

# THE MILITANT

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 72/NO. 27 JULY 7, 2008

## Study: gov't agency hides workplace injuries

BY SETH GALINSKY

Although the U.S. Department of Labor claims that workplace injuries and illnesses have been at “all-time lows,” a study by researchers at the University of Illinois found that 83 percent of an alleged drop from 1992 to 2003 is due to changes in record-keeping by the Labor Department’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). As much as 69 percent of injuries and illnesses never make it into government reports.

Among the record-keeping changes, OSHA no longer requires an injury be recorded if a worker returned to the job the day after the injury. It is a common practice in the meatpacking industry, for example, for employers to tell employees too injured to work that they must report to the job for “light duty.”

OSHA has stopped collecting data at workplaces and instead relies on employers to provide the information.

Companies are increasingly list-  
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## Socialist campaign completes Washington ballot effort

BY DAVID ROSENFELD

SEATTLE—Workers gathered around Alyson Kennedy to talk with the socialist candidate for vice president as she campaigned outside the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 19 hall at the Port of Seattle. Kennedy toured here June 18–24 at the close of a successful petitioning effort to get the Socialist Workers Party ticket on the state ballot.

John Fischer, a retired longshore worker, gave Kennedy a hug, saying, “I’m really glad to see you again.” In 2004 Fischer helped organize solidarity with striking coal miners at the Co-Op Mine near Huntington, Utah. At the time, Kennedy was one of the striking miners who traveled to Seattle to speak to members of the longshore union. Several veteran union members recalled the visit and the solidarity and money that was raised for the miners’ fight.

Kennedy told the workers that “my  
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## Tel Aviv escalates threats against Iran

Washington, EU increase sanctions



Israeli air force carried out military exercise in early June in rehearsal of bombing attack on Iranian nuclear facilities. Above: Israeli air force H64 Apache helicopter.

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—The Israeli air force carried out a long-range military exercise the first week in June that was demonstrably a rehearsal for bombing Iran’s nuclear facilities.

In another step to ratchet up pressure on Iran, the U.S. Coast Guard, in mid June, began searching all ships that have docked at an Iranian port within five port calls of coming to the United States. The U.S. Senate Finance Committee approved a bill

June 18 to strengthen U.S. sanctions against Iran.

On June 23 the European Union (EU) imposed new sanctions on 15 individuals in Iran and 20 Iranian companies it claimed were linked to nuclear and missile programs.

Washington and its imperialist allies charge that under cover of its nuclear energy program Iran is seeking to develop nuclear weapons. Tehran has denied the charge and rejected  
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## Korean truckers strike, win pay raise to offset fuel costs



Associated Press

Truckers rally outside Shinsun pier in Busan, south Korea, June 18. The seven-day strike forced cargo bosses to ease the burden of rising fuel and maintenance costs.

BY SETH GALINSKY

A seven-day strike over skyrocketing fuel prices by thousands of cargo truck drivers in south Korea forced concessions from shipping companies and the government June 19.

The 13,000-member Korea Cargo Workers Union called the strike. Although it accounts for only 4 percent of all commercial vehicle drivers, the

union members drive large trucks that are critical to the transport of export goods.

Most of the striking truckers own their trucks and bear the burden of fuel and maintenance costs.

The government deployed 5,700 riot police to major ports to intimidate strikers, but had little impact. By the

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## Poorly built levees in Midwest magnified damage by floods

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

DES MOINES, Iowa—Floods that ravaged parts of the Midwest have wreaked havoc on the livelihood of tens of thousands of workers and farmers across the region, especially those closest to overflowing rivers.

The floods are the worst disaster in the United States since Hurricane Katrina in 2005, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). But as the waters begin to recede, evidence is growing that profit-driven decisions by capitalist industrialists and farmers played no small part in the scope of the damage done.

FEMA assured residents of Gulfport, Illinois, that their town would withstand a “historic flood.” On June 17, the levee gave way and Gulfport was submerged in 10 feet of water. In this town of 750 people along the Mississippi, only 28 had flood insurance.

In 1993 a flood caused \$20 billion in damage across the Midwest and took 48 lives. Like this year’s it was classified as a 500-year flood, meaning there is a 0.2 percent chance of a flood of that extent in any given year.

Today many are asking: how is it pos-

sible to have two 500-year floods within 15 years?

At least 22 levees in three states have been topped or breached in the course of this month’s flooding. According to the *Christian Science Monitor*, “the flooding has raised questions about the adequacy of the patchwork system—in which little information is known about where levees exist, who maintains them, and what their condition is.”

There is no federal oversight of the  
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# Marines conduct military maneuvers in Indianapolis

BY RÓGER CALERO

Some 2,300 U.S. marines from the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit conducted a two-week military exercise in and around Indianapolis, Indiana, June 4–19.

The Marines Web site reported that the exercises included “entry control points, vehicle checkpoints, escalations of force, counterinsurgency operations, urban assault and forward operating base defensive operations.” The maneuvers were carried out under the direction of the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security.

The exercise involved firing blank ammunition, conducting patrols, and landing helicopters.

To justify the presence of the troops, military spokespeople said the exercises were necessary to adequately train the Marines unit in an urban setting, even though Camp Lejeune, where the troops are based, is home to a training facility modeled after an Iraqi town.

In 2002 the Pentagon established the U.S. Northern Command (Northcom), charged with carrying out military operations within the United States. Prior to this, under the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878, the U.S. armed forces had been barred from domestic operations, except in specific, limited circumstances. Northcom had been preceded by the Joint Task Force–Civil Support, established by the William Clinton administration in October 1999 as a “homeland defense command.”

In recent years, the U.S. government has used military units along with federal police agencies in an increasing number of “antiterror” drills in U.S.

cities.

On June 16 and 17, several Blackhawk helicopters were seen flying low over parts of Denver, as part of a multiagency operation involving U.S. Special Forces units and the Denver police. None of the agencies involved informed the public or news agencies about the exercise. A special unit of the Department of Defense was also seen driving through downtown Denver in big sports utility vehicles carrying sophisticated communications equipment.

“It’s nothing more than Special Operations Command training with local authorities,” said Lt. Nathan Potter of Special Operations Command. He said similar exercises are being conducted in other cities.

In February of this year, Mayor Car-



U.S. Marines Corps

Troops from the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit and Indiana Army National Guard during urban training exercises at Camp Atterbury, Indiana, June 13.

ty Finkbeiner of Toledo, Ohio, ordered a 200-member Marines unit to leave the city just before the beginning of an urban warfare training session it was scheduled to carry out in that city’s

downtown. “The mayor asked them to leave because they frighten people,” Finkbeiner’s spokesman said. “He did not want them practicing and drilling in a highly visible area.

## Vigil protests undercover cop killing of Houston man

BY ANTHONY DUTROW

HOUSTON—“We’ve had enough. For the Houston Police Department it’s open season on young Black men,” Cynthia Barnes told the *Militant*.

Barnes helped organize a press conference and vigil June 12 to demand answers on the slaying of Tarance Brown, who she says was shot two times in the back as he was fleeing the cops.

In the early morning hours of June 4, Brown, 32, was riding his bicycle when he was approached by three cops from the undercover “gang tactical unit.” The police say they fired Tasers at Brown.

Brown started running toward the

Crescent City Apartments and was shot by Officer Shane Nash.

