

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

How attempts to shut abortion clinics were defeated in early '90s
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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Washington seeks new sanctions on N. Korea

BY BEN JOYCE

The U.S. government and its imperialist allies have condemned a recent nuclear test and missile launches by North Korea. Washington and Tokyo are pressing for a UN resolution to impose more punitive sanctions and other measures against the country for daring to challenge their dictates.

Susan Rice, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, said June 1 that the UN Security Council was “making progress” in coming up with a new resolution that may involve new sanctions on North Korea. A partial draft of the resolution obtained by the Associated Press May 29 calls on all governments “immediately to enforce” all sanctions currently in place, referring to restrictions on banking and trade that were imposed after North Korea tested a nuclear weapon in 2006.

U.S. defense secretary Robert Gates attended an Asia Security conference in Singapore May 30, where he said that Washington would not “stand idly by as North Korea builds the capability to wreak destruction on any target in Asia.” He said the progress that North Korea has made on developing nuclear weapons is a “harbinger of a dark future.”

The U.S. government controls a
Continued on page 4

Protests say: abortion is a woman's right to choose!

Vigils condemn killing of clinic doctor in Kansas

BY TED LEONARD AND MAGGIE TROWE

WICHITA, Kansas—Just hours after Dr. George Tiller was shot to death, about 400 people joined a candlelight vigil here May 31 to protest his killing and defend a woman's right to choose abortion.

In nearby Lawrence 150 people participated in a similar vigil that night. In the days following the doctor's death, similar events took place throughout Kansas and the Midwest, and across the country.

**MOBILIZE TO DEFEND
WOMEN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE!**
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Tiller, 67, a physician at the Women's Health Care Services clinic here, was killed during services at the Reformation Lutheran Church where he was ushering. A longtime rightist, Scott Roeder, has been arrested and charged with first-degree murder.

Trina Wheeler, 49, co-president of the Wichita chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW), told the *Militant*, “The next action is the defense on Saturday for the funeral services for Tiller. The antiwoman forces will be there.” Wheeler encouraged all who can to come to the funeral and join in the defense.



AP photo/Orlin Wagner

Hundreds gather for vigil at Old Town Square in Wichita, Kansas, May 31 to protest killing of Dr. George Tiller earlier that day. Tiller was one of only a handful of doctors in United States who perform late-term abortions.

Tiller, one of the few doctors in the United States who performed late-term abortions, had been the target of rightist attacks for many years. His clinic was bombed in 1986, and in 1993 antiabortion rightist Rachelle Shannon shot him in both arms. Shannon was convicted for the assault, and later confessed to setting fires at abortion clinics in Or-

egon, California, Idaho, and Nevada.

In the summer of 1991 rightist forces carried out mobilizations aiming to shut down Wichita abortion clinics, including Tiller's.

Liberal politicians who claim to be pro-choice have made recent overtures to opponents of abortion rights,

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GM to lay off thousands more in gov't-brokered bankruptcy

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

General Motors filed for bankruptcy June 1. For 77 years, it was the world's largest auto company.

Several days earlier the United Auto Workers (UAW) approved a major concessionary contract amounting

Washington, Tel Aviv spar over settlements

BY SETH GALINSKY

In a sharp rebuke to Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, U.S. secretary of state Hillary Clinton insisted May 28 that Tel Aviv must freeze Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

President Barack Obama “wants to see a stop to settlements—not some settlements, not outposts, not ‘natural growth’ exceptions,” Clinton said. “And
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to about \$1.3 billion in annual cutbacks that include slashing benefits and freezing wages.

The company, in collaboration with the Obama administration, insists that this will be a quick bankruptcy, creating a much smaller, “new” GM based on half its previous car lines—Cadillac, Chevrolet, Buick, and GMC. The rest, dubbed “old” GM—including Pontiac, Saturn, Saab, and Hummer—will be shut down and liquidated in a process that could take years.

This is the third largest bankruptcy in U.S. history, Bloomberg reported. The company announced it was closing 11 plants and “idling” three more. It will also slash 21,000 jobs from the current union workforce at GM of about 54,000. In 1970 the company employed 395,000 workers.

Also impacted by the bankruptcy are some 300,000 employees at GM dealerships, many of which are slated to close, and hundreds of thousands of workers at auto parts companies
Continued on page 11

N.Y. mayor plans deeper attacks on workers, seeks third term

BY CINDY JAQUITH

NEW YORK—The race for mayor of New York City, the political and financial center of the United States, is emerging as the most important electoral contest in the country, as the employers and their local government step up assaults on the living conditions of the working class.

In response to these attacks, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor, sewing-machine operator Dan

Fein, puts forward a platform to unite working people to defend their class interests.

Two-term incumbent Michael Bloomberg is running for a third term, virtually unopposed by other capitalist candidates. Bloomberg is a billionaire who has been in the forefront nationally of the bosses' attacks on jobs, cuts in social services, and curtailment of workers' rights.

A vocal backer of the “war on terror,” he recently awarded certificates

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Court drops case against Iowa unionist

BY CHUCK GUERRA AND MAGGIE TROWE

MARSHALLTOWN, Iowa—In a victory for immigrant rights, the U.S. District Court in Des Moines, Iowa, dismissed charges May 12 against unionist Braulio Pereyra-Gabino of “harboring illegal aliens.”

Pereyra-Gabino, a former vice president of Local 1149 of the United
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N.Y. homeless may have to pay rent for shelters

BY DAN FEIN

NEW YORK—City officials have temporarily backed off from plans to make workers in homeless shelters pay rent if they have a job.

Authorities had announced in early May that shelter operators would begin requiring working residents to pay a certain percentage of their paycheck. The amount could be as much as 50 percent of their monthly income, officials said. The move is part of the push by Mayor Michael Bloomberg, with bipartisan support, for across-the-board cuts in funds for education, health care, transportation, and other social services.

On May 21 the deputy commissioner of the Department of Homeless Services said that the rent program was shelved until “technical issues” were resolved.

Vanessa Dacosta, who earns \$8.40 an hour as a cashier, received a notice under her door in early May informing her that she owed \$336, nearly half of her \$800 monthly wages, to the Clinton Family Inn, a shelter in Manhattan where she has lived since March.

“It’s not right,” Dacosta told the *New York Times*. A single mother, Dacosta said she spends nearly \$100 a week on child care for her two-year-old. “I pay my baby sitter, I buy diapers, and I’m trying to save money so I can get out of here. I don’t want to be in the shelter forever.”

City officials said they were simply enforcing a state law passed in 1997. “Everyone else is doing it,” Bloom-

berg said, “and we’re told we have to do it, so we’re going to do it.”

A state official said the rent collection will affect about 2,000 of the more than 9,000 families in New York City shelters. More than 500 families were informed that they were being charged rent starting May 1.

“Families have been told to pay up or get out,” said Steven Banks, the chief attorney for the Legal Aid Society. “We’ve already had a case of a survivor of domestic violence who was actually locked out of her room.”

Shakiema Johnson has lived with her two young children in a shelter in Harlem since March of this year. Johnson told the *Militant* that city officials had denied her application for a shelter many times, insisting she instead live with her grandmother. It took her grandmother’s death for her to get into a shelter.

Palestine relief fund defendants to appeal sentences

BY STEVE WARSHHELL

HOUSTON—Five men convicted of conspiracy to raise money for a Palestinian group the U.S. government calls “terrorist” have announced they will appeal their sentences.

On May 27 a federal court in Dallas handed down sentences totaling 180 years in prison for the five. They were convicted last November of raising more than \$12 million for the Palestinian group Hamas through the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and De-

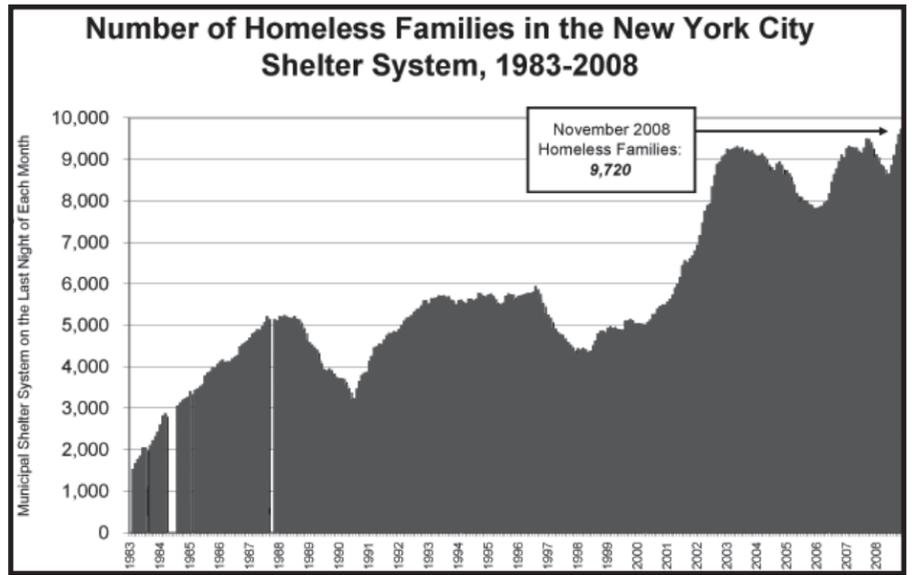


Chart shows increase in number of families living in New York City shelters. City officials want to force those with family members working to pay rent.

Johnson described the scrutiny applicants undergo to gain admission. “They look into where you have lived, or where you got mail,” she said. “This new policy is not fair. If I had enough money to pay rent, I wouldn’t be here.”

Sinnamon Jackson lives at the same Harlem shelter with her child.

“Everyone here has some kind of income,” she noted, “a job, unemployment compensation, Social Security, welfare. Eventually they are going to want everyone to pay some rent.”

Dan Fein is the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of New York City.

velopment, a charity based in Richardson, Texas.

It took the government two trials, a decade-long press campaign claiming the charity was “terrorist,” and 15 years of wiretapping and spying on bank records, to win the case.

Throughout the trial and sentencing, the defendants denied the charges and stated that they had raised money for individuals and groups in the West Bank and Gaza for humanitarian purposes.

Shukri Abu Baker, former executive chairman of the foundation, received a 65-year jail term. Before sentencing him, U.S. District Judge Jorge Solis referred to Abu Baker as “an ardent supporter of Hamas.”

During his statement to the court, Abu Baker told the judge, “It’s easy to demonize your opponent,” and insisted that it was “not rage against Israel” but his desire to provide aid to Palestinian children that motivated his charity work.

