

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Active Workers Conf. discusses opportunities to build party
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 78/NO. 25 JULY 14, 2014

Workers protest separatist attacks, aid refugees from east in Ukraine

BY JOHN STUDER

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko reinitiated military operations against separatists in the country who have been carrying out kidnappings, beatings and intimidation of working people in parts of the eastern Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Separatist gangs, reinforced by unknown numbers of heavily armed combatants from Russia, have shut down several mines to disperse miners, the majority of whom support the Ukrainian fight for sovereignty.

On June 21, a truckload of armed thugs from the “Donetsk People’s Republic” seized the office of the DTEK

Komsomolets Donbassa mine, reported Worldcoal.com news. They trapped 700 miners underground and fired on hundreds of second-shift miners to keep them away; kidnapped two mine directors; and stole 22 vehicles and ATM machines loaded with the pay miners were to get the next day.

More than 1,000 miners the following day marched from the mine to the center of Kirovsky, where they were joined by hundreds of area residents. They demanded separatists lay down their arms and start peace talks with the government.

“You want people to support you,”

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Workers from Lviv Coal Company picket government office in Kiev June 11, demanding months of back wages. Signs include, “Give us work and back wages” and “No mine closures.”

Imperialist order in Iraq unravels, Kurds advance fight for homeland

BY SETH GALINSKY

Two and a half years after the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq, the country is splitting along the lines separating three distinct ethnic regions.

Since early June the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, an al-Qaedaist formation, has taken over most of the predominantly Sunni Arab west. The Iraqi army and Shiite Arab militias are in control from Baghdad to the southeast. The Kurds, an oppressed nationality, have seized on the opportunity to consolidate control in the northeast, stake out new ground, including the disputed oil-rich city of Kirkuk, and take another step toward the establishment of an independent Kurdistan.

The borders of modern Iraq were drawn by the imperialist powers of Europe following World War I a century ago, setting up a pro-imperialist monarchy and establishing the domination of a Sunni-Arab ruling class. The region’s borders were carved up out of the former Ottoman Empire in agreements between the governments of Britain, France and czarist Russia. The new borders, like the empire they replaced, denied a homeland for the

Kurds — today roughly 30 million who reside in a region spanning parts of Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria.

But the removal of the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein and his national-socialist Baathist party in 2003 precipitated the unraveling of this imperialist order. Washington’s goal of establishing a stable capitalist regime of a new kind in Baghdad that would better serve imperialist in-

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Events in Greece build support for Cuban Five

BY GEORGES MEHRABIAN

ELEFSINA, Greece — More than 100 people attended the opening here June 21 of “I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived” — an exhibit of prison watercolors by Antonio Guerrero, one of five Cuban revolutionaries framed up and imprisoned in the United States in 1998. (See “Who Are the Cuban Five?” on page 3.)

Elefsina, about 15 miles northwest

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Turkish miners fight for better conditions, wages ‘We have to take ownership of job safety’



Militant/Tony Hunt

Kinik, Turkey, June 28. Seated at table clockwise from left, miner Engin Kursuncu, worker-correspondent Frank Forrestal, miners Tolga Yilmaz (writing) and Serkan Yilmaz, and worker-correspondent Alyson Kennedy. Forrestal and Kennedy are former miners from the U.S.

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

KINIK, Turkey — More than 50 workers from this farming area and surrounding villages were among the more than 300 miners killed in the May 13 disaster at the underground Eynez coal mine. In striving for maximum profitability, bosses and government officials disregarded the most basic safety protections.

Working people here are discussing how to organize themselves to defend life and limb.

“When people learned of the accident, the town emptied to go to the mine and rescue the miners,” Serkan

Yilmaz, 36, with 15 years of underground mining experience at Eynez, said. “My brother was killed in the mine. He had three kids, one was a newborn baby. He was only 26 years old.”

Kinik, with a population of 13,000, is near Soma, a town of 76,000. The Soma coal basin is the second largest region of coal production in the country. The coal that is mined here is lignite, which is of a poorer quality than bituminous or anthracite coal. “Until the mine disaster we were worried about being arrested if we spoke out,”

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Calif. prison authorities move to tighten censorship behind bars

BY JOEL BRITTON

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — As the first anniversary of a statewide prisoners’ hunger strike against solitary confinement approaches, California prison authorities are moving to tighten censorship of books, newspapers, photos and letters.

A new rule banning publications in California prisons that “indicate an association with groups that are oppositional to authority and society” has been inserted into six pages of proposed “Obscene Material Regulations,” which revolve around censorship of pornography.