“The cops claimed he had drugs and a weapon that he held in his left hand,” Barnes said. “Neither was found at the scene.”

Houston Police Department public relations officer Capt. Bruce Williams claimed someone stole the alleged drugs and weapon while Brown lay in the apartment complex dying. Barnes

asked, “Can you imagine, someone is going to go in the middle of this crime scene and steal something?”

Joyetta Young, Brown’s mother, told the vigil, “Everything they are saying about my son is not true. Justice will be done.”

*Anthony Dutrow is the Socialist Workers Party candidate for Texas State Representative, District 138.*

## Peru miners demand benefits, funds

BY RÓGER CALERO

Workers at the Cuajone copper mine in Peru carried out a two-day strike June 17–19 for better benefits.

The strike took place as workers and peasants in the southern town of Moquegua set up roadblocks to demand that a greater share of royalties paid by the mining company to the government be spent on the region. Thousands joined the protests, which began June 10, blocking roads, including the main highway to Chile and access to the Cuajone mine and a nearby smelter.

Workers at the Cerro Verde copper mine, owned by U.S.-based Freeport-McMoRan, ended a 10-day

strike June 20 after the government agreed to negotiate with the union on the workers’ demands on health coverage, overtime, and other issues.

The protests and labor stoppages paralyzed the region, the country’s top producer of copper. President Alan García’s government has come under increasing pressure as the benefits of a six-year economic boom fueled by high gold, copper, and zinc prices have not reached the majority in the country. More than 44 percent of Peru’s population lives below the poverty line.

Peru is a leading global exporter of silver, copper, zinc, and gold.

## THE MILITANT

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*As the race between John McCain and Barack Obama heats up, there is only one working-class ticket offering an alternative to their programs for more war and heightened assaults on workers. Follow the socialist candidates in the pages of the ‘Militant.’*



Socialist Workers 2008 campaign contingent at May Day march in New York.

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Managing Editor: Cindy Jaquith

Business Manager: Angel Lariscy

Washington correspondent: Sam Manuel

Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Ved Dookhun, Ben Joyce, Martín Koppel, Doug Nelson, Ben O’Shaughnessy

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Fax: (212) 244-4947

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# Construction worker killed at Las Vegas site

BY NAOMI CRAINE

On June 16 Lyndal Bates became the 12th construction worker in the last 19 months to die on the job on the Las Vegas Strip. Bates, a member of the Carpenters union, was dismantling scaffolding at the Echelon Tower construction site when he fell about 12 feet and hit his head on the ground, the *Las Vegas Sun* reported.

This fatality came just two weeks after union members walked off the job at the nearby MGM Mirage CityCenter project, where six workers have died since construction began in January 2007. The strikers went back to work a day later after the general contractor, Perini Building Co., agreed to a safety review, increased safety training, and full access to the job site for union officials.

There is a major construction boom on the Las Vegas Strip, with many

new hotels and casinos in the works. “They’re looking for shortcuts to do it faster and they break the rules. Not the workers, but the companies,” a shop steward from the Carpenters union at the CityCenter project told *Militant* correspondents June 7. He asked that his name not be used, for fear of company harassment.

Last July about 70 Ironworkers at the Fontainebleau construction site stopped work for three days in an area they deemed unsafe, demanding the contractor fix several problems. Three days after they returned to work, however, apprentice Norvin Tsosie fell to his death due to an unsafe hook.

The Nevada Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has recorded numerous safety violations at the various construction sites, including the use of faulty equipment,



Two weeks prior to latest construction death in Las Vegas, construction workers picket MGM Mirage’s CityCenter during one-day strike June 2 to protest unsafe conditions at the site after a crane oiler was killed on the job.

lack of temporary floors or netting designed to break a fall, and uncovered holes that workers can fall through. Often, however, the safety agency has withdrawn citations during informal

meetings with contractors, according to the *Las Vegas Sun*.

Bates’ death was the first fatal accident at the Echelon construction site, where five hotels are being built simultaneously. The 87-acre resort is scheduled to open in 2010. In April another carpenter working on that project was hospitalized with head injuries after being hit by a piece of falling equipment. Nevada OSHA issued no citations in that incident.

The Labor Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives will hold a hearing June 24 to hear testimony about recent construction deaths in Las Vegas and New York.

## 15th coal miner killed in 2008; retreat mining used

BY BEN JOYCE

The 15th coal miner fatality this year occurred June 16, claiming the life of Robert Carey. He was crushed when a section of the roof measuring about 600 square feet collapsed at the Harmony Mine near Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania.

The Harmony Mine had been using a method known as retreat mining. As coal is extracted from the ground, some pillars are left behind to support the roof. Once the coal is mined out, the pillars themselves are then extracted as the operation withdraws

from the mine, allowing the roof to collapse behind them. It is considered to be one of the most dangerous forms of mining.

Retreat mining is the same method that had been used at the Crandall Canyon coal mine outside Huntington, Utah, when it collapsed in August 2007, killing six miners. Three others died in the rescue effort.

Carey had nine years of experience at this mine, and at the time of his death was a roof bolter and assistant foreman.

Tom Rathbun, a spokesman for the

state Department of Environmental Protection, said that the mine does not “have a history of safety problems.” However, the mine has been cited with 31 safety violations so far this year by the Mine Safety and Health Administration, including a violation issued in April for not having a roof control plan up to regulation standards.

## Socialist Educational and Active Workers Conference set in July

BY SETH GALINSKY

The 2008 Socialist Educational and Active Workers Conference will take place in Oberlin, Ohio, July 10–13. It is sponsored by the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialists.

The gathering takes place as the worldwide social and financial crisis of capitalism deepens. Working people are bearing the brunt of the crisis with widening wars, raging inflation and growing unemployment, and so-called “natural” disasters that become social catastrophes.

Workers will be joined by students at the conference to discuss the emerging resistance to the employer offensive against working people and the importance of building proletarian parties that can chart a course toward replacing capitalist rule.

SWP national secretary Jack Barnes will open the conference Thursday afternoon, July 10, with a talk on the world political situation.

A selection of classes on the political themes of the conference will start Thursday morning.

Friday morning a panel of workers and youth deeply involved in the working-class struggle will kick off discussion on the battles for workers’ and immigrants’ rights unfolding in the Upper Midwest.

At Dakota Premium Foods in South St. Paul, Minnesota, workers beat back a company attempt to decertify their union, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 789, last January. Then they fought for and won a new contract.

This fight lays the basis for strengthening unionization throughout the re-

gion. The panel will also take up the interrelationship of struggles by meat packers and resistance to the massive immigration raids in Iowa, Minnesota, and other parts of the Midwest.

There will be classes on “Fraction-Building Jobs Work and Skills Training” Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. These workshops will discuss how communist workers can effectively participate in union fights as they concentrate their forces in the meat-packing and garment industries where the bosses’ offensive has been among the sharpest. This is part and parcel of being able to more effectively join the resistance and fight side-by-side with fellow vanguard workers.

Socialist workers need to improve their skills so they are better able to get and hold jobs in these key industries. The workshops will also include lessons on meat cutting and sewing, complete with knives, steels, and sewing machines, so that workers with more experience can help those with less.

Friday evening Mary-Alice Waters, editor of the magazine *New Interna-*  
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## Gov’t hides on-the-job injuries

**Continued from front page**  
ing workers who once would have been considered their employees as “independent contractors” who are therefore not included in accident statistics.

