production in Turkey's booming shipbuilding industry. Since 2002, the workforce there has nearly tripled to 35,000. Turkey's shipbuilding exports grew from \$1.4 billion in 2006 to \$2 billion last year.

The employer drive for stepped-up production at all cost has led to skyrocketing injuries and deaths for workers. Most of these have been crane-related.

A June report by a Turkish parliamentary commission described the shipbuilding companies' disregard for safety at the Tuzla port, where most workers labor in narrow spaces up to 14 hours a day. Most are employed by subcontractors.

At a May rally in front of the shipyards, members of the Limter-Is (Port and Shipyard Workers Union) carried empty caskets and poured red paint over them to symbolize recent deaths.

Limter-Is primarily organizes workers at the port employed by subcontractors. Another union, Dokgemi-Is,

represents only permanent workers.

Shipyard owner Cengiz Kaptanoglu complained that Turkish newspapers were calling Tuzla "the shipyards of death."

Cem Diniz, head of Limter-Is, told the English-language *Turkish Daily*

News that Turan was killed on a Sunday, which is supposed to be a rest day. "If the regulations were implemented," he said, "Ihsan Turan would be with us today."

Many of the workers are migrants from poorer regions of Turkey.

Unemployment jumps to 5.5%

BY RÓGER CALERO

The unemployment rate shot up to 5.5 percent in May from 5 percent in April, the U.S. Labor Department reported June 6. This is the fifth consecutive month registering an increase and the largest increase in one month since February 1986.

Some 49,000 jobs were cut in May according to the Labor Department's figures, which are often initially underestimated and later further adjusted. The number of job cuts reported by the government has totaled 324,000 so far this year.

The figures caught financial analysts by "surprise." They were expecting a lower increase, in the hope that a recession "could be narrowly avoided," said a June 6 article on CNNMoney.com. The U.S. government has not yet officially declared the economy is in a recession.

The jump in the unemployment rate, according to the Labor Department, is partly attributed to a sudden increase of 577,000 workers entering the workforce, some of whom are students looking for summer work.

Workers who have either stopped

looking for work or have been looking for more than one year are not counted as part of the workforce when figuring the unemployment rate. Undocumented immigrant workers are not included in the figures either.

The number of unemployed grew by 861,000 to 8.5 million. Unemployment rate for Blacks increased to 9.7 percent. The rate for teenagers rose to 18.7 percent, the highest in five years.

General Motors announced earlier in June that it will cut by half its workforce of 2,400 at its Janesville plant by this summer. The plant is scheduled to be shut down completely by 2010, said GM representatives. Likewise, Continental Airlines executive have said the company will shed 3,000 jobs in the coming months, more than 6 percent of its workforce. United and American Airlines have also announced they will be cutting thousands more jobs.

Meanwhile, a bill that would have extended unemployment benefits by 13 weeks—the Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act—was defeated in the House of Representatives on June 11.

CALENDAR

CANADA

Toronto

Free the Cuban Five—Rally. Sat., June 21. 1:00 p.m. U.S. Consulate in Toronto, 360 University Av. Organized by Toronto Forum on Cuba. For more information contact: www.torontoforumoncuba.tyo.ca

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

FLORIDA

Miami

No Construction Worker Has to Die! Safety is a Union Question! Speaker: Ellen Brickley, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., June 27. 8:00 p.m. 8365 NE 2nd Ave., Suite 206. Tel: (305) 756-4436.

Cuban Five conference

Continued from front page
plicity.

In 2001 a federal court convicted and sentenced them on charges of “conspiracy to commit espionage” and other false charges—including “conspiracy to commit murder” in the case of Hernández—in a trial marked by basic violations of rights.

The regional conference projected a range of activities for a stepped-up campaign in the fall to win new support for the Cuban Five. Among the actions projected is a national demonstration in Washington, D.C., September 13, as well as a national petition campaign over the next several months to introduce and win support for the case from those who do not yet know about it.

Leonard Weinglass, one of the defense attorneys for the five, gave a succinct explanation of the June 4 federal appeals court ruling. The judges upheld the unjust convictions of the five, he said, but they also threw out the sentences of Guerrero, Labañino, and Fernando González as excessive by legal standards, and sent those three cases back for resentencing.

“We’re going back to seek a petition to overturn this decision,” Weinglass said. “The court endorsed the use of secret evidence, it endorsed allowing the judge and the prosecutors to have a private meeting without the defense attorneys present, it endorsed eliminating seven African-American jurors from the jury pool,” and other aspects of an unfair trial, he explained. He pointed out that even one of the judges who upheld the convictions acknowledged the entire case should have been overturned because the original judge refused defense motions to move the trial out of the prejudicial atmosphere of Miami. (See the June 23 *Militant* for coverage of the decision.)

Another speaker at the opening plenary was Rodrigo Malmierca, Cuba’s representative to the United Nations. Part of a new film, produced by Jennifer Wager and Sally O’Brien, *Against Silence in Our Own Voices: Families of the Five Speak Out*, was shown.

Gloria La Riva, director of the San Francisco-based National Committee to Free the Five, called for stepping up the campaign to demand that the U.S. government grant visas to Olga Salanueva and Adriana Pérez, the wives of René González and Gerardo Hernández, respectively. They have not been allowed to travel to see their husbands. She highlighted plans for the September 13 demonstration and the petition cam-

paign.

The previous night, as part of the conference, Alicia Jrapko from the International Committee to Free the Cuban Five gave a presentation on the defense campaign at a reception hosted by the Pastors for Peace Friendship.

Discussion took place at seven conference workshops on winning new support among labor, religious groups, students, artists, legal professionals, academics, and community groups.