“We have to vigorously challenge this new attempt by the CDCR [California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation] to confiscate books, magazines, newspapers and newsletters,” Mutope Duguma, a prisoner in solitary in Pelican Bay wrote in

the June issue of the *San Francisco Bay View* newspaper. “These new proposed regulations are designed to serve one purpose and that is to censor any writings, mailings and publi-

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Kurds fight for homeland

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interests failed. Instead, it set in motion unintended consequences, including an opening of political space in the region for working people to discuss, organize and fight for their class interests and the beginning of a new stage in the struggle of the Kurdish people.

Between 55 and 60 percent of Iraq’s 29 million inhabitants are Shiite Arabs, roughly 20 percent are Sunni Arabs and 15 to 20 percent are Kurds.

To the chagrin of the region’s capitalist rulers, Kurds in Iraq following Washington’s wars have carved out a semi-autonomous region. The Kurdish Regional Government collects its own taxes, has its own army — the Peshmerga with some 200,000 men and women under arms — and conducts trade, bypassing the government in Baghdad.

After some 800 ISIS combatants captured Mosul from 30,000 Iraqi soldiers June 12 and the Iraqi army disintegrated in the north without a fight, the Peshmerga moved rapidly to defend nearby Kurdish areas.

Over the last couple of weeks Peshmerga expanded the area under Kurdish rule by 30 percent, including the city of Kirkuk and surrounding oil fields Salahaddin and Diyala, brushing aside objections of Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.

“The time for Kurdistan’s independence is closer than anytime before,” Kurdish government employee Shorsh Khalid Ahmed told the *Wall Street Journal*.

More than 14 million Kurds are estimated to live in Turkey, where they have fought against systematic and brutal oppression. Advances for the Kurds in Iraq forced new openings in Turkey. An

agreement last year brought decades of armed conflict between Ankara and the guerrilla forces of the Kurdistan Workers Party to an end. The Turkish government has, little by little, conceded language rights and other national demands.

Turkey is today the largest foreign investor in Iraqi Kurdistan. An oil pipeline to the Turkish port of Ceyhan opened recently as part of expanding trade across the border.

“In the past an independent Kurdish state was a reason for war, but no one has the right to say this now,” Huseyin Celik, a spokesperson for Turkey’s ruling Justice and Development Party, told the *Financial Times* June 27.

“In Turkey, even the word ‘Kurdistan’ makes people nervous, but their name is Kurdistan,” he said. Independence for Iraqi Kurdistan is not Turkey’s “number one choice” he said, but “if Iraq is divided and it is inevitable, they are our brothers.”

Origins of ISIS

ISIS has its origins in al-Qaeda of Iraq, which organized a campaign of terror and fomented sectarian killings between Arab Sunnis and Arab Shiites after the overthrow of Hussein.

In 2007, al-Qaeda was pushed back by an offensive of the U.S. military in alliance with tribal-based forces under the control of Sunni-Arab rulers who had formed the backbone of Hussein’s regime. Washington promoted Awakening Councils that put 100,000 Sunni-Arab militiamen on the U.S. military payroll.

Many Awakening Council fighters were incorporated into the Iraqi army. Maliki, who first came to power in 2006



Reuters/Ako Rasheed

Members of Kurdish Peshmerga celebrate June 24 after taking control of city of Kirkuk.

as the candidate of Shiite capitalists, formed a fragile alliance with Sunni-Arab bourgeois politicians.

But that alliance was short-lived. Sunni-Arab Tariq al-Hashemi, vice president of Iraq and a leader of the al-Iraqiyya bloc, was arrested and then sentenced to death in absentia in September 2012, accused of aiding armed anti-government groups. Funding for Awakening Council local patrols was cut, and Sunni Arab army officers were replaced with Shias. Maliki also formed closer ties to the government of Iran.

Growing resentment in Sunni areas against discrimination by the new Shia-dominated government provided fertile ground for ISIS and other groups opposed to the regime in Baghdad. ISIS fighters, which include a large number of recruits from across the Middle East, Chechnya and elsewhere, have also gained experience in the Syrian civil war where they have wrested control of swaths of territory. The group gets funds and other aid from capitalists in the Gulf monarchies, especially Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

ISIS has taken control of almost every Iraqi border crossing with Syria and Jordan. The group tweeted pictures of a bulldozer demolishing an earthen barrier between Syria and Iraq.

While the U.S. rulers are concerned about moves toward a Kurdish nation and the strengthening relationship between Baghdad and the Iranian government, its greatest worry is the threat

posed by al-Qaeda forces. The latter concern is equally shared by Tehran and has given impetus to thawing of relations between the Iranian and U.S. governments. The *Washington Post* reported June 16 that U.S. and Iranian diplomats meeting in Vienna discussed how to cooperate to bolster the Iraqi government and push back ISIS.