Companies have many motivations to cover up their safety record—if they report fewer injuries and work-related illnesses, they are less likely to face an OSHA inspection. Fewer reported injuries mean lower workers compensation insurance premiums.

## — CALENDAR —

### NEW ZEALAND

#### Auckland

**Celebrate the Life of Mervyl Morrison: A Working-Class Fighter and Communist.** Sat., July 5, 7:00 p.m. 7 Mason Ave., Otahuhu, upstairs above Laundromat. Sponsored by Communist League and Young Socialists. Tel (09) 276-8885.

## — MILITANT LABOR FORUMS —

### NEW YORK

#### Manhattan

**Working-class Alternative in the 2008 Elections. Bosses’ Assaults on Our Standard of Living, Life and Limb, Highlight Why Working People Need a Labor Party Based on the Unions.** Speaker: Róger Calero, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president. Fri., June 27. Dinner, 7 p.m.; program, 8 p.m. 307 W 36th St. Tel: (212) 629-6649.

# S. Korea: U.S.-backed dictator killed 100,000 prisoners in 1950

BY BEN JOYCE

A government commission in south Korea estimates at least 100,000 people were executed there in 1950 under the direction of the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Syngman Rhee, reports the Associated Press. The commission's estimates follow the ongoing discovery of mass graves.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, led by Kim Dong-Choon, has investigated the killings over the course of two years and estimates that there are around 150 mass graves in south Korea from the period of the Korean war. The government commission estimates that 25,000 were killed in the province of South Gyeongsang alone.

The commission is also handling petitions filed with the government by more than 7,000 south Koreans

who were affected by the mass executions.

## History of struggle

Coming out of World War II, the Korean people fought to end their colonial domination by Japan. On Sept. 6, 1945, a new government was formed based on popular mobilizations. It announced plans for land reform, nationalization of key industries, and improved working conditions. The U.S. government invaded Korea two days later and occupied the southern part of the country.

The Rhee dictatorship was installed in 1948 by a rigged election conducted by Washington under the cover of the United Nations. The regime was characterized by brutal repression of workers' rights, and by 1950, prisons in the south held up to 30,000 political prisoners. Rhee was



More than 150 mass graves are estimated to exist in south Korea dating from the Korean war. Above: Prisoners on the edge of a mass grave awaiting execution.

in power for 12 years before being overthrown by popular mobilizations of workers and students in 1960.

In north Korea, meanwhile, capitalist property relations were overturned and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) was founded in 1948.

Between 1949 and early 1950, the DPRK built up its military in

response to provocations by the U.S.-backed Rhee regime. In June of 1950, war broke out between UN forces led by Washington and the DPRK's Korean People's Army.

In this context the mass killings in the south were organized as a way to prevent the DPRK from absorbing political prisoners in the south into the ranks of its army. As forces from the north progressed southward, prisoners were either executed on the spot or trucked to remote locations where they were killed.

## U.S. complicity in atrocities

Complicity on behalf of the U.S. government fueled much of the killings, the commission points out. According to the AP article, U.S. military officials considered the situation a Korean "internal matter," despite having direct oversight on all military forces in south Korea at the time. Now declassified U.S. military documents regarding the Korean War include army photographs of one of the mass killings.

The workers and farmers of Korea defeated the UN forces in 1953, handing U.S. imperialism its first military defeat.

Since then, the United States has maintained a large military presence on the Korean peninsula and continues to this day to enforce the partition of the country. Today, there are about 28,000 U.S. troops in south Korea. According to the U.S. State Department website, \$11 billion from the U.S. war budget will go toward "force enhancements" in the region around south Korea over the next four years.

# Afghanistan-Pakistan border clash sharpens

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—Afghanistan's president Hamid Karzai threatened June 15 to send troops into Pakistan in pursuit of Islamist militias that carry out attacks from Pakistan on U.S.-led NATO and Afghan troops.

The Pakistani government reacted sharply, saying only its security forces would be allowed to take action against al-Qaeda and Taliban units on its soil.

A long-standing border dispute between Kabul and Islamabad has been sharpened by the stepped-up pace of imperialist military operations against the Islamist militias in which Pakistani troops have also been killed.

## Border dispute sharpens

Speaking at a news conference in Kabul June 15, Karzai said that Afghanistan had the right to send troops into Pakistan because Taliban militias were crossing from that country into Afghanistan.

Karzai, who faces an election next year, also said Afghanistan has a duty

to defend Pashtuns in Pakistan against the Taliban, whom he called a tool of Pakistan's intelligence services.

Kabul has never recognized the border, which was drawn by Britain. Kabul says the line was drawn in such a way as to rob Afghanistan of land and divide Pashtuns.

Islamabad has become increasingly concerned at the backlash among Pashtuns, the largest ethnic group living in the tribal areas along its border with Afghanistan, stemming from the stepped-up U.S. military operations.

The Pakistani government was so angered by a U.S. missile strike on a border checkpoint that killed 11 Pakistani soldiers June 10 that the military is considering postponement or cancellation of a program for the U.S. military to train a paramilitary border force.

Pakistan's military condemned the attack, calling it "cowardly and unprovoked." Gen. Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, Pakistan's new army chief, personally approved the language, according to the *International Herald Tribune*.

The paper reported that Kayani has refused every suggestion that U.S. forces be permitted to operate in the tribal area, including on an advisory basis. He has also ruled out U.S. trainers accompanying Pakistani troops on counterinsurgency missions in the border regions.

A plan for U.S. trainers to instruct Pakistani trainers who in turn would train Pakistani Frontier Corps was accepted by Kayani as "the least-intrusive alternative," the *Tribune* reported.

## Khandahar

In Afghanistan NATO and government officials announced June 19 that they had routed hundreds of Taliban militia members in several villages around Khandahar. According to NATO and Afghan officials, dozens of Taliban have been killed by missile strikes.

Some 1,000 Afghan and Canadian troops were involved in the assault on the Taliban in the Arghandab district near Khandahar. Thousands of civilians fled the area as the Taliban destroyed bridges and planted mines ahead of the battle.

Hundreds of Taliban members were among more than a 1,000 prisoners who escaped following a Taliban suicide bomb assault on Khandahar's main prison. A Taliban leader told the press that many of those freed from the prison had joined Taliban forces in Arghandab.

A NATO military spokesman said the operation around Khandahar was in its closing stages. He accused the Taliban of having exaggerated their numbers and capabilities. "The insurgents were there, but they do not have the numbers or foothold that they have claimed," he said.

# Korean truckers strike, win raise

Continued from front page

second day of the strike hundreds of containers were piled up at warehouses in Incheon and Busan ports. While shipping dropped by about 18 percent at Busan, the strike stopped 90 percent of the shipments from the western port of Pyeongtaek and the southern port of Gwangyang.

The Samsung Electronics plant in Gwanju shut down its home appliance factory halfway into the strike. LG Electronics, the world's fourth largest mobile phone maker, stopped shipments from its factory in Changwon, 400 kilometers south of Seoul.

The truck drivers' strike received reinforcements June 16 when thousands of construction industry drivers went on strike to demand cheaper fuel and higher pay. At a demonstration in Seoul to launch their strike, many construction workers wore plastic rice sacks and held

cooking pots to highlight their situation. Many held banners that said, "I'd rather die than live like this."