The judge cut Abu Baker off, saying, “I don’t want to go all morning.”

He then pronounced what amounted to a life sentence.

The remaining defendants also received harsh jail terms: Ghassan Elashi, 65 years; Mufid Abdulqader, 20 years; and Mohammad el-Mezain and Abdulrahman Odeh, 15 years.

The U.S. government designated Hamas as “terrorist” in 1995. The government shut down Holy Land in December 2001.

The first trial ended in a hung jury Oct. 22, 2007. In the second trial prosecutors were allowed to speak with jurors from the first trial in order to modify their case to ensure a conviction the second time around.

The conviction of the five also includes an order for Holy Land to pay the U.S. government the more than \$12 million the foundation had collected.

THE MILITANT

Oppose layoffs, cuts in schools, health

From California to New York, Democrats and Republicans are telling working people they must be the ones to sacrifice because of the capitalist economic crisis. Read about the working-class alternative in the ‘Militant.’



Militant/Naomi Craine
Los Angeles demonstration May 26 against cuts in education funding.

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Stance on undocumented discussed at N.Y. union rally

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK—More than 600 union members rallied here May 28 to protest a construction company employing workers who are not in the union.

Union officials said that the company, Leviathan Construction, hires non-union workers to avoid paying prevailing union wages and to cut corners on safety to boost profits. The noontime demonstration in front of a worksite just blocks from Times Square attracted workers from nearby construction jobs, many in hardhats with concrete- or paint-splattered work clothes.

Roughly 75 percent of construction workers in the city belong to one of 25 different construction unions, organized along craft lines. Union speakers said that picket lines would continue until Leviathan agrees to hire union workers for the construction project.

Bob Barry, from the New York State Building and Construction Trades Council, told the crowd that union officials had supported zoning change and tax breaks to promote new construction “because we believed we would have union jobs, not nonunion jobs.

We need to let them know we are the most skilled and best workers in the world.”

Members of the construction unions are among the better paid workers here. Union boilermakers, carpenters, electricians, and ironworkers earn more than \$45 an hour for a seven-hour day. Laborers earn more than \$20 an hour.

Reporters for the *Militant* have heard from numerous undocumented workers about construction bosses who agreed to pay them only half or less of the prevailing union wage. Often the boss then paid only half of the lowered wage, promising to pay the rest later.

“Leviathan wants to exploit workers who can’t stand up for themselves,” Edward Walsh, president of the New York State District Council of Iron Workers, said at the rally. “We’re willing to stand up for them. We’re willing to take them into the union.”

While some speakers and rally participants blamed undocumented immigrants for “taking” union jobs, others said that all workers, regardless of what papers they have, should be welcomed into the union. Other speakers at the



Militant/Ben Joyce

Some 600 workers rally in the streets of Manhattan, New York, May 28 to protest the hiring of nonunion labor by Leviathan Construction company.

protest openly scapegoated workers without papers. “Who’s taking our jobs?” said Terry Moore, a business agent for Metallic Lathers Union Local 46. “Undocumented workers who are not properly trained, getting sub-standard wages.”

Workers at the rally expressed a variety of views. The Leviathan workers “are probably without papers,” iron worker Corbett Melfti told the *Militant*. “We don’t want to deny people the right to work. They need to know

we’re not here to turn them in. It’s about everybody’s quality of life.”

Construction worker Wayne Antoine, who is originally from Trinidad and Tobago, said, “Undocumented should do what they have to do to get documented. They can’t come into the city and take the jobs of people who support the city.”

The day after the rally, construction union officials reached an agreement with the bosses that would reduce labor costs up to 21 percent on selected building projects, *Crain’s* reported. The concessions include some wage freezes, no strikes, and increasing the standard workday to eight hours.

Some contractors complained that the concessions are not enough. “It doesn’t solve the problem,” said Steven Spinola, president of the Real Estate Board of New York.

Many workers at the May 28 rally were looking for a way to strengthen the union, stop wage cuts, and fight for safer working conditions.

“I’m here to show solidarity,” Abe Delgado, a member of Laborers Local 79 said. “I think the guys working here, whether they’re in the union or not, should be compensated the same amount that other construction workers get.”

“This affects all of us,” Manuel Muzha, a mason who is originally from Ecuador, said. “We need the union to protect ourselves.”

White House: Talks with Iran not ‘open-ended’

BY CINDY JAQUITH

President Barack Obama, who has offered to participate in direct talks with the Iranian government over its nuclear program, assured Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu in late May that such talks would not be “open-ended.” Meanwhile, aides to Obama underscored that the option of a military strike against Iran’s nuclear plants remains on the table.

In April Obama broke with the Bush administration policy and indicated Washington would join Paris, Berlin, London, Moscow, and Beijing (known as the P5) in talks with Tehran over its nuclear program. The P5 governments have been seeking a deal with the Iranian government whereby it would abandon uranium enrichment, a process that can be used to produce weapons-grade uranium. Tehran says its production is for peaceful uses only, to develop the country’s infrastructure.

Even as it pressed for dialogue, the White House reminded Tehran that military action remains a possibility. In a May 22 interview on NBC’s *Today Show*, U.S. defense secretary Robert Gates said Obama had ordered that existing plans for a U.S. military strike on Iran be updated. “Presidents always ask their military to have a range of contingency plans

available to them,” Gates said.

The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Adm. Mike Mullen, said on ABC’s *This Week* that he estimated Tehran would not have a bomb for “one to three years.” But he spoke against a military strike. “I think the unintended consequences of a strike against Iran right now would be incredibly serious. . . . That’s why this engagement in dialogue is so important. I think we should do that with all options on the table as we approach them.”

Tehran took several steps to establish its military readiness in the meantime. It launched a new, solid propellant missile May 25. According to Gates, “it was a successful test.” The Sejil-2 missile has a range of 1,200 to 1,500 miles, far enough to reach Israel and parts of Europe. Its range is about the same as the Iranian Shahab-3 missile, said an official of the National Security Council. However, its solid-state design makes it easier to transport.

On May 26 the Iranian navy announced it had deployed six warships in international waters including the Gulf of Aden, north of Somalia. “This mission shows our increased capability in dealing with any foreign threat,” said Navy commander Habibollah Sayari.

All four candidates in Iran’s presiden-

tial elections, scheduled for June 12, favor continuing development of nuclear power. The two leading contenders are President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Mir Hossein Mousavi, who served as prime minister from 1981 to 1989.

Ahmadinejad announced May 25 that he opposed entering talks with the P5 and Washington and said Iran should negotiate only with the United Nations’ nuclear agency. He challenged Obama to a debate at the United Nations.

Mousavi argues that Ahmadinejad’s “extremist” positions have isolated Iran unnecessarily. Joining talks with the U.S. government should not be a “taboo,” he says. “We will not abandon our right to nuclear technology but we are ready to offer assurances that it’s not aimed at building arms.”

Case dropped against unionist

Continued from front page

Food and Commercial Workers union and steward at the JBS Swift plant here, had been found guilty in May 2008. He was later sentenced to one year and one day in prison and fined \$2,100.

Pereyra-Gabino won an appeal and the conviction was overturned in April. The U.S. attorney’s office filed a motion to dismiss the case May 11, which was granted by the court the next day.

Pereyra-Gabino was one of 25 people arrested in a workplace raid by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency in July 2007. Several months earlier immigration cops carried out a coordinated raid on six Swift plants across the country, arresting 1,297 workers, including 99 at the Marshalltown plant.

One of Pereyra-Gabino’s responsibilities was to carry out union orientation sessions with Spanish-speaking workers recently hired at the plant. He had worked at the plant for 12 years before his arrest. In an interview with

the *Militant* last September, he said, “My job was to build the union. If a worker had a problem, I would refer them to an attorney.” He said his approach was: “If I see someone drowning, I’ll help him. I don’t say show me your green card before I will help.”

After his arrest Pereyra-Gabino was suspended and then removed from his union post. The union officials sent him a certified letter informing him that he would not receive union assistance for his legal defense. He has been working in the plant while the appeal of his conviction was pending.

In the appeal, Pereyra-Gabino’s attorney argued that his client’s discussions with union members were protected under the right to free speech under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

However, the appeals court based its decision on grounds that jury instructions failed to “inform the jury of the essential elements of the offense charged and the government’s burden of proof” and that the government’s case was “not overpowering.”

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'People's Weekly World' aids U.S. gov't on N. Korea

BY SAM MANUEL

"No way to act" is the headline on a May 26 on-line edition editorial of the *People's Weekly World (PWW)*, a newspaper reflecting the views of the Communist Party USA. The editorial condemns the recent nuclear test and missile launches conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), calling these a "grave threat to peace and stability in the region" and "reckless and provocative acts."

Virtually every line in the editorial, reprinted on this page, is a falsehood.

The main concern of the *People's Weekly World* editors seems to be that the DPRK's actions "play into the hands of those in the U.S. who want to derail the Obama presidency."

"Recent changes in the world make the test all the more irresponsible," the *People's Weekly World* editorial says. "Today, Barack Obama is the U.S. president and as such pledged to reduce nuclear arsenals, to sign a treaty that would ban all nations, including the U.S. itself, from any nuclear tests."

"Unprecedented vows from any U.S. president," swoon the *PWW's* smitten editors, "and one that has been welcomed around the world."

What are these "unprecedented vows"? Obama has called for a revival of the 1999 Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty signed by then U.S. president William Clinton but blocked by the Senate. Supporters of the treaty argued at the time that the treaty would "lock in U.S. nuclear superiority."

The truth is that the *People's Weekly World* editorial, from start to finish, provides cover for the Obama administration's moves to crank up U.S. imperialism's campaign against the DPRK, including military threats as well as the denial of food and fuel.