US-Iran collaboration

“The United States and Iran find themselves on the same side of the current battle in Iraq,” the *Post* said, “both seeking to prevent the collapse of the Baghdad government or descent into all-out civil war.”

Washington has sent some 300 special forces to Iraq to bolster operations against ISIS, as well as drones and other surveillance planes. According to the *New York Times*, Iranian transport planes have been flying 140 tons of military equipment to Iraq every day.

“It feels both too late and too early to stop the disintegration,” *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman wrote June 17, reflecting a bleak and inaccurate perspective common in the U.S. ruling class. “Pluralism came to Europe only after many centuries of one side or another in religious wars thinking it could have it all, and after much ethnic cleansing created more homogeneous nations. . . . Arab Muslims need to go on the same journey.”

Secretary of State John Kerry flew
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THE MILITANT

‘Us today, maybe you tomorrow’

Workers at Sloan Valve in Franklin Park, Illinois, have been on strike since May 18, fighting for respect and against company contract demands to use lower-paid temporary workers and raise health care costs. The ‘Militant’ backs the fights of workers standing up to the bosses.



Militant/Laura Anderson
Sloan Valve strike picket line near Chicago.

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The Militant

Vol. 78/No. 25

Closing news date: July 2, 2014

Editor: Doug Nelson

Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Naomi Craine, Frank Forrestal, Seth Galinsky, Emma Johnson, Paul Pederson, Gerardo Sánchez, John Studer, Brian Williams, Rebecca Williamson.

Published weekly except for one week in January, one week in June, one week in July, one week in August and two weeks in September.

Business manager: Lea Sherman
The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018. **Telephone:** (212) 244-4899 **Fax:** (212) 244-4947
E-mail: themilitant@mac.com
Website: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

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Support in Greece for Cuban 5

Continued from front page

of Athens, is an industrial center of steel plants, shipyards, cement works and other factories.

The opening event, held at Lykiskos Café-Bar, attracted steelworkers, shipyard workers and others from the area. Participants viewed Guerrero's 15 paintings and captions on display in the café's outdoor patio.

"Despite imprisonment, despite being put in the hole, despite the violence that prison is, they have fought on with a free spirit," Sofia Roditi, a leader of the Women's Committee that organized solidarity during a 2011-2012 strike at the Elliniki Halivourgia steel mill in Aspropyrgos, told the crowd. "Now with these paintings they have come to Greece, the land of crisis, of unemployment, of hospital closures, of increasing suicides and of resistance. Our solidarity is what makes us strong and that will

help us bring about a new society based on justice."

"Gerardo, Ramón and Antonio, the three of the Cuban Five still held hostage in the U.S., will return to Cuba once millions of people throughout the world support their release, when working people identify with their fight through our own experiences in resisting the violence of capitalism in crisis," said Natasha Terlexi on behalf of the José Martí Cultural Association.

"Our comrades have been unjustly in jail for over 15 years," Osvaldo Cobacho Martínez, Cuba's ambassador to Greece, told the meeting. "This conviction is part of a vendetta against Cuba for daring to carry out its own revolution, a socialist revolution just 90 miles from their noses. The wall of silence around their case must be broken."

Tassos Stavros, president of the Greek Committee for Détente and Peace, also



Militant photos by Georges Mehrabian

Above, more than 100 participants attended June 21 opening event of exhibit of Antonio Guerrero's prison paintings about Cuban 5 on patio of Lykiskos Café-Bar, Elefsina, Greece. Inset, participants view watercolors.

spoke. Antonis Alexandropoulos, president of the Elefsina chapter of the Greek Peace Council, chaired the event.

This was the third stop in the nationwide tour of the paintings, which has been organized by the José Martí Cul-

tural Association and Hasta La Victoria Siempre, groups that organize solidarity with the Cuban Revolution.

On June 2, some 300 people joined an evening of solidarity at the Niki Volou soccer club stadium in Volos, about a four-hour drive north of Athens. The event included an exhibition soccer game, the exhibit of Guerrero's watercolors and music by local band Skapanies and well-known singer Vassilis Lekkas.

"The case of the Five goes back to the fact that Cuba is resisting," said Savvas Kofidis, a former member of the Greek national soccer team, who played in the June 2 match. "Cuba gives us strength. It is a source of inspiration because it shows what we can do."

Close to 500 people have come to events since the tour of Guerrero's paintings began in early May. Participants have bought 71 books on the fight to free the Five, the Cuban Revolution and other books on revolutionary working-class politics published by Diethnes Vima.

Who are the Cuban Five?

Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González are Cuban revolutionaries who during the 1990s accepted assignments from the Cuban government to gather information on the operations and plans of Cuban-American paramilitary groups based in southern Florida. These rightist outfits, organizing on U.S. soil with virtual impunity, have a long record of carrying out bombings, assassinations and other attacks, both against targets in Cuba and supporters of the Cuban Revolution in the United States, Puerto Rico and elsewhere.

On Sept. 12, 1998, the Five were arrested by the FBI. They were framed up and convicted on a variety of charges, which included acting as unregistered agents of the

Cuban government and possession of false identity documents. Without a shred of evidence, three were charged with "conspiracy to gather and transmit national defense information."

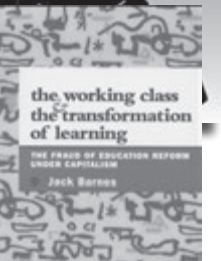
Hernández was also convicted of conspiracy to commit murder, based on the pretext that he bore responsibility for the Cuban government's 1996 shutdown of two Brothers to the Rescue aircraft that had invaded Cuban airspace in disregard of Havana's repeated warnings. He is serving two life terms plus 15 years. His wife Adriana Pérez is barred from entering the United States.

René González returned to Cuba in May 2013. Fernando González returned Feb. 28.

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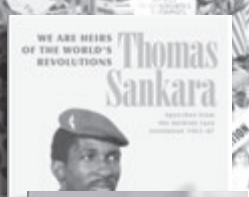
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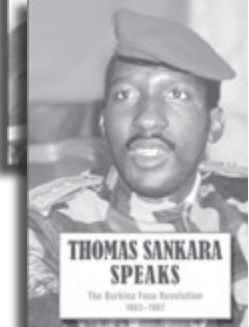
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Exhibits of paintings by
Antonio Guerrero,
one of the Cuban Five

**I Will Die
the Way I've
Lived**



London

June 15-July 13

Exhibit hours: Mon.-Fri. 9AM-6PM. Sun. 10AM-4PM. Sat. (call to check). Public meeting Sat., July 12, 3PM with representative from Cuban Embassy; Rupert Sylvester, whose son died 1999 in Tottenham police custody; Gloria Morrison, campaigner against Joint Enterprise laws; and Andy de la Tour, actor. Bernie Grant Arts Centre, Town Hall Approach Road, Tottenham, N15 4RX. Tel.: (020) 8365-5450.

Manchester, England
June 25-July 19

Exhibit hours: Mon.-Thurs. 9AM-8PM. Fri.-Sat. 9AM-5PM. Manchester Central Library, St. Peters Square, City Centre, M2 5PD.

Turkish miners fight for safety

Continued from front page

said Yilmaz, “but now we are raising our voices more and more. We know that the company and the state don’t support us.”

“Of the 28 villages that make up Kinik, 20 have had a miner die from their town,” said Engin Kursuncu, a miner from the Imbat mine. The mine employs 5,500 miners.

Soma Holding has leased Eynez and two other mines from the government-owned Turkish Coal Enterprises since 2005, when the ruling Justice and Development Party privatized mining operations.

Since then the coal bosses have ramped up production. In 2012 Alp Gurkan, co-owner of Soma Holding, boasted the company reduced costs of extracting the coal from \$130 a ton in 2005 to \$23.80. Today miners are contract laborers, no longer state employees.

Turkey’s rulers are trying to reduce dependency on coal, oil and gas imports. Lignite coal production nationwide has increased tenfold between 2003 and 2012, according to *Hurriyet Daily News*.

A few weeks after the mine disaster, Soma Holding attempted to reopen their mines, but miners refused to work, and held sit-in protests for 10 days.

One of the Eynez miners involved in these protests, Tevrat Cun, 29, said miners there presented a list of demands to the National Assembly in Ankara. Demands included no miner going underground until serious safety inspections are conducted, no layoffs of miners until inspections are concluded, salary increases, and getting rid of the hated contract labor system.

Cun was busy building support for a July 2 sit-in protest planned for Soma.

As of July 1, only one Soma Holding mine — the Isiklar mine — is working but not at full capacity, according to Ali Sogut, who is employed there. The Eynez and Ata Bacasi mines remain closed.

Union needs to be transformed

The Maden-Is union needs to be transformed, said Engin Kursuncu. About 70 percent of the 13,000 miners in the Soma coalfields are members of this union, he said.

“Many miners call Maden-Is a yel-

low union but the problem is the officials, who are not chosen by the workers, but appointed from above,” Kursuncu said. “We are fighting to change this where underground miners elect their representatives.”

“The leaders of Maden-Is are in bed with the company,” continued Kursuncu. “Change has to come from the ground floor.”