By June 19 employers were ready to toss in the towel. The truckers' union agreed to end the strike when the major association of transportation firms agreed to increase freight-hauling fees by 19 percent and implement a minimum wage on a trial basis next year. As of June 21, however, more than 7,000 trucks were still idle as negotiations proceeded with individual companies.

The union had also called for an increase in government fuel subsidies. According to the Associated Press, union officials agreed to hold off on the subsidies demand while the government prepared other measures to deal with rising fuel prices. Prior to the strike the government promised to cover half of the increase in fuel prices for truckers and bus drivers.

## New International no. 12

### Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun

by Jack Barnes

"One of capitalism's infrequent long winters has begun. Accompanied by imperialism's accelerating drive toward war, it's going to be a long, hot winter."

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**Their Transformation and Ours**  
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# Cuban revolutionary addresses meetings in London, Edinburgh

BY ÖGMUNDUR JÓNSSON

LONDON—"The discussion in Cuba today is about defending the Revolution, not departing from it," said Teresita Trujillo, an official of the Foreign Relations Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba at a May 29 public meeting at the University of London Union. The previous week Trujillo spoke at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, where nearly half the participants were students or other youth. Some 90 people attended each of the meetings.

In Edinburgh the meeting was hosted by the University of Edinburgh Socialist Society and sponsored by a range of individuals and organizations. In London sponsors included Movimien-to Ecuador en Reino Unido (Ecuador Movement in the United Kingdom), Rock Around the Blockade, and the Communist League.

In opening her remarks Trujillo referred to the wide-ranging discussion on the economic and political challenges facing Cuba that has taken place across the island following a speech by Raúl Castro July 26, 2007. In February this year, after being elected head of state by the National Assembly following the retirement of Fidel Castro due to ill health, Raúl Castro reiterated that "the massive support enjoyed by the revolution demands from us that we question everything in order to improve on it."

The discussion in Cuba today is "not unique," Trujillo said, contrary to reports in the capitalist media that new economic measures being introduced are due to Fidel Castro's retirement. She pointed to the decades-long continuity of Cuba's leadership in initiating political discussion among workers and farmers on shifts and adjustments needed to defend or strengthen the revolution.

"Huge debates" took place among working people, she said, during both the "rectification" process, when the Cuban leadership sought to make a historic correction to the course of the revolution in the mid-1980s, and the economic crisis of the 1990s, known as the Special Period. That crisis was precipitated by the loss of favorable trade relations with Soviet bloc countries.

Trujillo explained that the improved economic situation today has allowed the Cuban government to make certain adjustments, like lifting restrictions on the sale of cell phones, DVD players, and computers. These measures were

put in place to limit the emergence of new inequalities during the Special Period and because of limits in Cuba's infrastructure.

The government has also taken steps to increase agricultural production in the face of rising world food prices. "We have to reintroduce socialist principles of distribution, so that some people would earn more than others according to the contribution they make to society," Trujillo said.

With increased access to education over the decades, fewer people are willing to work in agriculture, she noted, requiring raising awareness of the need for increasing production.

Transportation is also a priority, she said. A campaign has been launched to recruit 250 drivers for new buses in Havana, with a substantial increase in wages.

In response to a question in Edinburgh about the role of the media, Trujillo said, "We are fighting for the media in Cuba to be more critical."

Answering a question in London on Cuba's internationalist missions, Trujillo reported that 35 volunteer health workers from the Henry Reeve Brigade are now in Sichuan province in China helping those hit by the May 12 earthquake. Trujillo noted some 38,000 Cuban internationalists, most of them medical workers, are now serving in 79 countries.

She concluded both talks by urging participants to join a stepped-up campaign of activities September 12 to October 8 to win the release of the Cuban Five, Cuban revolutionaries who have spent a decade behind bars in the United States, framed-up for their activities to defend Cuba from violent attacks by right-wing Cuban-American groups backed by Washington.

"We are pursuing the legal path, but that will be a dead end without a campaign of international pressure and winning over public opinion in the United States," she explained.

*Tony Hunt in Edinburgh contributed to this article.*



Militant/Caroline Bellamy

Strikers at picket line June 14 in front of Grangemouth tanker terminal in Scotland during national tanker driver strike in the United Kingdom. Drivers won a 14 percent pay increase.

## UK tanker drivers win strike

BY CAROLINE BELLAMY  
AND ALEX XEZONAKIS

EDINBURGH, Scotland—Fuel tanker drivers in the United Kingdom won a 14 percent pay increase over two years after a four-day national strike June 13–16.

The 641 members of the Unite union struck haulage companies Hoyer UK and Suckling Transport as they fought to bring their pay into line with other tanker drivers. Hoyer and Suckling have contracts to transport fuel for Shell from depots to fuel stations around the country.

According to the London *Independent*, with overtime and other payments, this would bring their pay to £42,000 [U.S. \$83,000] by the end of the second year.

In 1999 Shell ceased employing the drivers directly and subcontracted their jobs. Workers lost significant benefits, including a final salary pension plan.

Speaking at Basildon depot in southeast England, where about 150 drivers were on strike, Unite regional organizer Matt Draper said, "Through outsourcing, Shell has driven down wages to maintain profits." Drivers work a 45-hour week in 12-hour shifts, which include weekends and nights at flat rate.

"We're doing more for our money all the time," a striker at the Grangemouth, Scotland depot added, saying he preferred his name not be used due to company retaliation. "For most deliver-

ies now, the driver is solely responsible for the safety of transferring fuel from tanker to station. Everything is timed now, you have so many minutes to load and unload. The tankers are bigger and harder to drive. It all puts safety at risk for us and other people."

Drivers for other fuel companies walked out the last day of the strike in solidarity with 11 drivers suspended by Scottish Fuels for refusing to cross the picket line at the Grangemouth depot. About 40 workers stood at the gate. A driver for British Petroleum who asked that his name not be used said, "This is about bullying and intimidation, that's why we had to support the drivers at Scottish Fuels."

Drivers from other companies respected picket lines around the country. Though hundreds of fuel stations ran out of fuel, there was no major disruption to supplies.

The government is trying to convince workers to stop demanding higher wages as inflation increases. UK business secretary John Hutton claimed, "There needs to be discipline in public and private sector pay if we are to keep inflation under control." Chancellor of the Exchequer Alistair Darling, in an attempt to minimize the example set by the fuel tanker drivers, said the strike settlement, which is way above the official 3.3 percent inflation rate, was due to "particular problems" confined to that dispute.

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



July 8, 1983

DAWSON, Pa.—At 10:15 p.m. on June 21, seven coal miners were killed and three injured in an explosion that sent a curtain of fire roaring 2,000 feet down the McClure No. 1 mine in Dickenson County, Virginia.

It was considered Virginia's worst mining accident in 25 years.

This tragedy, like many mining disasters, could have been prevented. But Clinchfield Coal Co., which owns McClure, subordinated miners' safety to company profit.

The United Mine Workers of America is conducting its own investigation into the causes of the explosion, independently of the ones being carried out by the company and the government.



July 7, 1958

A slowing down of the rate at which the American economy has been sliding into depression is being touted by Administration and Congressional leaders a proof that the upturn has started and the economic crisis is over.

With glib assurances that "the bottom has been reached," leaders of both parties have turned their backs on pleas for public works programs.