Contrary to the *People's Weekly*

World, it is imperialism that threatens "peace and stability in the region," not North Korea. The U.S. government introduced nuclear arms and delivery systems on Korean soil and waters, and has maintained them for decades throughout the region, despite the DPRK's longstanding call for denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

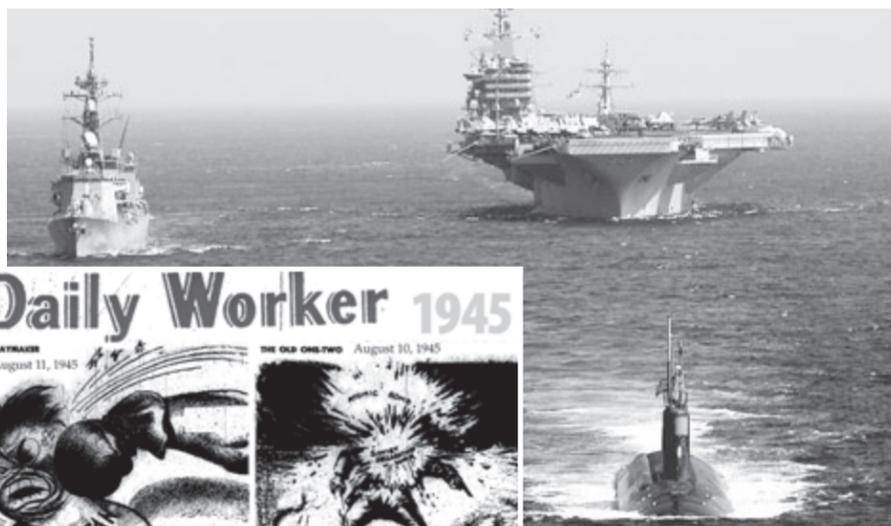
In April President Obama announced plans to add nearly \$1 billion in spending on U.S. weapons programs.

It is Washington that imposed the partition of Korea in 1945 at the end of World War II and has forcibly maintained that division for six decades. Tens of thousands of U.S. troops remain deployed on Korea's territory to this day, trampling on its sovereignty.

Washington maintains a range of trade and financial sanctions against North Korea, and now the Obama administration is threatening additional and harsher sanctions. The U.S. military routinely conducts joint war exercises with Tokyo and Seoul aimed at North Korea—most recently in March, with 26,000 U.S. troops, 30,000 South Korean troops, and a U.S. aircraft carrier.

North Korean ships have been stopped and searched at sea under the U.S.-led "Proliferation Security Initiative," through which Washington and its allies assert the right to conduct piracy by boarding any vessel "suspected" of carrying materials to produce "weapons of mass destruction." The South Korean government has announced it will now fully participate in the PSI.

It is the height of cynical understatement to say, as does the *PWW* editorial, that the U.S. government "fought in the war" against Korea. The Democratic Party administration of President Harry Truman *organized* that imperialist assault in 1950-53, with the U.S. invaders using the United Nations blue helmets



Above: Walter Wayman, U.S. Navy
Above: U.S. aircraft carrier and submarine accompany Japanese destroyer after a February undersea warfare exercise in west Pacific Ocean. Japan has taken major steps to bolster its position as regional imperialist power. Above left: clippings from 1945 *Daily Worker*, predecessor to *People's Weekly World*. Below left: front page of Aug. 18, 1945, *Militant*.



as cover. U.S. warplanes literally flattened Pyongyang and other cities, using napalm on the population. The Truman administration threatened to employ atomic weapons. It is estimated that 4 million of the 30 million people in Korea were killed in the war.

What's more, it was not "the war that divided the country in two." That had already been done by U.S. military forces in 1945, with the complicity of the Stalinist regime in Moscow.

Nonetheless, the *PWW* counsels the DPRK that building nuclear weapons "can never be justified." Such advice rings hollow from a newspaper that in August 1945, when it was called the *Daily Worker*, hailed the U.S. nuclear incineration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which annihilated hundreds of thousands of Japanese along with Koreans living in those cities. The paper's editors acclaimed the atrocities of August 5 and August 9 as "The Super-Duper Week."

Class-conscious workers in the United States and elsewhere, as a simple matter of national sovereignty, support Korea's right to self-defense against imperialism.

Washington, the world's main nucle-

ar power and the only one to have used nuclear weapons, has no legitimacy to demand that North Korea abandon its development of nuclear technology.

The *PWW* tries to bolster its argument by noting that "socialist" China and Vietnam condemned the North Korean tests. Beijing has hosted six-party talks between the DPRK and governments of the United States, China, Japan, Russia, and South Korea. Washington's aim is to bring to bear the muscle of Moscow and Beijing—North Korea's largest source of trade and economic aid—to compel Pyongyang to unilaterally bow to the U.S. rulers' dictates.

Far from supporting the U.S. capitalist government led by Barack Obama, working people must oppose Washington's moves and demand: End all sanctions against North Korea! Get all U.S. troops and weapons out of the Korean peninsula!

The only way to put an end to the threat of nuclear war is for workers and farmers—first and foremost right here in the United States—to organize a revolutionary movement capable of waging a struggle to conquer state power and disarm the imperialist war makers once and for all.

U.S. gov't seeks sanctions on Korea

Continued from front page

nuclear arsenal of some 10,000 warheads and is capable of striking any target on the planet. It is the only power to have unleashed nuclear weapons on human beings, when it annihilated nearly a quarter of a million Japanese in the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of the Second World War.

Washington maintains some 28,000 troops on the Korean peninsula as part of a joint U.S.-South Korean military force. In March the force conducted exercises involving 26,000 U.S. troops, 30,000 South Korean troops, and a U.S. aircraft carrier.

The UN Security Council is made up of five permanent members with the largest nuclear arsenals. They are the United States, the United Kingdom, France, China, and Russia. It also includes 10 rotating members, currently Libya, Mexico, Japan, Vietnam, Austria, Turkey, Uganda, Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, and Croatia.

Washington has met virtually no resistance within the Security Council on its drive to levy additional sanctions against North Korea. U.S. secretary of

state Hillary Clinton said May 27 that she was "very pleased that we have a unified international community, including China and Russia," working on a "firm resolution."

The U.S. government says its spy satellites have documented what may be preparations for an upcoming long-range missile test by North Korea. Washington and Tokyo threatened Pyongyang following what they said was a missile test in early April, with the Japanese government imposing harsher sanctions.

Following the conference in Singapore, Gates made a visit to Alaska where he toured an 800-acre missile defense complex at Fort Greely. "If there were a launch from a rogue state such as North Korea, I have good confidence that we would be able to deal with it," Gates said after the tour.

The current proposal from the Defense Department would have 30 missile interceptors installed at Fort Greely and at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. The proposal includes \$750 million to further develop the ground-based interceptors and an additional \$200 million to sustain the two sites.

May 26 editorial from 'People's Weekly World'

No way to act

North Korea's recent nuclear test, as well as its subsequent test firing of two missiles, represents a grave threat to peace and stability in the region, the fight to eliminate nuclear weapons from the world and, more generally, the fight for peace and social progress.

We condemn these reckless and provocative acts.

North Korea has claimed that it has been the victim of imperialist aggression, specifically from the United States. The United States has refused to sign a peace treaty with North Korea, has hedged on agreements made in the six-party talks aimed at solving the nuclear issue, and, over the decades, worked to isolate North Korea.

And it was the U.S. that fought in the war which divided the country into two—a war that has never officially ended. The border between North and South Korea is one of the most militarized in the world.

Nonetheless, building nuclear weapons, which endanger the very existence of humanity itself, can never be justified.

Recent changes in the world make the test all the more irresponsible. Today, Barack Obama is the U.S. president and as such pledged to reduce nuclear arsenals, to sign a treaty that would ban all nations, including the U.S. itself, from any nuclear tests. Unprecedented vows from any U.S. president, and one that has been welcomed around the world.

The current fight for progressive forces is to make sure that such a nuclear policy is implemented. North Korea's tests do exactly the opposite. They play into the hands of those in the U.S. who want to derail the Obama presidency, as well as into the hands of those in Japan who would like to destroy the nation's "peace constitution" and turn Japan itself into an aggressive power.

The North Korean news agency said, "The test will contribute to defending the sovereignty of the country and the nation and socialism and ensuring peace and security on the Korean peninsula and the region." However the world sees it differently, including North Korea's socialist neighbors, China and Vietnam, which have condemned the tests.

Link to article: <http://www.pww.org/article/view/15770>

5,000 workers march in England against layoffs

BY PAUL DAVIES

BIRMINGHAM, England—Five thousand workers from across the United Kingdom took to the streets here May 16 in pouring rain to protest job cuts.

Among those marching were car workers from Jaguar Land Rover and LDV plants, where workers have faced layoffs; and steelworkers from Teesside Cast Products, where 2,000 jobs are threatened at the Corus plant. A number of young people joined the march, which was organized by the Unite union.

Official unemployment figures show that those out of work now total 2.2 million, a rate of 7.1 percent. The increase over the first three months of the year has been the fastest quarterly rise since 1981. Among those hardest hit have been young workers, with the unemployment rate for those aged 18 to 24 rising to 16.1 percent. The West Midlands, where Birmingham is located, has an unemployment rate of 9.3 percent, the highest in the United Kingdom.

Around 20 workers from the Visteon plants in Enfield and Basildon joined the march. The workers there and at the Visteon plant in Belfast have been waging a fight since the end of March, when the company announced it was closing its three UK plants.

“Before our fight, I was confined to my small world. I’d see a picket and not think twice,” said Cindy Green, who worked at the Visteon plant in Enfield for two decades. “I’m a changed person. From now on, if I see a picket, I’ll stop, find out about it, and offer solidarity.” Before the dispute she’d never been on a demonstration.

On May 18 workers at the Enfield plant ended their picket line, marching from the factory to nearby Ponders End, accompanied by firecrackers and cheers. Workers at all three plants had been laid off within hours of being given notice March 31 and told that they would only receive the government’s minimum redundancy (severance) payments. Following a seven-week fight, which included an occupation of the Belfast plant, workers have won a substantially increased redundancy package. Workers at the Belfast plant ended their occupation, and at the Basildon plant the picket lines have also been taken down.

“We were on strike eight years ago,” explained David Jones, “and we got support from other workers. That is why I’m marching today.” Jones was one of several former car parts workers from Friction Dynamics in north Wales who joined the march. They faced a two-year lockout after striking against wage cuts

and a longer working day.

John Cooper, from the Vauxhall car plant at Ellsemere Port on Merseyside, joined the march explaining that car workers face short-time working and reduced pay.

The Unite Web site described the demonstration as a “campaign bringing the union together with senior business, academic and political figures.” Marching alongside Unite leader Tony Woodley was Digby Jones, former head of the bosses’ organization, the Confederation of British Industry.

At a rally following the march Woodley sought to divert attention from the capitalist class as a whole, demagogically singling out only bankers and “speculators” for blame. Striking a nationalist tone, Digby Jones told the *Sunday Mercury*, “If we don’t keep skills in manufacturing in Birmingham when the economy turns round . . . international manufacturing investors will go to Mumbai, Shanghai and Germany.” One of Unite’s demands at the march was for “action by our government to defend manufacturing on the scale of our EU competitors.”