He said that after the disaster about 300 miners joined another union, Dev. Maden Sen, which is affiliated with the Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey (DISK).

At the DISK office in Soma, Sogut said he recently joined Dev. Maden Sen, but also remains a member of Maden-Is. He has been visiting miners in the villages to hold discussions on fighting for safety and better working conditions. “We have to take ownership of safety in the mines,” he said.

In an outdoor café, surrounded by olive trees, on the outskirts of Kinik, *Militant* worker-correspondents met with about a dozen miners who had worked at Eynez.

“I was working near the surface when the incident happened,” said Metin Kursuncu, a miner with 18 years experience. “We think what started the fire was a collapse of coal from the roof, but nobody has exact information. When it collapsed it fell on electrical cables, which weren’t fire resistant.”

No official report has been published on the cause. A few days after the mine disaster, the London *Guardian* reported, Gurkan said the company “invested a lot of money to ensure the safety of workers,” and that the mine was a “first-class workplace.” The Turkish Ministry of Labour reported that the mine was inspected in March and given a clean bill of health.

So far 24 company officials have been arrested on charges of “causing death by negligence.” According to the *Guardian*, confiscated company records show “that management ignored dangerously high levels of toxic gas inside the mine for days.”

On June 29, Soma Holding’s lawyers told the court that the company was not at fault and suggested that “the accident might even be caused by sabotage,” according to the *Hurriyet Daily News*.

The fire broke out close to shift change. “Some second-shift miners entered the mine, but right away six of them fainted,” said Metin Kursuncu. “They were able to get out but one of these miners later died in the hospital.”

“The respirators didn’t work. They were old, the ones I saw were made in 1993,” said Tolga Yilmaz, 25, who worked at Eynez for four years. “There wasn’t really a rescue operation. Almost all the miners were dead from carbon monoxide poisoning when they were found. To make matters worse, none of the families of the dead miners have received any compensation.”

In the aftermath of the mine accident, large protests occurred in Turkey’s biggest cities. Police clashed with demonstrators, using tear gas and water cannons.

In Soma, hundreds of miners joined a demonstration of 2,000, and called for the resignation of Turkey’s Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan after he gave a news conference where he said the risk of death is the fate of miners. “The protest would have been much larger,” said



Coal miners protest in Kinik, Turkey, after May 13 disaster at mine in nearby Soma killed more than 300 miners, including more than 50 from the Kinik area. Mine is still closed as workers fight for safety protection, higher wages and end to contract labor system.

Engin Kursuncu, “but the police sealed off the main roads into the city. The government brought in thousands of cops from across the country. The military was also deployed in many of the small villages.”

Contingents of steelworkers, glass workers, and public workers, as well as miners from other areas, were part of the demonstrations, Kursuncu said.

Bad working conditions at mine

“The working conditions where the explosion and fire took place were very bad,” said Serkan Yilmaz. “I worked there the week before the accident. The heat was so bad that sweat was swishing around in my boots.”

“The coal seam above us was overheating, which we think contributed to the fire,” Yilmaz said. Miners told the bosses about this but nothing was done.” The week before this area “had been cool like where we are sitting right now.”

Two weeks before the May 13 disaster, *Hurriyet Daily News* reported that technicians “warned shift supervisors over the poor state of electrical cables.”

Another major safety concern voiced by many miners was the inadequate ventilation system. “We doubted that the air flow was adequate,” said Metin Kursuncu. “It was too weak. When we asked for detectors to check the levels of carbon monoxide and methane, the bosses said they were too expensive.”

Only mining technicians who work for the company carry detectors, miners said. Another major safety hazard was the fact that there was no emergency escape way. Inspections were rare.

Some miners dispute reports that 301 miners were killed. “We think it is many more,” Metin Kursuncu said. “The company didn’t want to say how many miners really died. So many miners died that they ran out of space at local mortuaries. They put miners in cold storage at a fruit company.”

After talking to miners at the café, we visited Cafer Atas, 47, a farmer from the nearby village of Caltikar, whose son and cousin were killed in the mine. “What happened at the mine is the fault of management there,” Atas said, surrounded by more than a dozen family members. “They didn’t do their job and I also don’t believe 301 were killed. There were more. The bosses don’t care about safety and inspectors never go deep into the mine. They knew there was a problem with the coal heating up, but they did nothing.

“My son was only 22. He had just finished his mandatory 20-month military

service. None of the miners like their jobs. The working conditions are very bad. Working there is your last option. This is farm country but farming is not enough,” Atas said. “It is very hard to survive because the lira has less and less value.”