The Economic Committee calculates that on the basis of "optimistic" assumptions, unemployment will be as high as 5,500,000 next winter. Under less optimistic assumptions, the staff said, "unemployment would rise to as many as 7,000,000."



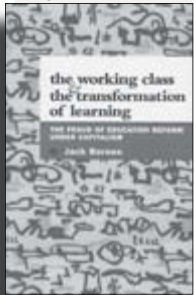
July 8, 1933

The strike of 4,000 pocketbook workers is the best answer to the demand for open shops of the Industrial Council of Leather Goods Employers Association. In the first week of the strike 25 non-union shops were stopped from work. The response of the workers is excellent. The strikers are picketing the shops daily. What is necessary now is mass picketing and mass demonstrations in the market to spread the strike to the rest of the scab shops.

Today we can show that through the militancy of the workers in the Morris White shop in N.Y., this boss was forced to settle with the union and concede to the union demands.

### The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning The Fraud of Education Reform under Capitalism

By Jack Barnes



"Until society is reorganized so that education is a human activity from the time we are very young until the time we die, there will be no education worthy of working, creating humanity."  
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# How the U.S. gov't framed the Cuban 5

(First of a series)

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

In the early morning hours of Saturday, Sept. 12, 1998, FBI agents raided homes across Miami and the surrounding area. They arrested 10 people, ransacking their apartments and seizing personal belongings. With much fanfare, officials of the Clinton administration's Justice and State departments announced they had discovered a "Cuban spy network" in Florida.

The big-business media reported that those arrested were accused of trying to "penetrate" the Pentagon's Southern Command, pass U.S. military secrets to the Cuban government, "infiltrate anti-Castro groups," and "manipulate U.S. media and political organizations."

They had sought "to strike at the very heart of our national security system and our very democratic process," U.S. attorney Thomas Scott alleged at a highly publicized press conference at FBI headquarters.

Federal prosecutors singled out five of those arrested as their main targets. They were Gerardo Hernández, 33; Ramón Labañino, 35; Antonio Guerrero, 39; Fernando González, 35; and René González, 42. The government announced that they faced espionage charges carrying sentences of up to life in prison.

The truth is that the Cuban Five, as their case has become known internationally, were framed up by the U.S. government.

What was their "crime"? The five Cubans explained—proudly—that they had accepted assignments to keep the government of Cuba informed about counterrevolutionary groups based in South Florida that have a long record of carrying out attacks on Cuba from U.S. soil, such as a string of bombings of hotels in

Havana in 1997. Not only has Washington not prevented such attacks—it has given these groups a green light through five decades of U.S. economic and military aggression against the Cuban Revolution.

In 2001 the five were convicted after an unfair trial marked by violations of elementary rights, and despite the fact that the prosecution admitted they had never handled any classified information. Hernández was sentenced to a double life term, Labañino and Guerrero to life in prison, René González to 15 years, and Fernando González to 19 years.

## Purpose of frame-up

The railroading of the Cuban Five had a double purpose.

It was one more attempt by the U.S. billionaire class to punish revolutionary Cuba for having the audacity to make a socialist revolution and set an example for working people worldwide fighting against exploitation and oppression.

It was also aimed against workers and farmers here in the United States. The message was: think twice before standing up to the employers and their government.

The U.S. rulers thought they would get away with this frame-up. However, they underestimated the resistance by these five working-class fighters and how the case would strike a chord among increasing numbers of people.

For the past 10 years the Cuban Five have been on the front lines of those fighting against government and employer assaults on the rights and living conditions of working people. Not only have they stood up to harsh treatment by their jailers—including long stints in solitary confinement and the restriction or outright denial of visas for their loved ones to visit them—they have reached out in solidarity to many others fighting for justice, both inside and outside prison walls, in the United States and abroad.

This record is consistent with the exemplary role they played in Cuba, whether as student leaders or as internationalist combatants among the thousands of Cuban volunteers who helped defeat the racist government of South Africa when it invaded Angola.

Over the past decade, the unfair trial, frame-up, and arbitrary treatment of the Cuban Five by U.S. authorities have led growing numbers to demand their release. They have become an example to others fighting for justice, from meat packers jailed for working without proper papers to those opposing the execution of Troy Davis, a Black man in Georgia framed up by police.

The five are well aware that their battle for freedom is a long-term one. Because of their refusal to give up, however, the frame-up has suffered some cracks in the legal arena.

In 2005 a federal appeals court panel overturned their convictions on the basis that they received an unfair trial. A year later, after the U.S. government challenged the ruling, the full court restored the convictions. Then



Militant/Naomi Joliffe

Two relatives of five Cubans unjustly imprisoned in the United States speak at October 2006 "Free the Cuban Five" meeting in Toronto, Canada. From left: Irma González, daughter of René González; Elizabeth Palmeiro, wife of Ramón Labañino; and Cuban official Valentín Purón. Inset: Palmeiro visiting Labañino in Beaumont, Texas, federal prison.



in June 2008 a third appeals court decision, while upholding the convictions, threw out the sentences against three of the five—including two life sentences—as being excessive even by U.S. legal standards. These cases now go back to the original trial judge for resentencing.

Today, the fact that the five have remained locked up for 10 years leads many people, as they learn the facts, to say: Enough is enough—elementary justice demands that they be freed!

This article is the beginning of a series the *Militant* will publish on the facts of case to get out the truth as broadly as possible.

## Refuse to 'cooperate' with gov't

In September 1998, a few days after their arrests, Hernández, Labañino, Guerrero, René González, and Fernando González were dragged before federal magistrate Barry Garber, who ordered them held without bail at Miami's Federal Detention Center (FDC). "Each represents a danger to the community," he stated, agreeing with the prosecutors. They were assigned public attorneys.

"The goal now for prosecutors is to persuade the alleged agents to cooperate," the *Miami Herald* reported September 16, citing unnamed government sources.

Ramón Labañino described what happened to him: "Everything started on Sept. 12, 1998, at about 5:30 a.m. at home, when we were detained and taken to FBI headquarters in Miami for a 'persuasive' interview, where they asked us to collaborate and betray our country with promises offered in return. Obviously I had nothing to say, and after they were sure they were getting nowhere, they put us in a car and took us to the Federal Detention Center in downtown Miami, where we've been all this time."

Labañino wrote these lines to his wife, Elizabeth Palmeiro, in January 2001, as his trial was under way.

Under pressure, five of the 10 detainees soon pleaded guilty on lesser charges—acting as an unregistered agent of a foreign government—and agreed to testify against the others. Among them were two married couples with children who were warned they faced long prison terms and might lose paternal authority over their children if they did not "coop-

erate." In early 2000 they were sentenced to jail terms of between three and a half and seven years, with promises of early release and federal witness protection.

Meanwhile, the Cuban Five were kept in solitary confinement. They were confined to cramped, damp, moldy cells 23 hours a day, with only an hour of "recreation" to stretch their legs. They would stay in "the hole" for 17 consecutive months.

A federal grand jury brought a 26-count indictment. The five pleaded not guilty to all the charges, which included the following:

- Each was accused of "acting as an agent of the Republic of Cuba without registering with the Attorney General," and of "conspiring" to do so.
- Guerrero, Hernández, and Labañino were charged with "conspiracy to commit espionage."
- Hernández was charged with "conspiracy to commit murder."
- Each was accused of various minor charges such as possession of false identification documents.