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Visteon workers’ contingent at May 16 march for jobs in Birmingham, England. After company announced abrupt closures workers fought for and won higher severance pay.

Nationalism also marks the No2EU campaign, which has candidates standing in the June elections to the European parliament. Its supporters joined the Birmingham march.

No2EU is a coalition led by Bob Crow, general secretary of the Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers Union, and includes the Communist Party of Britain

and the Socialist Party. Its policies include opposition to “social dumping of exploited foreign workers in Britain.” It holds up the example of the reactionary strikes this past winter at the Lindsey oil refinery against the hiring of Italian and Portuguese workers. The strikes established preferential hiring for British workers, a blow to workers’ unity.

Actions condemn killing of Wichita doctor

Continued from front page

talking about “common ground.” In her campaign for the Democratic Party presidential nomination, Hillary Clinton called abortion a “tragedy.”

Just weeks before Tiller’s death, President Barack Obama gave the commencement address at Notre Dame University, reaching out to anti-abortion forces to “work together to reduce the number of women seeking abortions,” giving the green light to antiwoman forces.

Members of Tiller’s Lutheran church congregation reported that the presence of antiabortion protesters outside the church had been a regular occurrence for several years.

Dan Monnat, one of Tiller’s attorneys, said that on May 2 staffers

at Tiller’s clinic reported substantial vandalism to the building. Two days later Tiller reported receiving a letter threatening his life.

Operation Rescue, an antiwoman outfit whose trademark is harassing abortion clinics and their clients, had a “Tiller-watch” section on its Web site. While the organization’s president, Troy Newman, condemned Tiller’s killing and disassociated the organization from Roeder, it was reported that Roeder had posted comments attacking the doctor on the group’s Web site.

Randall Terry, founder of Operation Rescue, said that Tiller was “a mass murderer.”

Roeder had been active in the 1990s in the “Freemen,” an ultrarightist out-

fit with many conspiracy theories. The group also calls for independence from governmental jurisdiction. Roeder was arrested in April 1996 for having ammunition and bomb components in his car.

Supporters of women’s rights had scored a victory in March when jurors here took only 45 minutes to acquit Tiller of charges that he broke a Kansas law restricting how late-term abortions should be handled.

On the day Tiller was killed, reaction was swift. Dustin Deckard, a gay rights activist in Wichita, said, “I was disgusted and shocked that it had happened, and immediately looked around for any vigil being organized. Nothing was planned, so I began put-

Continued on page 9

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



June 15, 1984

SHEFFIELD, England—“What you now have in South Yorkshire is an actual police state, tantamount to something you are used to seeing in Chile or Bolivia,” stated Arthur Scargill, president of the National Union of Mineworkers, following a series of violent attacks by police on coal miners picketing the Orgreave Coke Depot, near Sheffield, May 29 and 30.

The miners have been on strike for nearly three months against British government plans to close many mines permanently and throw thousands of miners out of work.

In response, the British government has unleashed a wave of police violence and a crackdown on the democratic rights of miners and other unionists that causes many to recall previous historic British labor confrontations such as the 1926 general strike.



June 15, 1959

NEW YORK—More than 2,000 striking workers from seven hospitals jammed the main ballroom of the Hotel Diplomat tonight. They roared their approval as their union president, Leon J. Davis, bitterly assailed the police force for its brutal attack on pickets yesterday.

The striking members of Local 1199, Retail Drug Employees Union, AFL-CIO, voted unanimously not to act on a proposed formula for settling the strike until the union held a scheduled meeting with Mayor Wagner.

Davis also proposed that the strikers begin taking time off the picket lines to participate in a stepped-up organizing drive of some 70 other voluntary hospitals and indicated that the union might be forced to strike still other hospitals where the workers have already been signed up.



June 16, 1934

For the last two months the capitalist press has been calling for the blood of the “reds” in the New York school system. By “reds” is meant anybody who has the courage to put up a squawk against some aspect of the feudal regime of the reactionary Board of Education or who lifts a finger to fight against wage cuts. On the 4th of May the *New York American* tried to smear a coat of red-wash over 700 teachers who had signed a petition circulated by the Teachers Anti-War Committee.

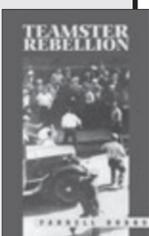
The central purpose of this barrage was to whip up a red scare and create sentiment for the passage by the state legislature of the Ives Bill. The bill was intended to place man-hunting weapons in the hands of the state to crush the teachers’ resistance to wage cuts and other “economy” measures by expelling militants as seditious and treasonable people.

Reading

Teamster Rebellion

by Farrell Dobbs

The 1934 strikes that built the industrial union movement in Minneapolis and helped pave the way for the CIO, recounted by a central leader of that battle.



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Malcolm X speaks on the 'victims of Americanism'

Printed below is an excerpt from Malcolm X Talks to Young People. The Spanish edition is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for June. Malcolm X, an internationalist revolutionary leader of the Black struggle and of working people worldwide, was assassinated in February 1965. The book contains four talks and an interview given to young people during the last months of his life, months during which Malcolm spoke out more and more directly about the capitalist roots of racism, exploitation, and imperialist oppression. The item quoted below is from a speech at the University of Ghana on May 13, 1964. The talk was part of a week-long tour in Ghana organized by the Malcolm X Committee, made up of a number of African Americans living in that country. Copyright © 1965 by Betty Shabazz and Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Robert Parent

Malcolm X at Kennedy Airport in New York after returning from trip abroad, Nov. 24, 1964.

people in America. And our condition is so deplorable because we are in a country that professes to be a democracy and professes to be striving to give justice and freedom and equality to everyone who is born under its constitution. If we were born in South Africa or in Angola or some part of this earth where they don't profess to be for freedom, that would be another thing; but when we are born in a country that stands up and represents itself as the leader of the Free World, and you still have to beg and crawl just to get a chance to drink a cup of coffee, then the condition is very deplorable indeed.

So tonight, so that you will understand me and why I speak as I do, it should probably be pointed out at the outset that I am not a politician. I don't know anything about politics. I'm from America but I'm not an American. I didn't go there of my own free choice. [Applause] If I were an American there would be no problem, there'd be no need for legislation or civil rights or anything else. So I just try to face the fact as it actually is and come to this meeting as one of the victims of America, one of the victims of Americanism, one of the victims of democracy, one of the victims of a very hypocritical system that is going all over this earth today representing itself as being qualified to tell other people how to run their country when they can't get the dirty things that are going on in their own country straightened out. [Applause]

So if someone else from America comes to you to speak, they're probably speaking as Americans, and they speak as people who see America through the eyes of an American. And usually those types of persons refer to America, or that which exists in America, as the American Dream. But for the twenty million of us in America who are of African descent, it is not an American dream; it's an American nightmare. [Laughter]

I don't feel that I am a visitor in Ghana or in any part of Africa. I feel that I am at home. I've been away for four hundred years, [Laughter] but not of my own volition, not of my own will. Our people didn't go to America on the *Queen Mary*, we didn't go by Pan American, and we didn't go to America on the *Mayflower*. We went in slave ships, we went in chains. We weren't immigrants to America, we were cargo for purposes of a system that was bent upon making a profit. So this is the category or level of which I speak. I may not speak it in the language many of you would use, but I think you will understand the meaning of my terms.

When I was in Ibadan [in Nigeria] at the University of Ibadan last Friday night, the students there gave me a new name, which I go for—meaning I like it. [Laughter] "Omwale," which they say means in Yoruba—if I am pronouncing that correctly, and if I am not pronouncing it correctly it's because I haven't had a chance to pronounce it for four hundred years [Laughter]—which means in

that dialect, "The child has returned." It was an honor for me to be referred to as a child who had sense enough to return to the land of his forefathers—to his fatherland and to his motherland. Not sent back here by the State Department, [Laughter] but come back here of my own free will. [Applause]

I am happy and I imagine, since it is the policy that whenever a Black man leaves America and travels in any part of Africa, or Asia, or Latin America and says things contrary to what the American propaganda machine turns out, usually he finds upon his return home that his passport is lifted. Well, if they had not wanted me to say the things I am saying, they should never have given me a passport in the first place. The policy usually is the lifting of the passport. Now I am not here to condemn America, I am not here to make America look bad, but I am here to tell you the truth about the situation that Black people in America find themselves confronted with. And if truth condemns America, then she stands condemned. [Applause]

This is the most beautiful continent that I've ever seen; it's the richest continent I've ever seen, and strange as it may seem, I find many white Americans here smiling in the faces of our African brothers like they have been loving them all of the time. [Laughter and applause] The fact is, these same whites who in America spit in our faces, the same whites who in America club us brutally, the same whites who in America sic their dogs upon us, just because we want to be free human beings, the same whites who turn their water hoses upon our women and our babies because we want to integrate with them, are over here in Africa smiling in your face trying to integrate with you. [Laughter]

I had to write a letter back home yesterday and tell some of my friends that if American Negroes want integration, they should come to Africa, because more white people over here—white Americans, that is—look like they are for integration than there is in the entire American country. [Laughter] But actually what it is, they want to integrate with the wealth that they know is here—the untapped natural resources which exceed the wealth of any continent on this earth today.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY MALCOLM X

I intend for my talk to be very informal, because our position in America is an informal position, [Laughter] and I find that it is very difficult to use formal terms to describe a very informal position. No condition of any people on earth is more deplorable than the condition, or plight, of the twenty-two million Black

June BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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Iowa: Dairy farmers protest low milk prices

BY DAVID ROSENFELD
AND MAGGIE TROWE

MANCHESTER, Iowa, May 30—Some 150 dairy farmers and their supporters from Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, Nebraska, New York, and Wisconsin rallied here today to protest below-cost wholesale milk prices. They came to this rural town in northeastern Iowa to discuss solutions to the deepening crisis facing small dairy farmers around the country.

Joel Greeno, a Wisconsin farmer and leader of Family Farm Defenders, criticized the notion circulated by representatives of the giant food companies that “there are too many farmers and too much food.”

“Kraft made profits last year,” Greeno told the crowd. “We need to stand together as farmers to protest, and stand with fellow farmers around the world.”

Chris Petersen, president of the Iowa Farmers Union, said, “I’ve been in this fight for 20 years. I’m here today because I care. I’ve seen it, I’ve heard it—the suicides, the pain. Enough is enough! Some say what’s good for big ag is good for independent farmers. Well, it isn’t.”