Many of the miners we met are family farmers who own or rent small plots of land in the coal basin region — a patchwork of olive trees, potato fields, tobacco, tomatoes, as well as corn fields, rows of peach trees, bell peppers and a number of small food processing factories. Hundreds of farmhands were working in the fields.

Muzaffer Atas, 23, is one of the few miners who escaped the fire. His cousin was among those who did not. “I was in the deepest part of the mine,” he said. “I didn’t hear an explosion. Smoke blocked the main way out. There were about 200 of us. We headed away from the smoke toward the area where the coal is dynamited. The smoke followed us. We moved further away as far as we could go, only six of us survived. I saw dead bodies everywhere, on the ground, on the conveyer belt. Some miners tried to use the belt to get out. To this day the company hasn’t contacted me, no condolences, no help of any kind, nothing.”

“We are some of the lowest paid workers in the country,” said Tolga Yilmaz. “I know friends who work at a boat factory who make 3,000 lira [\$1,413] a month. But in the mines, the highest pay is 1,600 lira [\$753] a month; the lowest is 1,200 [\$565]. You have to work 30 days in a row to make the top rate of 1,600, and hardly anyone makes that.”

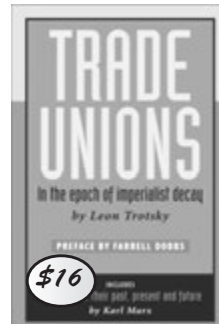
Alyson Kennedy, Tony Hunt and Yasemin Aydinoglu contributed to this article.

Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay

by Leon Trotsky

Also “Trade Unions: Their Past, Present, and Future” by Karl Marx

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San Francisco

The Worldwide Struggle for Women’s Emancipation: From India to Nigeria to the U.S. Speaker: Betsey Stone, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., July 11, 7:30 p.m. 7100 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

FLORIDA

Miami

Iraq, ISIS and the Kurdish Struggle for Independence: The Unintended Consequences of Imperialist War. Speaker: Tom Baumann, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., July 11, 7:30 p.m. 7100 Biscayne Blvd., Suite 306A. Tel.: (305) 757-8869.

CANADA

Montreal

Celebrate a Big Step Forward in Building a Canada-Wide Communist League. Sat., July 12, 4 p.m. 7107 St. Denis. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

ON THE PICKET LINE

Long Island Rail Road workers rally against concession contract

NEW YORK — More than 2,000 workers rallied in the parking lot of the Long Island Rail Road train station in Massapequa, New York, June 21 against the concessions demanded by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority in its contract dispute with more than 5,000 railroad workers. The unionists voted to authorize a strike July 20 after working without a contract since 2010.

In addition to Long Island Rail Road workers, 50 workers from the Metro North railroad participated. Other contingents included teachers, meatpackers, sheet metal workers and Teamsters.

MTA bosses began their offensive with a demand that workers would not accept — a contract with no wage raises. Two federal mediation boards recommended the two sides settle for a 17 percent raise over six years, which would be offset by the introduction of medical insurance premiums amounting to 2 percent of wages.

At a June 24 press conference MTA officials revealed that new hires were their main target. In exchange for a 17 percent raise over seven years, the company announced it wanted to impose second-tier conditions for all future employees. This included doubling the length of time before reaching the top wage rate, paying 4 percent of income for medical insurance and making pension fund payments for the duration of employment. Current employees pay into the pension fund for their first 10 years.

“It’s so unfair because we are the front line,” a conductor of 12 years who didn’t want her name used, told the *Militant* at Penn Station June 28. “They get all the credit for on-time performance. But we’re the ones who do the work and this is the thanks we get. We’re OK with paying into health insurance, but what they’re doing to new hires is horrible. There are passengers that support us. I went to the rally. It was awesome.”

— Deborah Liatos

Philadelphia rail workers strike over pay, cuts in health care

PHILADELPHIA — On Saturday, June 14 at midnight, 450 members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers shut down 13 regional rail lines that carry thousands of commuters in the area here. The unionists were forced out on strike after the Southeast Pennsylvania Transportation Authority imposed rates of pay not agreed to by the unions.

IBEW and BLET members have been without a contract for four years.

Workers are fighting for retroactive pay raises, against cuts to health benefits and for parity in pensions with members of Transportation Workers Union Local 234, which organizes about 5,000 bus, subway and trolley operators at SEPTA. TWU members have also been working without a contract since mid-March.

The Roberts Yard picket line of about 35 members from both striking unions also included an officer from the Machinists union whose members did not cross. R.G. Dickson, BLET Local 71 chairman and working engineer, gave a pep talk, and four members of the TWU, including TWU Local 234 Vice President Daryl Mack, stopped by.