The initial indictment was brought in early October 1998. The charge against Hernández of "conspiracy to commit murder," however, was added in May 1999, after it became clear the government had failed to break the defendants' spirits despite eight months of solitary confinement.

In an unprecedented legal move, U.S. officials charged Hernández as responsible for an action by a sovereign government—Cuba's 1996 shootdown of two planes flown over its territory by Brothers to the Rescue, a right-wing outfit that had repeatedly violated Cuban airspace despite widely publicized warnings.

## Cops jail, deport Olga Salanueva

Federal officials tried other ways to break the five Cubans, but failed. One particularly crude method was their arrest and deportation of Olga Salanueva as a club against her husband, René González.

Salanueva wrote an account of what happened in *Letters of Love and Hope: The Story of the Cuban Five*, a collection of correspondence between the Cuban Five and their families. González, a U.S. citizen who grew up in Cuba, moved to Florida in 1990, and Salanueva joined him six years later, becoming a U.S. permanent res-

Continued on page 7

## For further reading:

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# State governments target working people with layoffs, cutbacks

BY SETH GALINSKY

As the U.S. economy slides deeper into recession, state governments are seeking a myriad of ways to make working people pay for the capitalist crisis. Almost half of the 50 states are dipping into reserves or planning layoffs, cutbacks in social services, or tax hikes.

Sales tax collections are lower than anticipated in 16 states as well as personal income tax collections in 12 states and corporate income tax in 16. Fuel costs have also skyrocketed.

One state, Alaska, lost \$3 million when its nearly 44,000 shares of Bear Stearns tumbled from \$88.25 a share to under \$5. Tax income from sales and gambling fell steeply in Nevada.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, 23 states anticipate gaps totaling at least \$26 billion for their 2009 budgets.

California is in one of the worst positions. Claiming a \$16 billion deficit, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has proposed \$4.8 billion cut in education funding. About 20,000 teachers, counselors, librarians, nurses, and other school employees received written notice of potential layoff.

Eighteen states have about six months worth or less in reserves used to pay unemployment benefits, half the recommended one-year cushion. Michigan, Missouri, New York, and Ohio have just a few months reserve.

Many layoffs are still in the proposed stage, including 3,000 state employees in New Jersey, 1,200 in Rhode Island, and thousands in Arizona.

Huge cuts in health care have been proposed in Maine, California, and Arizona. In Illinois's Cook County, women in poor neighborhoods no longer have access to free mammograms from mobile vans.

On June 19 the Miami-Dade School Board voted to eliminate hundreds of positions, bringing the total number of job cuts to 2,000, including 950 teaching jobs, after the state of Florida severely cut school funding.

*Stateline.org*, an internet news service that focuses on state governments, reports that many have already slashed programs and others are trying "creative approaches to gin up more revenue." One sure bet: cutting debt service payments to wealthy bondholders will not even be consid-

## New Jersey casino workers rally for contract



Militant/John Staggs

ATLANTIC CITY, New Jersey—About 5,000 demonstrators rallied here on June 21 to demand contracts for casino dealers and slot machine technicians who voted to join the United Auto Workers union. Since March 2007, the workers have won six union elections in four casinos—Caesars, Trump Plaza, Bally's, and the Tropicana. Union members and supporters came from up and down the East Coast and marched throughout the afternoon past the casinos. Casino workers of many nationalities participated in the rally. Members of the Bengal Club, representing some 300 workers from Bangladesh, wore union T-shirts in Bengali.

—JANET POST

ered.

New Jersey governor Jon Corzine exemplifies the "creative" approach. He under-funded employee pension contributions there by 50 percent.

Corzine proposed \$1 billion in cuts for the 2009 budget. At the same time he hopes to pay half of the state's \$32 billion in bonded debt.

Figures on how much states pay in debt service are hard to come by. But statistics on New York give a little bit of a feel for the immense amount of money filling the coffers of the rich.

New York, which has a budget of more than \$80 billion for 2008–09, has \$50 billion in debt outstanding and will pay out about \$3.5 billion to bondholders.

While cuts in social services are being planned and implemented, many states have been increasing a variety of taxes that affect working people the most.

Since the 2002 recession, 43 states, the District of Columbia, and several U.S. "territories" raised cigarette taxes 75 times. New York State recently raised the cigarette tax to \$2.75 a pack, the highest in the country. Maine doubled excise taxes on beer, wine, and soda.

## Socialist campaign completes ballot effort

Continued from front page

running mate, Róger Calero, and I are candidates because the Democrats and Republicans don't represent the working class. We need a labor party based on unions that really fight for the working class. The Democrats and Republicans will always do what they are told by their wealthy masters."

Kennedy and her supporters also met younger longshore workers, called casuals because they are not in the union and have no guarantee of getting

job assignments. "We are lucky if we get one day of work in a week because of the recession," one told the socialist candidate. Kennedy explained that "when Calero and I are in office we will fight for public works programs to provide jobs at union scale, repairing and expanding affordable housing, and build reliable transportation, quality schools, and much needed infrastructure improvements."

Kennedy also stopped by the PCC Grocery Store where some of her campaign supporters, members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 21, work the night shift. A group of workers expressed their support for Kennedy's campaign and offered her samples from the dessert case. "I

haven't signed your petition yet but I want to," said one woman who gave her name as Cara.

"I heard you were a coal miner," said Marie. "I've read about the life of coal miners and the dangers they face. What can be done about the safety issues?"

While Kennedy was in Seattle, supporters reached their goal of gathering 2,000 signatures to place the SWP candidates on the ballot. "This is double the amount of signatures required by the state," said Mary Martin, SWP candidate in the 7th Congressional District. "We are confident that we are in a strong position to win ballot status for the working-class alternative in 2008."

## SWP certified for Colorado ballot

BY JOEL BRITTON

DENVER—"You're on the ballot," declared Colorado election official J. Wayne Munster on June 17, referring to the Socialist Workers Party ticket for U.S. president and vice president.

Munster had examined the "statement of intent" and "acceptance of presidential electors" forms submitted by campaign supporters on behalf of James Harris and Alyson Kennedy. Harris is a stand-in for Róger Calero in Colorado. Presidential candidates are required to be legally eligible to take office in order to appear on the ballot. Under current law, only U.S. citizens are eligible for the office of president. Born in Nicaragua, Calero is a permanent U.S. resident.

Nine registered voters in Denver and Colorado Springs signed up as electors for the socialist candidates and contributed more than the required \$500 filing fee.

## How the U.S. gov't framed up the Cuban Five

Continued from page 6

ident. They have two daughters, Irma, born in Cuba, and Ivette, born in the United States.

On Aug. 16, 2000, FBI and Immigration and Naturalization Service cops arrested Salanueva. They confiscated her green card. "They told me that I knew about my husband's activities and that, as a result, my residency was invalid," she wrote. "I was taken to the state prison in Fort Lauderdale."

She explained, "The real objective of my detention was to pressure Rene into signing a confession prepared by the Southern Florida District Attorney in which he would declare himself guilty and testify against the other defendants." The federal officials warned him that Salanueva, as a permanent resident, could also be

charged. González refused to sign the confession and she was arrested three days later.

On the way to jail, the cops took Salanueva, dressed in an orange prison suit, to see González at FDC. "They wanted to show him that they had made good on their threat and that our daughters and I were at their mercy. He looked at me and said, 'Orange looks good on you!' Even in front of the guards, he hadn't lost his sense of humor." That was the last time she saw him.