“What happened to the Cuban Five tells us what could happen to us as union members,” said Wellington Echegaray during discussion at the labor workshop, where participants planned to produce a labor-oriented petition and fact sheet to gather support from coworkers and union activists. They also agreed to form an ongoing Labor Campaign for Justice for the Cuban Five. Several people at the workshop cited facts that could be used to win broader support, such as the FBI’s secret searches of their apartments, the use of secret evidence, long periods of solitary confinement, and disproportionately harsh sentences.

At the final plenary session, Soffiyah Elijah, an activist who works at Harvard Law School, reported that those at the legal/civil liberties workshop proposed producing a fact sheet and organizing a speakers bureau to address the issues in the case, reaching out particularly to students and faculty at law schools.

Jean Weisman, an academic advisor at City College of New York, reported that participants in the academics workshop planned to get an article on the Cuban Five into the newsletter of the

New Zealand protest: ‘Free the Cuban Five’



Militant/Terry Coggan

AUCKLAND—Supporters of the Cuban Five picketed outside the U.S. Consulate here June 12 to protest the recent appeals court decision that upheld their frame-up convictions. A letter to the U.S. consul general calling for release of the five gained a range of signatures beforehand from university professors, union officials, student leaders, and political activists.

—JANET ROTH

5,000-member Latin American Studies Association and to involve faculty members in organizing speaking engagements at CCNY, Hostos Community College, and a few other campuses in the New York area in conjunction with student groups.

The youth/student workshop, which drew participants from six universities and three high schools, discussed several activities, including plans for events during Latino Heritage Month at Rutgers and Columbia universities, as well as New Jersey participants organizing a bus for the September 13 national demonstration. Two participants reported on

a film showing they are helping organize at Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas.

“I came to the conference to hear more about the case of the Cuban Five,” said Juan Pleitez, a shop steward at an industrial laundry in Somerville, Massachusetts, and a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union. “It was good to learn some things I didn’t know about the case and how the laws are used” to frame up fighters for justice. He said he planned to work with other unionists and supporters of immigrant rights to win their support for release of the five.

Capital Fund appeal stands at \$34,000

BY DAVE PRINCE

The special appeal to members and supporters of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists to donate their “Economic Stimulus” checks to the Capital Fund is inspiring a growing response.

Over the last two weeks the number of contributors who have joined the campaign has gone from 33 to 62, increasing the amount collected from \$19,000 to \$34,000.

A new, young member of the SWP in New York put in his contribution with the comment: “This is great—my first contribution to the Capital Fund.”

Contributions to the Capital Fund are dedicated solely to long-term publishing projects over the next decade and beyond. Members of the commu-

nist movement are carrying forward a proud tradition of contributing to the Capital Fund from “blood money” contract-signing bonuses—employer bribes given in lieu of paying higher wages—and so-called safety and production bonuses used to shut us up when life and limb are at stake. The “Economic Stimulus” checks are more of the same.

This appeal complements that of the *Militant* to readers to contribute their checks to the socialist press (see box below.)

The appeal got a special boost this week from SWP supporter Jeff Powers, who is a rail worker and member of the United Transportation Union (UTU).

Donate ‘Economic Stimulus’ checks to the ‘Militant’!

The *Militant* is urging its readers to donate the checks they receive from the U.S. government as a result of the “Economic Stimulus Act of 2008.” Readers who contribute this attempted bribe know it will be put to good use to strengthen the socialist press and its coverage of working-class struggles worldwide.

“Here is our drop of ‘blood money.’ Please use it to stimulate the workers’ movement,” wrote two readers who sent in \$600. Readers of the *Militant* have thus far donated a total of \$1,300. Join them!

Send contributions to:
The Militant 306 W. 37th St.
10th Floor New York, NY 10018.

The UTU just concluded a national contract agreement with the rail bosses, with a reported \$4,000 signing bonus. Jeff wrote a letter to other party supporters who work in the rail industry, saying, “Let’s contribute our contract bonus checks to the Capital Fund.” He goes on to say, “It seems like every month, the *UTU News* features an article about the work-related death of at least one and often two switchman, brakeman, or conductors. . . . Needless to say the contract does nothing to address the issue of being forced to work long hours without adequate time off for rest.”

He concludes: “It is a rotten deal and we should all send our blood money bonuses to the Capital Fund.”

Two supporters of the SWP from the Twin Cities in Minnesota sent their “Economic Stimulus” contribution of \$600 with a note: “Here’s our check for bribery and blood money to the Capital Fund. May it play a role in stimulating the ending of this ‘blood’ system.”

A longtime friend of the party in Miami who is an airline ramp worker smiled as he handed over six \$100 dollar bills for the appeal at a Militant Labor Forum there. A presentation on the appeal at a New York Militant Labor Forum won a pledge to the appeal from a teacher attending her first forum. The New York forum hall features a list of contributors to the fund.

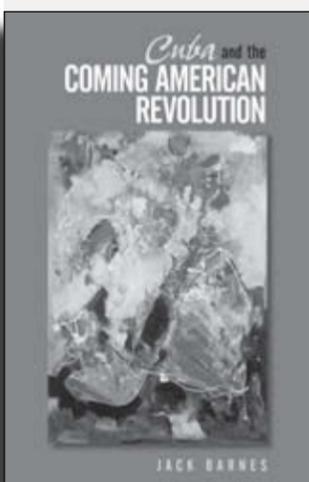
Join the appeal! Just over half of the checks have been sent by the government. We look forward to more contributors.

Dave Prince is the director of the Economic Stimulus Capital Appeal.

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution

By Jack Barnes

With a new foreword by Mary-Alice Waters



“There will be a victorious revolution in the United States before there will be a victorious counterrevolution in Cuba.”