“Do you think we should have a price for milk that covers your cost of production?” asked Anthony Loken, a dairy farmer from Minnesota, speaking from a flatbed truck serving as a stage. The crowd gathered in the Livestock Exchange parking lot responded with a resounding, “Yes!”

In the past year of economic contraction, the price farmers receive for raw milk has plummeted 50 percent, while their costs of production have fallen much less. “My income has been slashed in half and I don’t know why,” said Jerry Harvey, an organizer of the protest who has 70 cows on his Iowa farm. “We need solidarity. We want dairy farmers to come together.”

Last year farmers received about \$20 per hundredweight (100 pounds) for raw milk. Farmers at the rally explained they are getting between \$10 and \$11 per hundredweight today.

Speakers and participants at the event presented a range of ideas about the source of the problem and possible solutions. Many, like Arden Tewksbury, a former farmer and manager of the Progressive Agriculture Organization, spoke in support of a bill before the U.S. Senate that claims to set milk prices based on the farmers’ cost of production. Tewksbury has been traveling around the country speak-

ing out for the Casey-Specter Bill, as it is known. He recently addressed a rally of 250 dairy farmers in West Winfield, New York.

Farmers’ incomes slashed

A petition was circulated calling on U.S. secretary of agriculture Thomas Vilsack to use his powers to set an emergency minimum price for the milk that farmers produce. Many farmers pointed out that while dairy prices in the grocery store have dropped slightly, farmers’ incomes have been slashed.

So-called cooperatives, like the Dairy Farmers of America and Land O’Lakes, came in for intense criticism. These “co-ops” claim to be run by and serve the dairy farmers themselves. Some began as actual small farmer cooperatives, but today they are huge capitalist food manufacturing and marketing companies that reap profits by keeping prices paid to farmers low.

Deborah Windecker, one of four women dairy farmers who came from New York State, pointed the finger at



Militant/Maggie Trowe

Dairy farmer Jerry Harvey, speaking at May 30 protest in Manchester, Iowa.

“imports from places like China that don’t have the same food safety standards as we do.” She and several other speakers claimed that the influx of a milk protein by-product from other countries is leading to a lessening in demand for U.S. farmers’ raw milk to make cheese and other dairy products.

During the open microphone period

Wisconsin farmer Randy Jasper said, “I have a little problem blaming imports. Farmers in all countries are in the same boat.” He pointed to the example of thousands of farmers in Europe who recently carried out rallies and tractorcades in Berlin, Brussels, and across France to protest low milk prices. “Blame the corporations,” he told the crowd.

N.Y. mayor runs with bipartisan backing

Continued from front page

to more than 100 cops involved in the entrapment of four men in a “conspiracy” plot to bomb synagogues and shoot down military planes. In January he traveled to Israel to personally convey his support for Tel Aviv’s bloody war against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

There are no Republicans challenging the mayor. City Comptroller William Thompson, a Democrat who is Black, is running against Bloomberg but has received only a handful of endorsements from his party. President Barack Obama has pointedly not endorsed, nor campaigned for, Thompson. Queens city councilman Anthony Avella, also seeking the Democratic nomination, has even fewer backers.

The 17th richest person in the world, Bloomberg was originally a Democrat, but ran as a Republican in his 2001 and 2005 races for mayor. Now he calls himself an “independent.”

He has already secured the ballot lines of the Republican Party and of the Independence Party.

Obama: ‘Innovative elected officials’

The reluctance of the Democrats to run more than token campaigns against Bloomberg lies in the fact that they fundamentally agree with the mayor’s course of attack on the working class in New York.

Obama made a point of meeting recently with Bloomberg, California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger—notorious for slashing jobs and health care in that state—and Pennsylvania governor Edward Rendell to solicit their ideas on solving the economic crisis. The president called them “three of the most innovative elected officials in the country.”

Bloomberg returned the praise in a column evaluating Obama’s first 100 days in office published in the May 25 *Newsweek*. He hailed the president’s

willingness to “do the hard things first,” citing his decision to send more troops to Afghanistan and to tackle cuts in health care. During the 2008 presidential race, Bloomberg actively promoted Obama’s candidacy, without formally endorsing him.

With the backing of the New York Democrats, Bloomberg forced through an agreement June 2 with labor union officials to introduce copayments for medical care for the first time. About 100,000 city workers and retirees will now pay \$100 for hospital admissions and \$50 for emergency room visits.

Bloomberg and the Democrats recently raised subway and bus fares in New York City by more than 10 percent. Rail fares and bridge and tunnel tolls will also increase. They’re also seeking to raise the sales tax by 0.5 percent to 8.875 percent and reinstate the sales tax on any item of clothing above \$110.

Hanging in the balance are threats to eliminate some 12,000 union municipal jobs at the same time funds are increased for private outside contractors. The proposed budget for education projects \$400 million in cuts for the next school year.

Blacks and Latinos

Bloomberg has aggressively reached out for political support from figures in the Black and Latino communities. Although Al Sharpton has formally endorsed Thompson, he made a point of inviting Bloomberg, not Thompson, to address the annual meeting of his National Action Network in April. “In all fairness, Al Sharpton has been an awful lot more of a calming influence on the city and helper to the city than most people give him credit for,” Bloomberg told the gathering.

Following Obama’s nomination of Sonia Sotomayor, who is Puerto Rican, to the U.S. Supreme Court, Bloomberg strongly suggested at a

May 26 news conference that the appointment was actually his idea.

Democratic figures Floyd Flake, a long-time U.S. Congressman who recently retired, and Assemblywoman Barbara Clark, leader of the state legislature’s Black, Puerto Rican, and Hispanic Caucus, announced their support for Bloomberg in early May. “Mike is someone who acts independently and governs in a nonpartisan manner,” said Flake.

Socialist Workers candidate Fein

“I don’t claim to be ‘nonpartisan,’” Dan Fein said in an interview June 2. “The Socialist Workers campaign stands 100 percent on the side of the working class. We urge working people to unite in the fight for immediate demands that protect our interests as a class.”

These demands include guaranteed unemployment compensation for as long as a worker is jobless; a raise in the federal minimum wage to union scale; a massive, federally funded public works program to create jobs; and no cuts in medical benefits.

Fein said workers should also fight for immediate, unconditional legalization of all undocumented workers, a halt to farm and home foreclosures, and abolition of income taxes for workers.

A proletarian revolution that takes political power out of the hands of the capitalists is needed, Fein says, to begin to meet the crisis capitalism has created.

There is one other party that calls itself socialist in the race, the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL). Frances Villar, a City University of New York student, is the PSL candidate for mayor. She is running under the banner “Billionaires, your time is up.” She calls for “tax Wall Street and the big landlords,” “put the banks at the back of the line,” “no foreclosures or evictions in the city,” and “raise the salary for every public school teacher.”

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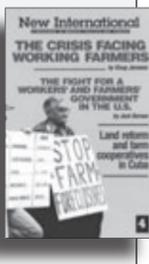
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Cuban 5: 'Our spirits lifted by world support'

The following is the third installment of an interview with Gerardo Hernández, one of five Cuban revolutionaries who have been held in U.S. prisons on frame-up charges for more than 10 years. Saul Landau, a fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, D.C., who is making a documentary on the case, conducted the April 1 interview by phone. The previous installments appeared in the last two issues of the *Militant*, and the remaining two will be printed in coming weeks.

Known internationally as the Cuban Five, Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, and René González were arrested by FBI agents on Sept. 12, 1998. They had been gathering information on counterrevolutionary Cuban American groups that operate from south Florida with Washington's complicity and have a history of violent attacks on Cuba.

The five were convicted in 2001 on charges that included "conspiracy to commit espionage" and failing to register as agents of a foreign government. They were given sentences ranging from 15 years to life in prison. Hernández, who was also falsely accused of "conspiracy to commit murder," was sentenced to two life terms plus 15 years, and has been held since 2004 in the federal penitentiary in Victorville, California, where he was sent after the Lompoc, California, prison lost its "maximum security" designation.

The five Cubans have appealed their convictions to the U.S. Supreme Court. That court is expected to decide this month whether to hear the appeal.

The English translation of the interview was checked against the original Spanish and revised by the *Militant*. Footnotes are by the *Militant*.



Saul Landau: Later you went to prison at Lompoc, California?

Gerardo Hernández: Yes, we had to wage a legal battle to get out of the "hole" and into the general population. Then came the trial, and after the trial, another month in the "hole." Then, after the sentencing, they sent us to different penitentiaries.

I was sent to Lompoc in 2003, and into the "box."¹ That happened in all five prisons on the same day. It's not clear why, or who gave the order. Lompoc is a very old prison, apart from the "hole," which is for people who have attacked guards or set fire to mattresses, etc. . . . [For] cases where there's basically

no alternative . . . there's the "box," a basement below the "hole"—10 double-doored cells. They put me down there, in my underwear, barefoot, for a month. I didn't know if it was day or night, because you're there 24 hours. In there, there's no recreation hour or anything. There was a drain pipe from the cell above. Whenever that person flushed the toilet, dirty water would run down my cell's walls.

I complained about the danger to my health from this. They had planned to keep us there for one year for "special administrative measures." They had warned me I wouldn't have any contact with anybody. No visits, no nothing. To communicate with my lawyer, I had to submit a letter. I had to make an envelope out of a piece of paper and seal it with toothpaste because there was absolutely nothing. Nothing to read, nothing to write with, nothing! That was quite a difficult month. They told us we'd be there for a year and that at the end of the year they'd review our cases; we could be there indefinitely.