"I didn't cry that day," Salanueva added. "When you're among friends you cry—but not before your enemies. Dignity gives you strength and hardens you."

During the three months Salanueva was jailed, González was not given her letters. "It was clearly an effort

to try to destabilize him emotionally since he did not know anything about me directly and the beginning of the trial was near," she noted.

They were barred from speaking to each other by phone. In a gesture of solidarity, a Peruvian-born co-worker at Salanueva's telemarketing job helped them get around that obstacle. Olga explained that "I called her and she recorded my message for Rene. He did the same. He called her, listened to my recording and then recorded" a message for his wife.

On Nov. 21, 2000, six days before the trial of the five began, Olga Salanueva was deported. For the past eight years the U.S. government has repeatedly denied her a visa to see her husband. She, along with other relatives of the five, has never stopped speaking out for their release.

# Class-struggle leadership and 1934 Teamsters strike

*Below is an excerpt from Teamster Rebellion, by Farrell Dobbs, a central leader of the 1934 strikes by Teamsters in Minneapolis, Minnesota. This selection describes how Teamsters Local 574 organized a major strike that began in May 1934. Teamster Rebellion is the first in a four-volume series on the class-struggle leadership of the strikes and organizing drives that transformed the Teamsters union in much of the Midwest into a fighting social movement and pointed the road toward independent labor political action. At the time he wrote this account Dobbs was national secretary of the*

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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### BY FARRELL DOBBS

Local 574's combat leaders, acting through the organizing committee, had no illusions about the gravity of the impending conflict. They were fully aware that the bosses would try to smash the strike. If the union was to win, a tremendous battle would be necessary. Under the pressures of such a fierce struggle, maneuvers detri-



Scene of heavy fighting May 1934 between striking Minneapolis truck drivers and police reinforced by deputies in the city's marketplace.

mental to the union could be expected from the Labor Board and from Governor Olson. We could also anticipate weakness on the part of the city's AFL officialdom, which was bound to be squeamish about physical combat and prone to urge the workers to rely completely on Olson. In the last analysis the outcome of the strike would hinge on the fighting capacity of the union ranks.

Seeking to impart this understanding to the membership, the combat leaders prepared to teach the workers the ins and outs of fighting for their rights. This circumstance made the strike quite exceptional. Fighting spirit in the ranks was usually restrained and dampened by the AFL officials, while in this case a militant struggle was being organized by what had become the key section of the top union leadership.

Seldom anywhere, in fact, had there been such a well prepared strike. When the sun rose on May 16, 1934, the headquarters at 1900 Chicago Avenue was a beehive of activity. Union carpenters and plumbers were installing gas stoves, sinks, and serving counters in the commissary. The Cooks and Waiters Union sent experts on mass cooking and serving to help organize things and train the volunteer help. Working

in two twelve-hour shifts, over 100 volunteers served 4,000 to 5,000 people daily. Sandwiches and coffee were always available and a hot meal was served whenever the commissary's resources and the circumstances of the strike permitted. In addition, arrangements were made so that key personnel could sleep in or near the headquarters for the duration.

Committees were set up to promote material aid. They solicited friendly grocers for staples to be used in the commissary and to help out the needy families of strikers. Similar donations were also received from sympathetic farmers. The committees fought city hall to get public relief for union members and the facts of life were explained to landlords who pressed the workers for rent payments. Money donations from other unions helped to stock the commissary, as well as to buy gasoline for the cruising picket squads and medical supplies for the union's emergency hospital. Even Governor Olson contributed \$500 to Local 574.

The union's medical staff included Dr. McCrimmon and two interns from the University of Minnesota hospital who volunteered their services during their off hours. Three trained nurses headed up a larger volunteer staff that provided such efficient care that, de-

spite the many open wounds treated, not one bad infection developed. The hospital was supervised by Mrs. Vera McCormack, a skilled technician whom everyone fondly called "Mac." To avoid air pollution in the hospital and commissary, picket cars were pushed into and out of the headquarters.

About a score of skilled auto mechanics had turned to, bringing their tools with them, to keep the strikers' cars in working order. The former tool crib and supply room in the big garage was turned into a general office where volunteers did the typing and mimeographing and signed up new members pouring into the union. An organized guard was maintained in and around the headquarters to watch for police intrusions, prevent drinking, cool down temper flareups, and keep order. Except at critical times, when everyone worked to the point of exhaustion, the various assignments were rotated.

Special attention was given to keeping the workers informed about the strike's progress and helping them to answer lies peddled by the bosses. Each evening a general assembly was held at the headquarters for this purpose. Reports were made by the strike leaders, guest speakers were invited from other unions to help morale through expressions of solidarity, and some form of entertainment usually followed. A loudspeaker system was installed so that packed meetings could hear what was said, as could the overflow crowds outside, which often numbered two to three thousand.

There were also regular meetings of the strike committee of seventy-five, which had been elected by the union membership. This body, which made the general decisions about strike policy, had in turn designated a small subcommittee to handle complaints. Most of the complaints had to do with requests from cockroach bosses who asked for special permission to operate their trucks. Usually the requests were unjustified and were automatically turned down, but having a special committee to handle these matters saved unnecessary wear and tear on the picket commanders.

July

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8 The Militant July 7, 2008

# No worker has to die on the job!

The rising toll on life and limb caused by the employers’ drive to boost profits at all costs has made job safety a burning issue. This problem is an international one, from shipyards in Turkey to coal mines in China to construction sites across the United States.

With the price of coal doubling in the past year, energy companies are competing to get an edge on the lucrative market. That means pushing miners to work harder, faster, longer, and more unsafely. Now the toll stands at 15 miners killed so far this year—twice the number of mine deaths by this time last year.

The construction boom has lined the pockets of U.S. building magnates. What is the cost for working people? Some 1,200 U.S. construction workers are killed on the job every year—casualties in the war by the employer class against the working class.

Latin American immigrants are 50 percent more likely to be killed on the job than other workers, according to a recent government report.

Bosses and their paid political servants claim they are “concerned” about us getting killed, but that “some jobs are dangerous and you will always have fatalities.” This class arrogance underscores the only conclusion we can draw: working people must look to our own collective action and solidarity to protect lives. Our banner must state the truth: “No worker has to die on the job!”

Work *can* be performed safely. But only when workers have control over job conditions. The first

step is for workers to organize into unions. That includes organizing immigrants and championing the fight to legalize all undocumented workers. Above all, this means *using* the collective power of the union ranks to enforce safe conditions—including stopping work until a hazardous situation is resolved. Shipyard workers in Tuzla, Turkey, and construction workers in Las Vegas, Nevada, have given examples by shutting down production to demand action in face of coworkers being sacrificed to the bosses’ speed-up drive.

Capitalist politicians, from Democrat Barack Obama to Republican John McCain, have nothing to say about this problem. Their concern is serving the billionaire class they represent. No matter which of them moves into the White House in November, the toll on working people will only increase.

Just as workers need to organize on the job, we need to organize in the political arena—independently of the Democrats, Republicans, and other capitalist parties and politicians. We need a labor party based on a militant union movement that can lead millions in action to defend the interests of working people.