That 1961 statement by Fidel Castro remains as true today as when it was spoken. This is a book about the class struggle in the U.S., where the revolutionary capacities of workers and farmers are today as utterly discounted by the ruling powers as were those of the Cuban toilers. It is about the example set by the people of Cuba that revolution is not only necessary—it can be made.

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Flooding devastates Iowa

Continued from front page

larly hard hit. The losses from the flooding and bad weather are likely to exceed \$2 billion, Iowa governor Chet Culver reported.

Driving up the road to Marshalltown, an hour from Des Moines, many farms looked more like rice paddies than cornfields. The drier land is still waterlogged and corn that is usually almost waist-high by this time of year is so stunted it barely stands ankle-high, due to earlier storms.

More than a million acres of corn have been washed out, along with 2 million acres of soy beans. The Iowa Farm Bureau estimates up to 20 percent of Iowa's grain crops may be lost.

Hog farms, which rely on corn for feed, and cattle ranches, which require hay, will also be hard hit. Many farmers have not been able to harvest hay due to the wet conditions.

Nancy Degner of the Iowa Beef Industry Council predicted that "herds will be reduced and the supply of meat will be lower. Food prices will go up."

Hardest hit was eastern Iowa. Cedar Rapids ordered the evacuation of 25,000 residents and the hospital.

working-class neighborhood burst and a mandatory evacuation order was issued for the area. More than 200 homes and the high school there were flooded.

According to the Army Corps of Engineers, the levee was poorly compacted when it was built in the 1950s and was further weakened over the years by tree roots. Corps officials had predicted after the 1993 flood that the levee would not hold without major improvements.

Roger Less, a Corps spokesperson, said that last December U.S. Congress authorized rebuilding the Birdland levee. Asked why this was not done, he replied, "When you're a nation at war, things tend to take a little longer on the home front at times. Priorities are stretched."

Charles Pickett, 71, unable to sandbag because of his bad knees, used his boat, pickup, and car to help move families in the Birdland area. "It looked like they needed help," he told the press.

In Iowa City, an army of University of Iowa students and others moved books from the library to higher ground and helped sandbag and build a levee to try to protect the buildings.

Flood levee bursts

During the 1993 flood of parts of Des Moines, city residents lost access to drinking water for 12 days. Over the following 15 years millions of dollars were used to build up levees and increase flood control protection of the downtown business district.

On June 14, a 100-foot-wide section of the levee protecting the Birdland

Dallas: construction worker killed on the job

BY STEVE WARSHALL

HOUSTON—One worker was killed and three others seriously injured last week at the new Dallas Cowboys stadium construction site in the Dallas suburb of Arlington.

On June 15, Timothy Mackinnon,

45, was standing on a ladder when he came into contact with a high-voltage line.

Three days earlier, three workers were injured when they were forced to jump off a crane they were working on to avoid being hit by falling equip-

ment from another crane.

According to a written statement from the contractor, Manhattan Construction, the latest incident occurred as the workers were assembling a crane. A cable connector "failed," which allowed cables and other parts to fall.

The death of Mackinnon is the fourth major safety disaster during construction of the \$1.1 billion stadium. In August, a worker was injured after being struck with crane cables.

There have been more than 170 injuries reported at the stadium site since construction began in 2006. Twenty injuries were reported in May alone. About 1,400 people work on the stadium.

On June 11, Omar Wray, 37, was killed at a construction site near the Stoneleigh Hotel in Dallas when a crane hook fell on him.

U.S. air strike kills 11 Pakistani soldiers

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—A U.S. air strike on a check point along Pakistan's border with Afghanistan killed 11 Pakistani soldiers June 10. Pakistan government and military officials sharply condemned the attack.

The U.S. military has been stepping up operations inside Pakistan against militias allied with al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Pakistan's new government has signed peace agreements with several of the militia groups in tribal regions where the Pakistani army has suffered substantial casualties. U.S. and NATO officials have criticized the pacts saying they will lead to increased attacks by al-Qaeda and Taliban-backed groups against U.S.-led coalition forces in Afghanistan.

Pakistan's foreign ministry called the attack an unprovoked and gross violation of its border, reported Reuters. "The senseless use of air power against a Pakistani border post by coalition forces is totally unacceptable," the ministry said.

An unnamed Pakistan army spokesman called the attack "unprovoked and cowardly," Reuters said, and charged that it would hurt Pakistan's support for the global "war on terror." Pakistan's ambassador to the United States, Husain Haqqani, struck a more conciliatory tone, saying Pakistan does not view the air strike as an intentional, hostile act and that it would not change Pakistan's relations with the U.S. government.

This is the second U.S. air strike on Pakistan's border in less than a month.

According to press reports U.S. warplanes and drones routinely violate Pakistani airspace. As many as 14 people were killed May 16 by missiles fired from Predator drones in the village of Damadola. U.S. and Pakistani officials said that a "high value" target was among those killed.

For years Washington relied on the military-backed regime of Pervez Musharraf in Pakistan. Musharraf was a protector of the Taliban in neigh-

boring Afghanistan until Washington overthrew the Taliban-led regime after Sept. 11, 2001. Musharraf then became an unstable but staunch U.S. ally.

Elections this past February in Pakistan resulted in a new parliamentary majority headed by former prime minister Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party. Bhutto was assassinated in December while campaigning in Rawalpindi. The new government has led peace talks with Islamist militias.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



July 1, 1983

NEW YORK—A militant, spirited march and rally were held here June 16, marking the 7th anniversary of the uprising in the Black South African township of Soweto.

Some 1,500 Blacks and several hundred whites and Latinos participated in the march.