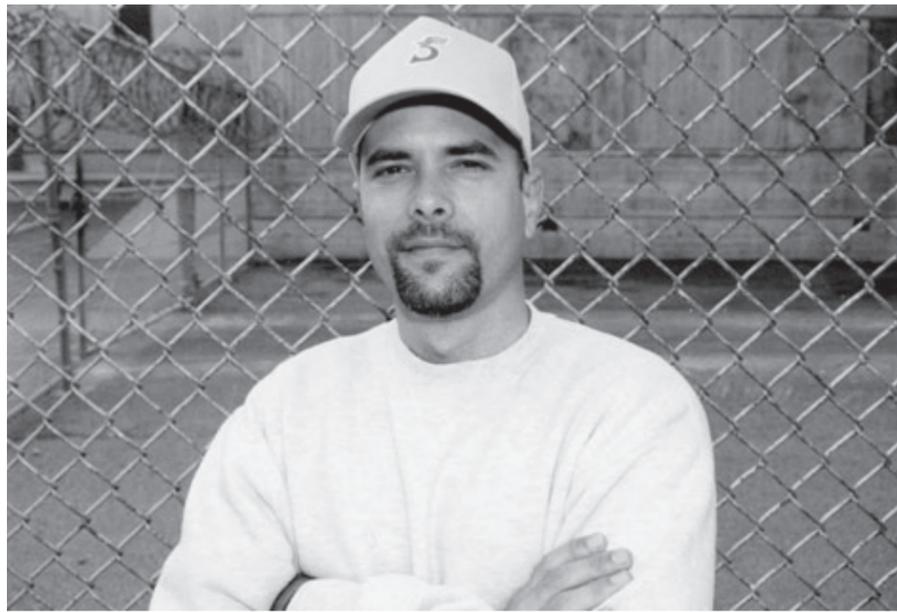
When the guards would take me to bathe, three or four guards would take me, handcuffed. The other cells kept their exterior doors open. The interior door was an enclosed grating. But the other was an iron sheet that cut you off completely. They kept those open so that people wouldn't go crazy. But mine was always kept closed. When they'd take me out, they'd close all the other doors so no one could even see me because one of the established rules was that I could have contact with no one.

I was there for a month, not knowing if it was day or night, dirty water running down the walls, barefoot, with the light on 24 hours a day; hearing screams of people around me, some of whom had lost their minds.

One day, a Thursday, they brought me papers to sign, saying I would be there for one year. The following Tuesday, without explanation, just as they'd brought me there, without me knowing anything, they took me out. We found out that lots of people had protested outside the Bureau of Prisons and that members of Congress had inquired about us.

Landau: Under what pretext were you thrown in the "box?" How did you keep sane?

Hernández: Pretext? None. The lieutenant who took me to the hole asked me, "Why are you going to the hole?" I said, "You're asking me? You should be telling me." When I asked, they'd tell



Gerardo Hernández at U.S. penitentiary in Lompoc, California, 2003. Hernández is one of five Cuban revolutionaries locked up on frame-up charges in U.S. prisons for more than 10 years.

me, "Orders from above." Coincidentally, this took place a month before we were to present our appeals, when we most needed contact with our lawyers. We went to the "hole," a mysterious coincidence, right before our appeal.

How could I endure it? We were aware of the support from people trying to get justice for us. That raised our spirits a lot. We knew Cuba would protest, and that our friends throughout the world, including in this country, would do everything possible to get us out of there. We did get out of the "hole," finally. Indeed, protests took place in many countries and in front of the Bureau of Prisons. Such actions really give you a boost, a lot of strength. And you know you can't let your *compañeros* down . . . people who won't fail you and expect that you won't fail them.

So, you spend all day thinking, "Nothing can happen to me in here, I can't have a panic attack, a nervous breakdown, I cannot yield, not even a little bit, because there are too many people that I would be letting down." That gives you tremendous strength.

Landau: Did you think about your family?

Hernández: The U.S. government won't give my wife a visa to visit me—for the last 10 years.² Denying me the chance to see my wife is part of this same process: the interrogation, incentives to sell out, months of solitary confinement. But the FBI's or administration's plans didn't succeed. Initially, they thought, "We'll arrest these Castro agents, threaten them, and they'll change their minds, because this is the richest and best country in the world and Cuba is a poor country, a dictatorship." For the

past 50 years, they've told Americans, "Cuba is hell, but you can't go there to see for yourself."³

Americans are free to do many things, but not travel 90 miles to visit that country to see if what their government says is true. They planned for the five to switch sides, put on a whole propaganda show: we'd denounce whatever they thought we should denounce, condemn the revolution, like they make any athlete or musician do.

When they come here, all they have to say is, "I come here seeking freedom." They squeeze the maximum from them, then forget about them. That was more or less the plan for us, but it didn't work. In retaliation, for 10 years they've made our lives as difficult as possible. Prisoners e-mail their families. They don't let me use e-mail, not even to communicate with my wife.

Landau: What did Cuba do to the United States to deserve punishment for 50 years?

Hernández: Cuba's biggest "crime" has been its desire to be a sovereign and independent nation. This history goes back way more than 50 years. Cuba was winning the independence war against Spain when the United States said: "Uh-oh, this is not good for us!" Suddenly and mysteriously, the USS *Maine* exploded in Havana harbor, and that was the pretext for U.S. intervention to defeat Spain. Then they put the Platt Amendment in Cuba's constitution allowing U.S. intervention.⁴

Let's go back much further: Cuba, the ripe fruit, would fall into U.S. hands; Cuba the backyard of the United States. That little island suffers the misfortune of being 90 miles from the most powerful country in the world. Cuba refused to be their resort and brothel like in the famous days when marines urinated on

Continued on page 10

1. For 33 months, from their arrests through the end of the trial, the five were held without bail at the Federal Detention Center in Miami. For the 17 months before the trial they were kept in solitary confinement—the "hole." After their convictions they were returned to the "hole" for another 48 days. In March 2003, now in different prisons across the country, they were placed in the "box"—an even more restrictive confinement within the "hole."
2. Adriana Pérez, who is married to Hernández and lives in Cuba, has not been allowed to see him for 11 years due to repeated visa denials by the U.S. government. In 2002, after being granted a U.S. visa and flying to Houston, she was detained for 11 hours and forced to return to Cuba without seeing him. Olga Salanueva, who is married to René González, another of the five jailed Cubans, has not been allowed to see her husband since August 2000.

3. Due to U.S. government restrictions, most U.S. residents cannot legally travel to Cuba.
4. From 1868 to 1898, Cuban independence fighters waged three wars against Spanish colonial rule of the island. José Martí's Cuban Revolutionary Party launched the final war in 1895. As Cuban rebels were defeating Spanish forces, the U.S. government under President William McKinley intervened and declared war on Spain, using the sinking of the USS *Maine* in 1898 as a pretext. The end of Spanish rule was immediately followed by U.S. military occupation. In 1901 Cuba was forced to incorporate into its constitution an amendment drafted by U.S. senator Orville Platt that gave Washington the right to intervene in Cuban affairs at any time and to establish military bases on Cuban soil.

Recommended Reading

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution

by Jack Barnes

The Cuban Revolution of 1959 had a worldwide political impact, including on workers and youth in the imperialist heartland. \$10



United States vs. The Cuban Five: A Judicial Cover-up

by Rodolfo Dávalos Fernández

Cuban jurist Dávalos Fernández reviews every aspect of the U.S. government's prosecution of the five men in the light of U.S. and international law, legal tradition, and procedures. \$22

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How attempts to shut abortion clinics were defeated

Counter-mobilizations across the United States blocked rightists in the early 1990s

BY SETH GALINSKY

In early July 1991 the Wichita City Council in a 4-3 vote defeated an ordinance prohibiting the use of city money for abortion counseling, requiring doctors to notify parents when a minor was seeking an abortion, and declaring that legally “life begins at conception.”

The mayor and the antiabortion group Operation Rescue, founded in 1987 by Randall Terry, had backed the ordinance. Operation Rescue claimed it wanted to “rescue” the “children who are scheduled to die” at abortion clinics. Its leaders demagogically argued that women were responsible for many of society’s problems, arguing that if they would return to their “traditional” role there would be less unemployment, child abuse, and drug abuse.

Operation Rescue responded to the defeat of the ordinance by targeting Dr. George Tiller’s Women’s Health Care Services and two other local abortion clinics in what was billed as a six-day “summer of mercy.” The group’s leaders said it was not enough to rely on “the political process” to end abortions—“action” was needed.

1991: rightists shut down three clinics

On July 16, 1991, the first day of the campaign, the rightists successfully shut down all three clinics. The next day, they stormed the church that Tiller attended and took over the service. One of the thugs grabbed the organist’s hands to stop her from playing while other thugs harangued the churchgoers.

The strategy of the leadership of women’s rights groups, trade unions, and civil rights organizations was to look to the courts, cops, and elected officials to keep the clinics open. Union officials said abortion was not a labor issue, ignoring that the assault on women’s rights is also aimed at the working class.

Sensing an opportunity in the lack of a combative response, Operation Rescue announced its stay was “indefinite.” By the end of the week, hundreds of rightist cadre streamed into Wichita from across the country. The



Supporters of women’s right to choose defend clinic in Denver, Colorado, August 1993.

group announced it would make Wichita “America’s first abortion-free city.”

The rightists stepped up their blockades of clinics and harassed volunteer clinic escorts, threatening them and vandalizing their homes.

In spite of a restraining order against blocking the clinics, the cops acted slowly. When they finally did arrest the “rescuers” they took their time, allowing the clinics to remain blocked for hours.

On August 20 Operation Rescue activists attacked the Women’s Health Care Services clinic. A few rightists blocked the car of a woman seeking care at the clinic, then dozens leaped over the gate and fence. Hundreds barricaded the entrance. They were finally stopped by cops before they were able to break into the clinic.

It wasn’t until August 24 that a public “Speak Out for Choice” rally was organized in Wichita to answer the rightist assaults. Five thousand attended. Young people and some workers began joining picket lines to defend the clinics.

The next day the rightists held a “Hope for the Heartland” rally that drew 25,000. They also won some support from small farmers. A “Rural America Speaks Out for Life” tractorcade drew 300 farm trucks, tractors, cars, and vans.

Officials, cops, complicit with rightists

The rightist actions went on for weeks with the complicity of some local officials and the cops. Kansas governor Joan Finney spoke at an Operation Rescue support rally after police had made 1,500 arrests.

The actions Operation Rescue organized in the early ’90s—with its reliance on street confrontations and violence, its cadre of followers, and support from cops and Democratic and Republican officials—showed the face of incipient American fascism. Working people in the United States will face movements like this more often as class polarization sharpens in the course of the current economic crisis.

Pro-choice forces countermobilize

While Operation Rescue did not succeed in permanently closing the clinics, the Wichita campaign put wind in its sails. Bolstered by its success, Operation Rescue and other rightists sought to close clinics around the country, in-

cluding in Iowa, Ohio, Michigan, and North Dakota. They also headed to Massachusetts and Rhode Island as a prelude to what they said would be national “Days of Rescue.” But they soon found out that they were not the only ones learning the lessons of what happened in Kansas.

An example of the growing resistance to the rightists took place Nov. 2, 1991. After Operation Rescue announced it was coming to town, 2,500 supporters of a woman’s right to choose

gathered at dawn at four clinics in the Boston area.

Instead, 150 rightists hit a clinic in Cranston, Rhode Island, 45 minutes away where they quickly overwhelmed 30 people defending the clinic.