In Cuba, workers consider it normal that if conditions are unsafe, they stop work until the problem is fixed. Why? Because in Cuba working people made a socialist revolution, overturning capitalist rule and taking political power. They have the most powerful instrument possible—a workers and farmers government that responds to the needs of the majority.

## Tel Aviv escalates threats against Iran

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demands that it stop enriching uranium, which can be used to fuel nuclear power plants or nuclear weapons.

### 100 Israeli jets

More than 100 Israeli fighter jets participated in the exercise carried out over the eastern Mediterranean and Greece. It included helicopters and refueling tankers that flew more than 900 miles, about the same distance from Israel to the Natanz uranium enrichment plant in Iran.

Shaul Mofaz, a deputy prime minister, said in an interview published the day after the exercise ended, “If Iran continues with its program for developing nuclear weapons, we will attack.”

Iran has taken steps to beef up its air defenses by acquiring advanced radar systems from Russia to detect low-flying aircraft and is close to acquiring Russian SA-20 surface-to-air missiles.

In September 2007 Israeli jets bombed what Tel Aviv said was a nuclear weapons facility in Syria. In 1981 Israeli jets destroyed a nuclear reactor in Iraq.

### U.S. sanctions

The June 18 bill approved by the U.S. Senate Finance Committee would tighten sanctions on goods to and from Iran. It bars the import of Iranian carpets, caviar, and nuts. The Clinton administration lifted a ban on these items in 2000 in hopes of obtaining an opening with then Iranian president Mohammad Khatami.

While squeezing Iran tighter with sanctions, Washington and the EU are looking for ways to convince the majority in Iranian ruling circles to end uranium enrichment in exchange for trade and other economic gains.

On June 14 Javier Solana, the EU foreign policy chief, traveled to Tehran with a package of incentives. The proposed deal was backed by the governments of Britain, France, Germany, the United States, Russia, and China.

The proposal offers Iran support for building a light water reactor, “legally binding” guarantees for nuclear fuel supplies, support for research and development of nuclear energy, and help in managing radioactive fuel waste if it halts uranium enrichment. The deal calls for steps to normalize Iran’s world trade relations including moves toward integrating Tehran into “international structures, including the World Trade Orga-

nization,” and the possible removal of restrictions on sales of aircraft to Iran.

### Rifts in Iranian bourgeoisie

The package is designed to appeal to growing layers in the Iranian capitalist class who are concerned that they are losing out because of sanctions that restrict their trade on the world market. This was reflected in the different responses in Tehran to the deal presented by Solana.

Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said the efforts of the United States and its allies to bully Iran had failed, adding “in our view Iran’s nuclear case is closed.”

The same day, however, Iranian foreign minister Manouchehr Mottaki told a news conference that Iran is ready to discuss the new package of incentives.

A few days before Solana’s arrival, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran’s religious leader and the most powerful political figure in the country, stated that “The Iranian nation is not seeking nuclear weapons.”

“You know the Iranian nation is in principle and on religious grounds against the nuclear weapon,” Khamenei said. “Nuclear weapons only incur high costs and have no use. They do not bring power to a nation.”

Khamenei has sided with some of Ahmadinejad’s opponents in the government in the recent period. In January Ali Larijani, formerly Iran’s chief nuclear negotiator, met with Egyptian president Mohammed Hosni Mubarak in Cairo as Khamenei’s representative. Iran cut diplomatic ties with Egypt when Cairo signed a peace agreement with Israel in 1979 and provided asylum for the deposed Shah of Iran.

Ahmadinejad had appointed Larijani chief nuclear negotiator with the EU and the United States in 2005. Larijani resigned the position in 2007 amid increasing disagreements with statements made by the Iranian president.

In this year’s elections Larijani won a seat in parliament representing the city of Qum. He recently defeated Gholamali Haddad-Adel for speaker of the parliament. Haddad-Adel was backed by Ahmadinejad.

Larijani has sharply criticized the president, elected in large part by promises to redistribute Iran’s oil wealth to working people, for the worsening economic crisis the country faces.

Inflation has risen from 12 percent in October 2006 to 19 percent in January 2008, according to the Iranian Central Bank. Unemployment is estimated at 30 percent. Prices for fruits and vegetables have tripled while housing costs have doubled.

## Flood damage

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levee system, a FEMA spokesperson said. Following Hurricane Katrina, Congress passed a bill to develop an inventory and inspect levees, but it was never implemented.

There are other problems with the system. Levees change the shape of rivers, confining and squeezing their natural course, which causes problems downstream. They can force water to go higher and faster and transform the capacity of rivers to absorb floods. Continual capitalist development along rivers reduces further the amount of flood plain available to absorb water.

The extensive flooding has opened a discussion about the failed levee system and flood-control measures. Much of it focuses on the need to allow rivers to reclaim their natural flood plain and to revamp the levees. This is not a new debate.

To qualify for flood insurance, structures must be protected by a levee built to a 100-year standard. The 100-year standard is considered a “joke,” according to John Barry, a member of the flood control authority in New Orleans. “We invest on the cheap.”

In the Netherlands, levees for ocean flooding are built to a 10,000-year standard; and inland levees are designed to at least a 250-year standard, and usually in excess of 1,250 years.

The cumulative impact of turning Iowa’s productive farmland into profits for agribusiness and larger and larger capitalist farms has made the land more vulnerable to flooding.

Heavy rains fell on a landscape radically reengineered by humans, Kamyar Enshayan, director of an environmental center at the University of Northern Iowa, pointed out in an interview with the *Washington Post*. Paraphrasing Enshayan, the *Post* said that “plowed fields have replaced tall grass prairies. Fields have been meticulously drained with underground pipes. Streams and creeks have been straightened. Most of the wetlands are gone. Flood planes have been filled and developed.”

## Conference

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*tional* and a member of the SWP National Committee, will give a talk on Cuba and the coming American revolution.

Four classes are scheduled on “The World Capitalist Crisis Today: Consequences and Prospects for the Working Class,” centered around the main themes of *New International* number 14. Omari Musa and Martín Koppel will present the classes on “Revolution, Internationalism, and Socialism: The Last Year of Malcolm X,” in English and Spanish; Alyson Kennedy and Ben O’Shaughnessy on “The 1990s Bipartisan Convergence in an Accelerating Assault on the Working Class”; Olga Rodríguez and Arthur Mitropoulos on the “Roots of the 2008 World Financial Crisis”; and Gerald Symington and Ben Joyce on “The Stewardship of Nature Also Falls to the Working Class.”

Two classes on the “Inevitability of Revolutionary Workers’ Struggles in the United States” will take place. One, by Frank Forrestal and Seth Galinsky, will focus on the newly reissued book *Teamster Power*, which draws out the lessons of three hard-fought strikes in 1934 that extended union power to cities throughout the Upper Midwest. The book has also been published in Spanish for the first time ever and the class will be given in English and in Spanish.

The second class, also presented in English and Spanish, will focus on the new Pathfinder pamphlet *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?* presented by Róger Calero and Sara Lobman.

Steve Clark and Angelica Vandersteen will lead a class on “China’s 450-Million-Strong Working Class and Coming Revolutionary Worker-Peasant Alliance: A Proletarian, Not a Nationalist View of the Chinese Revolution.”

On Sunday, June 13, there will be meetings for the volunteers of the Printing Project and the Young Socialists, as well as the final skills and jobs workshops.

Anyone interested in participating can contact socialist workers in the directory on page 8.