The demonstrators paid tribute to three African National Congress (ANC) liberation fighters executed by the racist South African government June 9, and vigorously protested U.S. collaboration with the apartheid regime.

In the front a large banner of the sponsoring Soweto Solidarity Coalition declared: "Down With Apartheid! U.S. Out of S. Africa! Victory to the ANC-SWAPO!"



June 30, 1958

One central issue dominated the United Independent-Socialist Election Conference held in New York June 13-15. Should socialists stand in clear-cut opposition to the Republicans and Democrats or should they support and work inside the Democratic party? The great majority of the conference sponsors and delegates recorded themselves in favor of militant socialist opposition to the two capitalist parties.

The fact that the conference took a decisive stand on the issue by no means ends the debate. The CP [Communist Party] leadership is continuing to marshal arguments against the idea of independent socialist political action and in support of its pro-Democratic party "coalition" policy.

N.Y. picket protests grand jury probe



Militant/Dan Fein

BROOKLYN, New York—Nearly 40 people picketed outside the federal courthouse here June 13 to protest a federal grand jury's subpoena of José Díaz, the fifth Puerto Rican independence supporter to be subpoenaed this year. Washington has used federal grand juries as fishing expeditions to frame up and jail Puerto Rican independence fighters. The picket line was sponsored by the Hostos Grand Jury Resistance Campaign.

—DAN FEIN

Myanmar: workers resist military junta

BY PATRICK BROWN

(Second of two articles)

AUCKLAND, New Zealand, June 14—The March 1962 military coup in Burma, now known as Myanmar, was part of a wave of defeats for working people in Asia, Africa, and Latin America in the years after they fought for and won independence from colonial rule.

“In one country after another the military caste seized power,” wrote Joseph Hansen, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States, in a 1966 article focusing on the previous year’s bloody coup in Indonesia—the heaviest defeat for many years.

Working people in these countries were politically disarmed by the class-collaborationist “peaceful coexistence” policies foisted by Moscow and Beijing on their followers. This contrasted with Cuba, whose leadership mobilized workers and farmers to carry out a socialist revolution and defend it.

Three years later Hansen commented on the extensive nationalizations of industry and commerce by post-independence Burmese governments, both civilian and military. Such nationalizations differed from those carried out in workers states such as China or Cuba, he said, which emerged as products of revolutions.

The moves in Burma followed a pattern in which a sector of the officer caste takes over, aiming to give “capitalism a new lease on life after a period in incubation under auspices of the state apparatus,” he noted.

‘Socialist’ military regime

General Ne Win, the main coup leader, said his government stood for “the Burmese way to socialism.” In July 1962 the military junta founded the Burma Socialist Programme Party as an agency of social control over unions, the Buddhist hierarchy, and other trouble-some groups.

By 1965 any media independent of military control had been closed down. Displaying its xenophobic character, the military established tighter and tighter controls over the country’s borders.

Burma’s capitalist economy stagnated. Rice shortages sparked protests in 1967. Seven years later demonstrations and strikes broke out over high food prices.

The junta also faced insurgencies for independence or autonomy by national minorities in the Shan and Kachin states and elsewhere. The government also faced resistance from guerrilla units of the Communist Party of Burma. Benefiting from arms and funding provided by Beijing, CPB forces based in the Burma-China border region escalated their attacks in 1968. But they were left high and dry when the Chinese and Burmese governments reestablished friendly relations a decade later. By the late 1980s the CPB was a spent force.

Washington gave the junta military aid, under the cover of fighting the opium trade.

1987–88 upsurge

Popular resistance reached new levels in 1987–88. Millions marched against the effects of inflation, unemployment, and the military suppression of rights. Protesters called for elections and the release of all political prisoners.

Opposition spread across the country,

involving students, workers, peasants, monks, and small traders.

The high point was a general strike and popular rebellion in August and September, one month after Ne Win resigned as official head of government.

Lacking a revolutionary leadership, the upsurge fell short of the overthrow of military rule. The generals regrouped, announcing the formation of a new State Law and Order Restoration Council headed by Gen. Saw Maung. Armored cars and machine guns were used against unarmed crowds. The death toll was in the thousands, according to widespread reports. Following its bloody crackdown the military called elections in 1990. Voters departed from the military script, however, electing the National League for Democracy by a landslide. The NLD was led by Aung Sang Suu Kyi, a prominent figure in the upsurge who had been placed under house arrest.

The junta blocked the new parliament from meeting. Reversing its course of closer ties with the unpopular regime, Washington publicly endorsed the bourgeois opposition leader.

Beijing has become a major exporter to Myanmar and, along with Moscow, the key supplier of arms to the regime. The army in Myanmar now numbers 400,000—more than double its size when the current junta consolidated its rule.

The junta, which renamed itself the State Peace and Development Council

Guantánamo inmates can challenge detentions

Continued from front page

face of exposures of inhuman conditions there.

Both major capitalist presidential candidates, John McCain and Barack Obama, have said they intend to close the camp. McCain was critical of the Supreme Court ruling, but added that the court had ruled “and now we need to move forward.” Obama supported the ruling as helping restore “our credibility” while criticizing the Bush administration for failing to “convict anyone of a terrorist act since the 9-11 attacks.”

The ruling struck down parts of the 2006 Military Commissions Act, which Congress adopted in a bipartisan vote. That law allowed the U.S. military to use the Guantánamo camp to jail indefinitely, without charges, any noncitizen declared an “enemy combatant” by the president or defense secretary.

The Supreme Court left other parts of the act intact, including the government’s authority to try detainees in military tribunals at Guantánamo. In such tribunals, the judge and “jury” are military personnel appointed by the Pentagon and the prosecution can use secret evidence and hearsay. Statements obtained through some forms of torture are permissible, as long as it took place before Dec. 30, 2005.