Some 800 pro-choice demonstrators, mostly students from Boston University, Harvard, Yale, and many other area colleges and high schools, quickly headed from Boston to Cranston and outmobilized the rightists. “We ran ’em out of Boston and we ran ’em out of here,” the students chanted as the cops escorted the rightists to their cars.

Spurred by the attacks, 500,000 people marched in Washington, D.C., in April 1992. It was the largest abortion rights action ever in the United States at the time.

Battles took place across the country over the next several years, including in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Buffalo, New York; and Melbourne, Florida. Clinic by clinic, supporters of women’s rights countermobilized and physically prevented the rightists from achieving their aims.

Under the pressure of the public defense of abortion rights, the cops and courts began arresting and sentencing more of the rightists when they blocked clinics.

Actions condemn killing

Continued from page 5

ting one together.” Deckard and others used Twitter and Facebook to get the word out, and hundreds responded.

Rightists responded as well. Fred Phelps, minister of the Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka, and his followers came, holding a banner reading “Burn in hell” and signs that said, “God hates fags.”

Willow Eby, a nurse who worked at Central Women’s Services in the 1990s, attended the vigil. “At the vigil I decided to be in their face. They’re not going to make me cover up my opinions and feelings or stop fighting for what I believe in,” she said. “The harassment and murders are all meant to make people stop defending the right to choose.”

Eby added, “I was putting bumper stickers on my car to legalize abortion when I was in high school” before the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision decriminalizing abortion.

Response at Wichita State campus

Reaction to Tiller’s death among students and staff at Wichita State University was mixed.

Shannon Kraus, 37, a student and staff member, said, “I’m pro-choice, even though it’s not my moral compass.” Women should be able to have abortions “in a place that’s safe and medically skilled where they can get what they need,” she added. “Hopefully with Dr. Tiller gone they can still have that option.”

“It was a pretty bad way to kill him—in his church,” Kindra White, 40, an administrative assistant at Wichita State University, told the *Militant*, “but I’m pro-life, and I didn’t agree with what he did for a living. . . . They’re painting him as a hero, and in my eyes he was not.”

Deepa Jayaraman, 22, a graduate student in electrical engineering, said, “I really felt bad at first. I don’t know what to do. I support a woman’s right to have an abortion.”

Arman Mazhar, 26, a graduate student born in Pakistan, said the violence against Tiller “was terrible. It is like Germany in the 1930s.”

Holly Weatherford, a Kansas lobbyist and public affairs manager for Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri, told the *Militant*, “We are looking at increasing capacity to provide services” at Planned Parenthood’s Overland Park, Kansas, clinic.

Dr. Leroy Carhart, a physician who operates a women’s health clinic in Bellevue, Nebraska, and has been carrying out monthly duties at Tiller’s clinic, said he would be willing to keep the Wichita clinic open if Tiller’s family wishes.

The funeral will take place at the College Hill United Methodist Church, 2930 E. First Street in Wichita at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 6. It is open to the public.

Wheeler, a veteran of the fight against the antiabortion siege of 1991, said, “I believe this will solidify our movement. Since Tiller’s death on Sunday, I’ve been hearing from people wanting to join NOW. One woman told me, ‘I don’t want to just sit back and watch anymore. I want to get involved.’”

Vigils and protest actions took place throughout the United States in the days following the killing, including Chicago, Atlanta, Minneapolis, Los Angeles, New York, Boston, Miami, Seattle, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C.

Joe Swanson from Des Moines, Iowa, contributed to this article.

Recommended Reading

Counter-mobilization: A Strategy to Fight Racist and Fascist Attacks

by Farrell Dobbs
Discussion on strategy and tactics in the fight against fascist attacks drawing on the experiences of the Minneapolis Teamsters of the 1930s. \$8

Fascism: What It Is and How To Fight It

by Leon Trotsky
\$7

Abortion Is a Woman’s Right

by Pat Grogan
\$5

Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women

by Joseph Hansen, Evelyn Reed, Mary-Alice Waters
\$15

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U.S. gov't seeks to expand Angola oil, diamond trade

BY BEN JOYCE

Top U.S. government officials met with Angolan foreign minister Assunção dos Anjos May 19–21 in an effort to expand Washington's economic influence in the region. The moves are part of the U.S. imperialist rulers' efforts to assert their domination on the African continent against their rivals both economically and politically.

On May 19 the two governments signed a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement to allow Washington more access to Angola's vast oil and diamond reserves. Today Angola is the second largest African oil supplier to the United States and is its third largest trading partner in the sub-Saharan region.

In April Angola produced 1.7 million barrels of oil per day. This is the second highest oil production on the continent, with Nigeria slightly higher at 1.71 million. Angolan diamond production in 2006 totaled about 7.8 million carats or roughly 4.5 percent of the world share.

Washington's relationship with Angola has been stamped by the legacy of U.S. imperialist plunder in the region, stemming from its involvement in the civil war that ensued following the defeat and subsequent pullout of the country's Portuguese colonial rulers in 1975.

In the wake of Portugal's withdrawal, the governments of the United States and the Soviet Union gave support to ri-

val groups vying for power. The Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), which has held power following the fall of Portuguese rule, fought the U.S.-backed National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) until 2002.

UNITA forces were supported by an invasion from the South African military that was already closing in on the capital Luanda by November 1975. The Cuban government immediately responded to an appeal by the Angolan government for military assistance to fend off the invading apartheid forces. Havana sent more than 375,000 volunteers over the next decade and a half to help defend Angola's independence. Cuban forces remained in Angola until May 1991 and played a decisive role in defeating the South African invasion.

The U.S. government has also been trying to bolster its position in Africa militarily. As part of transforming the U.S. military on a world scale, the U.S. Africa Command was established in February 2007 by then U.S. president George Bush shortly after Ethiopian troops and U.S. Special Forces invaded Somalia and overthrew the government that controlled the capital, Mogadishu. Its first major mission was carried out in January, flying equipment to African Union and UN troops in the Darfur region of Sudan.



Oil rigs off coast of Angola, second largest African oil supplier to United States. Trade agreement Washington signed with Angolan government gives U.S. energy corporations more access to country's resources.

Africom currently has a base at Camp Lemonier in Djibouti, a former French colony in the Horn of Africa. However, Washington has been unable to find a country on the continent willing to let

them build a base that could serve as the command's headquarters. Today Africom is headquartered in Stuttgart, Germany, with some two-dozen liaison officers posted at embassies around Africa.

Canadian authorities disrupt trip by Cuban trade minister

BY MICHEL PRAIRIE

MONTREAL—The Canadian government in mid-May denied a visa to Cuba's minister for trade and investment, Rodrigo Malmierca. The visa was eventually approved, but too late for Malmierca to attend the annual

shareholders meeting of Sherritt International in Toronto. The Canadian-based company is a major exploiter of Cuba's nickel and describes itself as the largest foreign investor in Cuba.

According to the May 21 *Globe and Mail*, Ottawa's decision was "a diplomatic tit-for-tat response to Cuba canceling a visit earlier this month by Peter Kent, Canada's Minister of State for the Americas." Cuba's decision was made after Kent had indicated his intention to denounce Cuba's government during his trip for "lack of human rights" in the socialist country.

Kent echoed widely reported statements made in April by Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper at the Fifth Summit of the Americas, held in Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean. Along with Puerto Rico, a U.S. colony, Cuba was the only country from the hemisphere excluded from the gathering. Several heads of state from Latin America attending the summit denounced the 47-year-old economic embargo imposed on Cuba by the U.S. government.

While describing himself as "an anti-Communist Conservative," Harper reiterated Canada's rulers' long-held stance toward the Cuban Revolution. "If one wants to break down a state-socialist economic nationalist model with walls," he said, "I don't think a trade embargo is the way to do that."

"That said," he added, "we don't turn a blind eye to the fact that Cuba is a communist dictatorship and that we want to see progress on freedom, democracy, and human rights as well as on economic matters."

In the April 17 issue of *Granma*, the daily paper of the Communist Party of Cuba, former Cuban president Fidel Castro wrote that Harper has been the only head of state at the event to have been "ill-mannered toward Cuba."

In a presentation she gave May 16 to the annual general assembly of the Table de concertation de solidarité Québec-Cuba here in Montreal, Cuba's ambassador to Canada, Teresita de Jesús Vicente, reported that the Cuban government officially protested Harper's comments as "offensive."

Cuban 5: 'Our spirits lifted by world support'

Continued from page 8

the statue of Jose Martí.⁵ Those times remain present in the minds of Cubans. Cuba's worst crime is to want to be a free and sovereign country without the U.S. ambassador dictating as he did for almost half a century. That's why they cannot forgive Cuba; for wanting to have its own system.

Remember they owned the casinos, industries, the best land; they practically owned the country. That ended in 1959; something for which they don't forgive us.

Landau: You're being punished as a symbol of "disrespect?"

Hernández: Yes, but there's another fundamental element, in my opinion. The FBI was in a bad spot, because it became known that it had penetrated Brothers to Rescue using Juan Pablo Roque.⁶ He was an agent; they paid him to give them information. When this came out, the FBI looked bad to the extreme right wing in Miami. The FBI looked for a scapegoat, so

they could say, "We nabbed these five guilty ones."

Landau: What did Brothers to the Rescue hope to achieve with your trial?

Hernández: Mainly, an economic goal. Some of them have legitimate political views and are patriots in their own way, but many are in it for economic reasons. The anti-Castro industry is a multimillion dollar industry. For 50 years, some people have lived off it: from radio commentators to heads of the 3,500 organizations sucking up federal money to "achieve freedom in Cuba" or taking donations from the elderly to buy arms for the "liberation of Cuba."

It never occurred to [José] Basulto to fly into Cuban airspace while people were giving him money to patrol the waters off Florida. He'd bought a few small planes with that donated money. When the money ran out because people stopped giving—why should they,

airspace. Roque had also been giving information on the group to the FBI, and had warned José Basulto, head of Brothers to the Rescue, that Cuba would shoot down planes that entered Cuban airspace in defiance of previous warnings. Federal prosecutors charged Hernández with conspiracy to commit murder, claiming he was responsible for the Cuban shoot-down of the planes. They also indicted Roque in absentia for not registering as a foreign agent.