One of the picketers was Juanita Hill, 42, an engineer for eight years. She said

she works a six-day workweek, but only gets paid time and a half for four hours. If she works a five-day week, she has a 12-hour shift. “When I wanted to go to my son’s graduation, I had to apply for a vacation day two months in advance,” she said. “I looked around and realized my kids had grown up without me being able to be with them very much.”

About 10 percent of BLET members are women, said Hill. She spoke about having to use an outhouse with no water and having to walk down the tracks in the dark because there are no bathrooms on the trains. “It’s very dangerous and not sanitary,” she said.

“They didn’t hire enough workers in 1983, and they don’t hire enough now,” John Horvey, who was on the picket line during the last strike in 1983, said. “They’ve never had enough workers.”

“I have to take a whole vacation day to get my teeth cleaned,” another striker, Heather, said. “That’s ridiculous!”

Under the National Railway Act the president can order workers back to work for a 240-day cooling-off period. In the face of the demonstration of union power by these rail workers that is exactly what Barack Obama did before the day was out.

— George Chalmers,
member of TWU Local 234

Rail workers’ strike in Sweden pushes back concessions

STOCKHOLM — After a 16-day strike members of the Swedish Union for Service and Communications (Seko) forced Oresundstagen commuter train bosses to back off from a number of concession demands.

In March, train operator Veolia Transport gave 250 regular workers notice that they would be fired from their jobs — and then rehired on hourly contracts at lower wages with no pension or sick pay. Negotiations between the union and the bosses organization Almega led nowhere and on June 2, the workers walked off the job.

Oresundstagen transports 80,000 passengers daily in the south of Sweden, to Copenhagen, Denmark, and on express trains to Stockholm.



Militant/Janet Post

Rail workers’ strike picket outside SEPTA’s Roberts Yard in Philadelphia June 14. President Barack Obama ordered some 450 workers on the regional rail system back to work same day.

The strike won broad support as union members picketed train stations. Fourteen other national unions in Sweden planned sympathy strikes and protest actions. Support came from rail unions in Austria, Luxembourg, Norway and Belgium.

The new contract raises wages for hourly workers to the average wage for each job category. When they are called in at less than 48 hours notice, workers will get an extra 6 percent pay. Part-time jobs and employees paid by the hour will be limited to 5 percent of the production hours at Oresundstagen.

— Lars Erlandsson

Meatpackers in Ontario approve contract as bosses drop wage cuts

HAMILTON, Ontario — Some 900 meatpackers at Fearman’s Pork Inc. in Burlington, Ontario, scored a victory June 7 when they voted by 81 percent to accept a contract after bosses there, in face of a looming strike, withdrew their demands for cuts in wages and benefits.

At a May 24 meeting the union negotiating committee reported that bosses at Fearman’s, the largest cut and kill pork processing plant in eastern Canada, declared they wouldn’t give an inch on their contract demands. The workers, members of the United Food and Commercial Workers, replied by rejecting the proposal with a vote of 98.6 per-

cent and informed the company that the next step would be a strike vote.

The new five-year pact includes wage increases totaling \$1.80. In addition, 14 job classifications have received wage raises of between \$1 and \$2 per hour. An attendance bonus of \$1 per hour was maintained and the much-hated “washroom swipe” was removed from the contract — which deducted every minute workers used the washroom from their paychecks.

“It’s good for us now,” said Leo Balthazar, who works in the kill department. “We can earn from \$15 to \$20 an hour in wages.”

This contract fight took place while the hog industry in Canada is undergoing major changes. On May 6, Quality Meats, a large pork processing plant in Toronto and Fearman’s main competitor, went bankrupt, throwing 700 meatpackers out of work. Fearman’s then scooped up the resulting excess hogs on the market and has now jacked up the workweek to 50 hours, processing 9,000 hogs per shift with a line speed of 1,100 hogs per hour. This expansion in production forced Fearman’s to hire new workers, many of whom are young. Even though the new workers are still on probation, they joined the fight and attended both union meetings.

— Rosemary Ray, worker in cut department at Fearman’s Pork

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



July 14, 1989

“The government of the United States has blood on its hands,” declared Melodie Bahan, a leader of the National Organization for Women after the July 3 ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court upholding Missouri antiabortion laws.

The ruling dealt a massive blow to women’s right to abortion — the biggest setback since the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision.

The 5-4 majority in the case *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services* upheld a Missouri law that bars performing abortions in public hospitals or any publicly owned or funded facility; forbids public employees as such, including doctors and nurses, from performing in or assisting abortions unless necessary to save a woman’s life; and requires that medical tests be performed on any woman seeking an abortion who is thought to be at least 20 weeks pregnant in order to assess viability of the fetus.