Military trials

The Pentagon has charged 19 men and is moving ahead with military trials against them. These include five prisoners arraigned June 5 on charges of involvement in the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. The U.S. government is seeking



Demonstration converges on Sule Pagoda, Rangoon, Burma, in August 1988. Millions protested in 1987–88 against suppression of workers’ rights and sustained poverty.

in 1997, stepped up its efforts to encourage investment from many capitalist interests in the region, and from imperialist companies such as Chevron in the United States and Total in France. Lucrative deals for the ruling generals have resulted.

For working people in Myanmar the consequences of military rule have been repression and grinding poverty. The country has gone from being the world’s biggest rice exporter in colonial times to one of Asia’s poorest nations.

The capitalist regime’s refusal to immediately mobilize aid for the victims of the May 3 cyclone was the latest example of its contempt for working people.

It was left to ordinary people to take the first steps in responding to the devastation sparked by the cyclone. These same working people had, just months earlier, shown once again their capacity to resist military rule. A series of mass demonstrations, sparked by rises in fuel prices, marked the 20th anniversary of the beginning of the 1987–88 upsurge.

the death penalty for all five in a tribunal scheduled to start September 15.

One of the 19 charged is Omar Khadr, a Canadian citizen captured in Afghanistan in 2002 when he was 15. Khadr faces life in prison for allegedly killing a U.S. soldier. His lawyers accuse military interrogators of having destroyed evidence. The Canadian Supreme Court ruled in May that Canadian agents broke the law when they interrogated Kadr in Guantánamo and handed the intelligence over to U.S. authorities.

The military trial of Salim Hamdan, Osama Bin Laden’s former driver, is scheduled for July 21. His lawyer said he will seek dismissal of the charges based on the Supreme Court decision. The former prosecutor at Guantánamo, Col. Morris Davis, who resigned over the use of evidence extracted through torture, has testified in Hamdan’s defense.

Pentagon officials announced in June they plan to charge Guantánamo prisoner Binyam Mohammad, accused of plotting to detonate a “dirty bomb” in the United States. They claim he conspired with José Padilla, who for lack of evidence was never charged for that. Padilla, a U.S. citizen, was sentenced in January to 17 years for conspiracy to commit unspecified “terrorist” acts. Mohammad, who faces a life term, “confessed” under torture in a Moroccan prison, his attorneys say.

Only one prisoner, Australian David Hicks, has been convicted by a military commission. After spending five years in Guantánamo, Hicks was released to Australia in 2007, where he spent seven months in prison in ex-

change for pleading guilty to providing “material support to terrorism.”

The Pentagon has said it plans to try up to 80 more by military commission.

At its peak in 2003, the Guantánamo prison held 680 inmates; today about 270 remain. Since the prison opened in 2002, prisoners have been denied rights guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution, including the right to due process. The vast majority have not been charged with any crime. For the last six years, according to former prisoners, inmates there have been subject to inhuman treatment that includes various forms of torture, beatings, sexual humiliation, starvation, long-term isolation, and sleep deprivation, some of which has been widely reported in the media. It is under such conditions that U.S. government interrogators pressed inmates for “confessions.”

The Supreme Court decision deals specifically with Guantánamo prison, where Washington—which has a naval base there against the will of the Cuban people—claimed that constitutional rights do not apply because it is not on U.S. territory. The ruling does not address U.S. prisons in other countries, where inmates are also held indefinitely without charges.

The U.S. military holds thousands of prisoners outside the United States, including more than 20,000 in Iraq. Washington is building a 40-acre prison camp at the Bagram airfield in Afghanistan to replace the makeshift jail there. Bagram prison has been used to jail suspected “terrorists” captured in Middle Eastern countries, often on their way to Guantánamo.

'Book is must reading for working-class militants'

Teamster Power by Farrell Dobbs. Pathfinder Press. 2008. 361 pp. \$19.

BY FRANK FORRESTAL AND RYAN SCOTT

To learn how an earlier generation of workers gained experience in union combat, a good place to start is by picking up a copy of *Teamster Power* by Farrell Dobbs. Originally published in 1973, the new Pathfinder edition is enhanced by a winning new cover; enlarged, easily readable type; 24 pages of photos; illustrations; and an expanded index. The Spanish-language edition, *Poder Teamster*, will be out soon.

The book is must reading for working-class militants fighting to expand unionization; for those who participated in May Day actions demanding legalization for immigrant workers; for independent truckers resisting assaults on their livelihood; for vanguard workers in the front lines of resisting immigration raids and deportations.

Using class power

Teamster Power tells the story of how the men and women of Minneapolis Teamsters Local 574 (later Teamsters Local 544) and their class-struggle leadership used the power they had won through three hard-fought strikes in 1934 to extend union power to cities and towns across the upper Midwest. Above all, it shows how workers used their class power against the bosses and transformed themselves in the process.

The book continues the story Dobbs began in *Teamster Rebellion*, the first volume in the four-part series on the



Members of Teamsters Local 574 gather May 1934 to hear announcement of strike victory

Teamster battles of the 1930s. *Teamster Politics* and *Teamster Bureaucracy* round out the series.

Dobbs was a rank-and-file leader of the 1934 Teamster strikes and organizing drive. "The young Farrell Dobbs we get to know in the pages of *Teamster Rebellion* became one of the great mass organizers of the U.S. working class," writes Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, in the introduction to that book. "Barely thirty, he was the chief architect and leader of the campaign—stretching from Texas, to Detroit, to Canada, to Seattle—that organized some quarter million over-the-road drivers into a powerful union and transformed the upper Midwest into union territory, the legacy of which is felt to this day."