7. Since the early 1960s Washington has granted legal residency to any Cubans who arrive in the United States and say they are fleeing the revolution. In 1995 the U.S. government implemented a "wet feet-dry feet" policy, where Cubans without U.S. entry visas who are intercepted at sea are sent back to Cuba but those who make it to U.S. soil are allowed to stay.

if when the Coast Guard is called they send the rafters back—he thought, "Uh-oh, I'd better invent something else." That's when he started violating Cuban airspace . . . to keep money coming in.⁷

Also, in my opinion, Basulto, who is very intelligent, may have wanted to provoke a serious conflict between the United States and Cuba. They dream of the day the U.S. Army would wipe all revolutionaries off the planet. Upon the ashes that remain they'd rebuild their own Cuba; the Cuba they had before the revolution. What they haven't been able to do, the U.S. Army would do for them. That's why they call the Bay of Pigs, Playa Girón, a "betrayal." They thought the U.S. Army would come in behind them at Playa Girón.⁸ That was Kennedy's betrayal. So, I don't doubt Basulto intended to create an international conflict. It didn't matter how many Cubans or Americans would die. All that mattered was getting their country back, what they consider to be their country.

Landau: In Miami, there was a rumor: Basulto was a Cuban agent. All his missions ended in failure or disaster.

Hernández: That second part is true, but the first part . . . I highly doubt it. It's a shame that lives were lost, but I assure you Cuba did everything possible to avoid it. They sent 16 diplomatic notes through official channels, asking the U.S. not to allow Brothers to the Rescue to fly into Cuban airspace.

8. In April 1961 some 1,500 mercenaries, organized by the Kennedy administration, invaded Cuba at Playa Girón, near the Bay of Pigs. In less than 72 hours of hard-fought combat, Cuban armed forces, militias, and revolutionary police dealt them a stunning defeat.

5. On March 11, 1949, a U.S. Marine climbed the statue of Cuban independence leader José Martí and urinated on it. This provoked outrage, sparking protests in front of the U.S. embassy in Havana that were attacked by police.

6. Juan Pablo Roque, a former Cuban air force pilot, was one of the Cuban revolutionaries who had entered Brothers to the Rescue—a right-wing Cuban American group that claimed to be a humanitarian organization devoted to rescuing Cuban "rafters"—to gather information on it. Roque returned to Cuba shortly before Feb. 24, 1996, when Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces shot down two planes flown by Brothers to the Rescue after they provocatively entered Cuban

Mobilize to defend abortion rights!

Supporters of women's right to choose abortion responded immediately across the country with vigils and rallies condemning the May 31 killing of Dr. George Tiller by an antiabortion rightist. A sustained response of public actions along these lines is the only guarantee that his killer will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

Discussions at the vigils, rallies, and coming actions must also take up the pressing need to remobilize *politically* to defend women's right to choose.

From the moment it was won in 1973, Democrats and Republicans have jointly chipped away at legal abortion, imposing restrictions making it as difficult as possible for women to exercise their right to decide whether to have a child. They have made headway: At the time of his death Tiller was one of only a few doctors in the nation providing late-term abortions.

Decades of reliance on "friends of women's rights" in the Democratic and Republican parties have resulted in the *political demobilization* of the women's rights movement. In a recent commencement speech at Notre Dame University President Barack Obama even suggested that supporters of a women's right to choose seek "common ground" with abortion opponents in order to "reduce the number of women seeking abortions." Obama issued a feeble two-sentence denunciation of the killing of Tiller, saying he was "shocked and outraged." But calls for seeking "common ground" with forces such as Operation Rescue only encourage further murderous assaults.

The shooting of Tiller is a consequence of the sharpening and spreading capitalist crisis. In 1991, right-wing forces around Operation Rescue made Wichita the central battleground in the fight against abortion rights. Their aggressive street actions to shut down abortion clinics there showed a face of incipient American fascism. Tiller, his clinic, and its workers were among their main targets.

His clinic has been bombed and workers there have been repeatedly threatened. Tiller himself was shot in both arms in 1993. Twice state officials have dragged Tiller into court to face charges that he had violated laws restricting abortion. In both cases he was acquitted.

Reproductive freedom is a fundamental right of women and a precondition for full equality and liberation. Without the right to control her own body, a woman cannot exercise effective control over her life or join as an equal in social and political life. This right becomes ever more essential as a larger and larger percentage of women are drawn into the workforce. Defending legal abortion against those seeking to subjugate women is vital to the interests of all working people.

The attacks on abortion rights are aimed against the working class as a whole. They are part of trying to divide working people, to drive down our conditions of life and our expectations. The labor movement should champion the struggle to defend a woman's right to choose and the fight to fully prosecute and convict Tiller's killer.

GM to lay off thousands in bankruptcy

Continued from front page

and other GM suppliers, reports CNN Money.

The government is financing GM's bankruptcy proceedings, providing it with nearly double the funds the company had requested. The U.S. Treasury is giving GM \$30 billion, on top of the \$19.4 billion in bailout funds the company has already received from Washington.

At the front of the line to receive \$6 billion of these funds are GM's "secured lenders," the largest banks, including Citigroup and J.P. Morgan Chase.

The U.S. government will now own 60 percent of stock issued by the new GM, as it seeks to return the auto barons to profitability.

According to the union, 74 percent of GM's production and skilled-trade workers approved the giveback contract. "This is a dramatic reduction of benefits," amounting to a 25 percent cut, UAW president Ron Gettelfinger told the media.

The deal suspends cost-of-living increases, bonuses, and some holiday pay, and bans strikes over the next six years. The company is offering a new

buyout offer to all those employed in GM's U.S. factories. Retirement-aged production workers would get \$20,000 and a \$25,000 vehicle voucher.

The biggest cuts target health care for the 500,000 U.S. retirees and more than 150,000 of their family members. In place of providing the \$20 billion GM owes to the union-managed retirees' health-care fund, known as Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association (VEBA), the company will give the fund \$10 billion in largely worthless stock. In exchange the union trust fund gets a 17.5 percent "ownership" stake in GM and a seat on GM's board.

In its 2007 contract the union agreed to GM's demand to end its responsibility for covering health care for retirees by setting up the VEBA fund, a move the *Wall Street Journal* describes as "the largest UAW concession in history."

VEBA takes over covering retirees' health-care costs in 2010. GM is supposed to cover benefits for the rest of this year. It has announced the immediate elimination of vision and dental programs and coverage for some medications.

LETTERS

Subscription request

Would you please provide me with a prisoner subscription to the *Militant*? I am interested in learning about the Socialist cause.

A prisoner
California

U.S.-Mexican war

I thank the *Militant* for printing the useful article on Benito Juárez by Steve Warshell [see May 4 issue]. I think that in light of the upcoming conference on Juárez, Lincoln, and Martí it will be useful to amplify on points made in the article.

The first is on the U.S.-Mexican war of 1846-48. While it is true that the slave-owning capitalists in the southern U.S. and their representatives in Washington pushed for the war with Mexico, it

is also the case that other sectors of the American ruling class supported it.

Many in the U.S. capitalist class were concerned that a European power could reestablish a presence in the Americas and close off westward expansion of the U.S. It's for this reason that Friedrich Engels drew the conclusion that if Mexico were to lose in war, it would be better to lose to the U.S.

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than for it to be dominated by one or more European powers. Sectors of the *hacendados* (big landowners) and the clergy believed only a return of a European monarch could stabilize Mexico.

Raul Gonzalez
Redwood City, California

More from 'Capital'

The paper should carry more Marxist analyses, especially from *Capital*.

Charles Wolfsfeld
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Israeli settlements

Continued from front page
we intend to press that point."

The Obama administration sees halting the settlements as a crucial step toward creating a Palestinian state alongside Israel that could help keep the Palestinian struggle in check and bring stability to the region.

There are more than 280,000 Jewish settlers in 120 settlements in the West Bank, which is home to 2.2 million Palestinian Arabs. In 2005 there were 230,000 settlers. The West Bank has been under Israeli occupation since the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

On June 1 Netanyahu told a committee of Israel's parliament that he could not "freeze life" in existing settlements and that some building must continue to accommodate "natural growth," that is, building more rooms and homes as families expand. He called Washington's demands "unreasonable."

While Netanyahu has shelved the negotiations for a Palestinian state that had been pushed by his predecessor Ehud Olmert, his attitude toward the settlements is in line with previous Israeli governments. The Israeli daily *Haaretz* notes that "every Israeli government since 1967 has insisted on building and developing the settlements." Not only has the number of Jewish settlers continually increased, the paper says, but along with it "the segregated road system and the invasive route of the separation fence, which is intended to facilitate Israel's de facto annexation of part of the West Bank."

The segregated roads, which West Bank Palestinians are not allowed to use, and the wall, which often prevents farmers from reaching their orchards, are a source of deep anger to Palestinians. Weekly protests continue against the more than 300-mile-long "fence" that twists and turns through the territory.

As the proportion of Palestinians inside the pre-1967 borders continues to grow—now more than 20 percent of the population—along with the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza, Israel's rulers have abandoned dreams of a Greater Israel. Instead they seek to maintain a majority-Jewish state within borders of their own choosing. But they still harbor hopes that this could include parts of the West Bank.

The divergence between Tel Aviv and Washington on the settlements and foreign policy is not new. In the course of the first war against Iraq, from 1990 to '91, Washington strengthened its ties to some Arab regimes and no longer had to rely exclusively on Tel Aviv to advance U.S. interests.

"U.S. policymakers have always opposed Israel's presence beyond the Green line [1967 borders]," the *Jersusalem Post* said in a May 31 editorial, pointing to comments by former secretary of state Condeleezza Rice in June 2008. "Still there's no denying the disturbing change in tone emanating from Washington, which is elevating the settlements issue to an importance which is disproportionate."

Obama met with Mahmoud Abbas, president of the West Bank-based Palestinian Authority, in Washington, D.C., May 28, a week after hosting Netanyahu. At the White House press conference after their meeting, Obama praised Abbas for taking measures to assure Tel Aviv "that security on the West Bank is in place." More needs to be done, he said to reduce "incitement and anti-Israel sentiments" among Palestinians.

Two days after Abbas's White House visit, U.S.-trained and financed Palestinian Authority police surrounded a house in the West Bank town of Qalqilya that they said Hamas members were using to store weapons. Hamas, a bourgeois Islamist group that governs the Gaza Strip, has significant support in the West Bank. Three police and three Hamas supporters died during the eight-hour battle.

Correction

The article "California campus meeting: End Cuba embargo," in the June 8 issue, misspelled the name of the editor of *Latin American Perspectives*. The correct spelling is Ron Chilcote. It also incorrectly described him as the journal's managing editor.