In the introduction to *Teamster Power*, Dobbs, referring to the 1934 strikes, says the most important fact was that workers won a "new sense of hope in the union." The workers of Minneapolis "began to look toward unionization as a way to win a better life for themselves. Wherever a new fight developed, the rank and file sought to emulate Local 574's methods, especially in the formation of broad strike committees."

In the heat of battle, Local 574's membership learned from their own

experiences that they had nothing in common with the bosses and their government. They learned that "if the workers don't fight as a class to defend their interests, the bosses will gouge them," Dobbs explains.

Teamster officialdom

In addition to fighting the trucking bosses, Local 574 went up against the American Federation of Labor officialdom, which opposed militant labor struggles. In response to the threat posed by the accelerated widening of union power in Minnesota, the Teamsters International bureaucracy, led by its president, Daniel Tobin, set out to crush the class-struggle leadership of Local 574.

Using its seasoned and battle-tested leadership, Local 574 stuck to its class-struggle course. Despite having its charter taken away by Tobin, Local 574 continued to win strikes, renew contracts with real gains, and recruit new members, reaching more than 4,000 members. From their combat experiences, Dobbs writes, a small but significant layer of the local's membership "was learning political lessons from experiences in the class struggle. Some were recruited into the revolutionary party."

Dobbs explains, "after a delay of al-

most two years" it became possible "to launch the general organization drive [throughout the Midwest] that should have followed on the heels of our strike victory in 1934."

11-state campaign

In the chapter, "We Reach Outward," Dobbs describes how the "Teamster expansion drive" led to the launching of the North Central District Drivers Council and their victory against a notoriously antilabor produce chain in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Word got out that the union victory resulted in wages being almost doubled in some towns. "News of the victory swept across the prairies like a grass fire. Workers in town after town were inspired to pitch into the Teamster campaign with renewed vigor," Dobbs writes.

These gains set the stage for launching the North Central Area Committee—now with the official backing of the Teamsters officialdom—to unionize over-the-road drivers through an organizing campaign covering 11 states. The ensuing mobilization of truck drivers resulted in the "biggest contract ever negotiated by the International Brotherhood of Teamsters up to that time," Dobbs said, and significant uniform wage gains and qualitative improvements in working conditions for tens of thousands of drivers throughout the Midwest.

Omaha and Sioux City became the center of the 11-state drive to organize over-the-road truckers in 1938–39. Dobbs dedicated *Teamster Power* "to the main army of the over-the-road campaign, the rank-and-file Teamsters of Omaha and Sioux City." Workers in both cities fought a six-month battle with the bosses and won a decisive victory. A good number of photos bring to life the militancy of their fight.

"To all intents and purposes, we had laid siege to Nebraska like Grant did to Vicksburg. Our task now was to hold firm in the established positions and to steadily intensify use of union power against the class enemy," Dobbs writes.

"Every worker militant in the city and state now understood that the bosses could be beaten," he explains. With the defeat of the Omaha-Sioux City bosses, the over-the-road contract was firmly planted in 11 states.

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New barrier to Cuba travel protested in Florida

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

TALLAHASSEE, Florida—About 120 people traveled from Miami to the Florida state capitol June 11 to demand Governor Charlie Crist veto State Senate Bill 1310, which would erect additional barriers to travel to Cuba.

The bill easily passed the Florida Senate and House. It would require Florida-based travel companies that handle trips to Cuba or any other country Washington designates as "terrorist"—Iran, North Korea, Syria, and Sudan—to pay a \$2,500 registration fee and post a bond of up to \$300,000.

Radio talk show host Francisco Aruca told *Progreso Weekly* that the bill "establishes that any violation of any federal or state law or regulation

that attempts to limit trade relations and 'transactions' with Cuba will be punishable by a fine of up to \$10,000 per violation, no matter how insignificant the violation, and could become a crime defined as third-degree felony."

Ignacio Millan, a retired heavy-equipment mechanic and member of the International Association of Machinists, came on one of three buses to the protest. While Millan was born in Mexico, his wife Georgina Mendivil is from Cuba. "We have a lot of family in Cuba," said Millan. "We have a moral responsibility for our families. It is a right no one can eliminate."

In 2004 the U.S. government tightened restrictions on trips by Cuban-Americans to the island, limiting vis-

its to once every three years and only to visit immediate family members. Washington also limited remittances to Cuba to \$300 per quarter. Prior to these restrictions, Cuban-Americans were permitted to visit close relatives once a year.

"We are in solidarity with this activity," Tony Llanso, president of the Cuban-American group Alianza Martiana, told the *Militant*. "The people in Alianza Martiana are not in the travel to Cuba business. We are the customers. If these agencies and charters are obligated to close their operations or become more expensive for the customers, it is us who will have to pay."

A car caravan to demand the right to travel to Cuba will take place in Miami June 28.

Leadership challenges in the transition to socialism

Below is an excerpt from Che Guevara and the Fight for Socialism Today, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month in June. It is based on the introduction by Mary-Alice Waters to the 1992 French-language edition of Che Guevara: Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism, by Cuban economist Carlos Tablada. Waters is the editor of the Marxist magazine New Internationalist and of numerous titles on Cuba published by Pathfinder. Copyright © 1992. Reprinted by permission.

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

The enduring political value of Guevara's ideas and example was discussed by [Fidel] Castro at some length at the October 1987 ceremony marking the twentieth anniversary of Guevara's murder at the hands of U.S.-trained troops in



Volunteers mobilizing to cut sugar cane in Cuba, 1963. Such work brigades were an early feature of the Cuban Revolution, opening the way for workers to transform themselves as they collectively worked to transform the social relations under which they lived.

the socialist world." It is with the aim of helping in this task that Pathfinder Press in 1989 published an English translation of Carlos Tablada's book and is now publishing this first French edition. Fidel Castro's October 1987 speech, which provides one of the best possible introductions to the place of Che's contributions as part of the living political continuity of the Cuban revolution, serves as the prologue.

The long emancipation struggle of Cuban working people dates back to the first war of independence against Spanish colonialism, which began in 1868. From the crucible of these and subsequent battles emerged leaders such as Antonio Maceo, Máximo Gómez, and José Martí, whose words and revolutionary deeds left a heritage of anti-imperialist intransigence, internationalism, political integrity, selflessness, and courage. The leadership that left Mexico on the *Granma* in 1956 drew strength from this rich revolutionary continuity in uncompromisingly leading the transition from Cuba's national democratic revolution that brought a workers' and farmers' government to power in the fall of 1959 to the socialist revolution that accelerated in late 1960 and early 1961 in response to the hostile actions of domestic and foreign reaction, above all U.S. imperialism.

The socialist road that Cuban working people set out on at the beginning of the 1960s had been opened some four

decades earlier by the October 1917 revolution in Russia. The Bolshevik Party leadership headed by V.I. Lenin went through the world's first experiences in organizing workers and peasants to begin the building of socialism in the course of fighting to advance the world revolution. These efforts, from late 1917 through the end of Lenin's active political life in March 1923, left an invaluable legacy to revolutionists such as Guevara and Castro who later sought to continue Lenin's course. The record of the Soviet government, Communist Party, and Communist International in Lenin's time is rich in lessons in the economics and politics of the transition from capitalism to socialism.

The socialist revolution, as Guevara explains repeatedly in the works cited by Tablada, marks the first time in history that expanding political participation and revolutionary consciousness of the toiling majority becomes necessary to the economic organization of society. The door is opened for working people to cease being the objects of blind economic laws that determine their living and working conditions and social relations, and instead to begin placing society's productive forces under their own conscious control.

This is not optional, not just one way among others following a successful popular revolution to advance the transition to socialism. The most committed and self-sacrificing vanguard of the working

people, organized in a communist party, *must* lead growing layers of their class in taking more and more control over the political direction and administration of the state and economy. This is the *only* way workers can transform themselves as they collectively transform the social relations under which they work, produce, and live. It is the only way they can make these social relations among human beings more and more open and direct—tearing away the veils and fetishes behind which the capitalist system hides the brutal consequences of its exploitation of toilers and obscures the unique contribution of labor to all social and cultural progress. Along any other road, society will not advance toward socialism and communism, but will instead—mired in bureaucratic planning and management—regress toward capitalism.

"Our revolution nationalized the domestic economy; it nationalized basic industry, including mining," Guevara explained in an August 1961 speech to a conference of Latin American government officials in Punta del Este, Uruguay. "It nationalized all foreign trade, which is now in the hands of the state, and which we proceeded to diversify by trading with the whole world. It nationalized the banking system in order to have in its hands the efficient instrument with which to exercise the function of credit in accordance with the country's needs. It provides for the participation of the workers in the management of the planned national economy."

The fundamentally *political* character of economic questions and decisions during the transition to socialism is central to Guevara's writings and speeches. His contributions in this regard, like those of Lenin, extend well beyond what is normally, and narrowly, thought of as "economics." Che constantly stressed the inseparable interrelationship between the transformation of the social relations of production and the transformation of the political and social consciousness of the working people carrying out this revolutionary process. "To build communism it is necessary, simultaneously with the new material foundations, to build the new man," as he put it in his 1965 article, "Socialism and Man in Cuba."

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

Bolivia. Guevara had left Cuba in April 1965 to carry out internationalist missions abroad, with the aim of extending the socialist revolution.

"What I ask for modestly at this twentieth anniversary," Castro said in the 1987 talk, "is that Che's economic thought be made known; that it be known here, in Latin America, in the world; in the developed capitalist world, in the Third World, and in

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Oppose 'anti-terror' measures

The June 12 Supreme Court decision that inmates in Washington's prison camp at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, have the constitutional right to challenge their detentions shows the extent to which the widespread knowledge of the inhuman conditions there are becoming a political liability for the U.S. ruling class.

Washington justifies its treatment of Guantánamo detainees by labeling them "enemy combatants." On that basis the prisoners have been held indefinitely, and denied their right to trial by a jury of their peers and to be free from cruel and unusual punishment. U.S. working people are told these measures are necessary to prevent "terrorist" attacks.

It is with this same argument that the rulers have proceeded to implement measures chipping away workers' rights—from more secret surveillance of "suspected terrorists," to increased "security" controls at airports and other transportation centers, to snooping on people's library visits and bank accounts. There is a growing use of "conspiracy" charges to arrest workers when there is no evidence, as in the case of the Cuban Five, Cuban revolutionaries who have been in U.S. jails for nearly 10 years, framed-up on charges of conspiracy to commit espionage, and in the case of Gerardo Hernández, conspiracy to commit murder.

Liberal opponents of these attacks blame the

Bush administration. But the fact is many of these measures were signed into law by President William Clinton, including the Comprehensive Terrorism Protection Act, which denies the right of death-row prisoners to submit more than one habeas corpus petition for review of their cases; and the 1996 Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, under which the U.S. government has held some two dozen people without bail on the basis of secret evidence.

The U.S. employers are preparing now for resistance to their deepening economic crisis on the part of working people. They want laws to already be in place as strikes, union organizing drives, and other efforts by workers to defend themselves spread.

While the court ruling allows challenges by many detained in Guantánamo to proceed to federal courts, it left intact the government's authority to try detainees in military tribunals, where the judge and jury are military personnel appointed by the Pentagon and the prosecution may use secret evidence and hearsay.

The labor movement should demand the immediate closing of U.S. prisons at Guantánamo, and in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other countries around the world; the release of all those jailed there; the abolition of U.S. military tribunals; and the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of U.S. and allied troops from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Mexico torn by capitalist drug wars

Continued from front page

rón's government launched an offensive against several major cartels that have been at war with each other for control of the \$40 billion drug trade—which represents almost 20 percent of all exports to the United States.

Some 30,000 federal cops and army troops have been mobilized to cities in several northern states, including those along the U.S.-Mexican border. In June 2007, Mexico's public security secretary announced the deployment of 1,600 federal cops to the state of Nuevo León after the fatal shooting of state legislator Mario César Ríos in downtown Monterrey, the business center of northern Mexico. The previous month state cops walked off the job to protest the jump in killings of police by the cartels.

The drug lords have responded to the military offensive by intensifying their assaults. In the past 18 months more than 4,000 people, including about 450 cops, have been killed in drug-related violence.

Assassinations of high-ranking officials involved in anti-trafficking efforts have spread from the north to Mexico's capital. Edgar Millán Gómez, who was responsible for overseeing most of Mexico's counternarcotics operations, was killed May 8 in Mexico City. He was the highest ranking of four senior officers killed in the past two months.

Drug capitalists have used their influence to put government officials—from local cops to high-ranking state and federal officials—on their payrolls.

In Ciudad Juárez, across the border from El Paso, Texas, drug traffickers left a handwritten note threatening 22 city police commanders at a monument dedicated to fallen cops, the Associated Press reported. It was addressed to "those who still don't believe" in the power of the cartels. Of the 22, seven have already been killed and three wounded in assassination attempts. Of the rest, all but one resigned their posts.

Los Zetas, a paramilitary unit of the Gulf cartel made up of former Mexican army commandos, have hung banners above highways with slogans such as "Los Zetas want you. We offer good salaries to soldiers," a taunt about low army pay.

The raging gang warfare and related instability

in Mexico are of no small concern to Washington. Mexico, which shares a 1,920 mile border with the United States, has a population of 110 million. Its economy is the 14th largest in the world, with \$210 billion worth of exports to the United States and \$136 billion in imports from the United States in 2007. Its gross domestic product was \$886 billion in 2006.

President George Bush has urged Congress to approve a three-year \$1.4 billion package to provide military hardware, spying equipment, police training, and "judicial assistance" for the Mexican government. U.S. police agencies have increased collaboration with their counterparts in Mexico.

On June 9, U.S. and Mexican officials unveiled Operation *Armas Cruzadas*, a joint effort to intercept U.S. weapons smuggled into Mexico for drug traffickers. Since at least 2002, U.S. cop agencies have also been involved in training and equipping special Mexican anti-drug-trafficking units.

The growing U.S. intervention in Mexico's drug wars is being accepted more and more by ruling-class circles in Mexico that previously balked at being accused of accepting the violation of Mexico's sovereignty.

A June 1 *New York Times* article headlined "What the Mexicans might learn from the Italians," suggested that the U.S. and Mexican governments should seek a policing partnership similar to the one established by Washington and the Italian government to combat the mafia in the 1980s.

"The things we are seeing in Mexico today, we saw the same glimmers in Italy," the beginnings of a crusade, a former FBI agent involved in operations at that time told the *Times*.

After decades of political and economic control of entire regions of Italy by the mafia since World War II, the Italian government launched a crackdown in the mid-1980s that ended with the arrest of hundreds of mafia leaders and government officials connected to them, including a prime minister.

The Calderón government has not limited the deployment of army troops and federal cops to fighting drug traffickers. His first move after his inauguration was to send 4,000 troops to the southern state of Oaxaca to crack down on teachers and other antigovernment protesters.

'Fulfilling pledge'

Continued from page 2

Minneapolis this spring where she met with Dakota workers as part of her tour stop. She spoke on a radio show in defense of their fight. "The radio show host decided to invite the meat packers to appear on his show as a result," she recalled.

The candidates have also spent some time campaigning outside the United States. In April and May, Calero visited New Zealand and Australia, while Kennedy traveled to the United Kingdom, Sweden, and Canada, speaking about the class struggle in the United States and learning about the struggles of workers abroad.

In Stockholm, Sweden, Kennedy was invited to speak with the executive board of the Somali Peace and Development Organization. There, they got into a discussion about the legacy of imperialism in Africa and specifically whether or not either the "West" or China could play a beneficial role. "One of them asked me if I think China's presence in Africa would be a better alternative than domination by the U.S. and Europe," said Kennedy. "I explained that neither Washington nor Beijing acts in the interests of working people in Africa, but the one example of internationalist aid to Africa with no strings attached is that of Cuba." Many of them knew what I was talking about and nodded their heads affirmatively."

Calero described attending a rally of striking teachers in Sydney, Australia, as well as a meeting there in defense of Aboriginal rights.

"Learning about and supporting the struggles of our fellow workers abroad helps us in our common fight," said Calero.

One aspect of the campaign that has had an impact on the candidates is the response they receive from students. Calero and Kennedy have spoken at campus meetings and in classrooms in a number of different cities from Denton, Texas, to New Brunswick, New Jersey.

"Every classroom I speak at, the questions are very serious," said Kennedy. "The students are genuinely interested in how they can change the world. The revolutionary working-class perspective that our campaign offers is very unique to them. The discussion always comes down to 'Is a socialist revolution possible in the United States?' and they always listen intently for my answer."

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