July 13, 1964

NEW YORK — Malcolm X launched his long-awaited organization at a rally at the Audubon Ballroom here June 28. Its name is the Organization of Afro-American Unity. As OAAU chairman, Malcolm X read aloud its Statement of Basic Aims and Objectives. Applications for members in the new organization were accepted.

The OAAU’s object is to win freedom, justice, equality and dignity for Americans of African descent “by any means necessary.” “We want it now,” the black nationalist leader said, “or we don’t think anybody should have it.”

“Both parties are racist,” declared Malcolm X,” and the Democratic Party is more racist than the Republican Party ... Both parties have sold us out.”

Malcolm X indicated that the new organization’s first actions would be against the Gestapo-like “No-Knock” and “Stop-and-Frisk” laws which have just gone into effect in New York.



July 14, 1939

ROCHESTER, N.Y. — The opening gun in its campaign against the Coughlin fascists was fired this week by the Rochester local of the Socialist Workers Party, when it put salesmen on the streets selling the Socialist Appeal and the pamphlet “Father Coughlin — Fascist Demagogue.”

As soon as the S.W.P. members appeared with the Appeal they were taken by the cops to the police station and told they couldn’t sell papers on Main Street.

This police persecution, however, did not check the carrying forward of the anti-fascist campaign. Socialist Appeals and pamphlets were sold on the streets just off the Main Street and canvassed from house to house with great success. Several large outdoor rallies were held and young workers volunteered to sell the anti-Coughlin pamphlet.

Thus far, over 500 pamphlets have been sold in this town.

Active Workers Conference discusses oppo

Projects course to expand readership of ‘Militant’ in working class and deepen inv

BY JOHN STUDER

“Never in my years in the party have workers been as receptive to our propaganda as they are now,” Phil Presser, a 20-year veteran member of the Socialist Workers Party, said at a meeting of the party’s branch in Los Angeles a week before the June 19-21 Active Workers Conference in Oberlin, Ohio. Jack Barnes, SWP national secretary, referred to Presser’s remarks in opening his Political Report to the conference, which drew some 320 participants.

There have been periods of greater receptivity in past decades, Barnes said, in the midst of the big mobilizations against Jim Crow segregation in the 1960s, for example, or during steelworkers’ and miners’ battles in the 1970s. But this interest wasn’t sustained for half a decade as it has been today.

This is what socialist workers find as they take the *Militant* and books on revolutionary working-class politics to workers’ door steps in cities and rural areas; to labor actions, social protests and other political activities; to co-workers in factories and other workplaces. They have developed lasting political relationships with a widening milieu of readers of the socialist press and involved more of them in the fight to free the Cuban Five, support for working people in Ukraine defending their country’s sovereignty, and other political work of the communist movement, Barnes said.

At a rally that concluded the conference, Presser reported on the experiences of communist workers in Los Angeles participating in demonstrations

by Walmart and Greyhound workers, as well as protests by postal workers against moves to contract out mail service and slash jobs. Workers expected us to join them and bring the *Militant* to these actions, Presser said. They expected us to report on their fights and wanted to talk about other struggles and broader political questions around the world. When only two of us showed up at the Walmart action, for example, some asked, “where is Ellie?” She was in a meeting *discussing* how to use her campaign for California governor, instead of taking the campaign to workers in action! This was a wake-up call for us, said Presser.

We need to use our headquarters as launching pads, trampolines, if you will, Barnes said, to step up involvement in political activity with others and build the communist movement.

“The SWP joins with others in propaganda and activity in the working class, where we find a receptive audience, to mobilize a ‘jury of millions’ that can weigh in on the fight to win freedom for the Cuban Five,” SWP National Committee member Mary-Alice Waters said in a talk titled “The Cuban Five and Our Proletarian Course: Building Worldwide the ‘Jury of Millions’” on the opening day of the conference. Building the jury of millions, Waters said, is a course of proletarian action. It’s not only about the fight to free the Five and win support for the Cuban Revolution, although that is an indispensable part. It’s about taking communist propaganda more broadly to the working class and discussing how to fight effectively.

The propertied rulers hope to overcome the capitalist crisis, to find a way to reverse the slowing growth of production and trade, and to regain higher rates of industrial profit. Since 2007 the bosses have stepped up their decades-long drive to make workers pay for their crisis. While resistance remains episodic today, the crisis has generated more interest in communist politics and receptivity to the need for a working-class, revolutionary course of struggle.

The capitalist ruling families envision a drawn-out, grinding period of stagnation during which they can slowly retire massive balloons of bad debt and lay the basis for renewed economic expansion. Their “plans” are predicated on workers’ grudging acquiescence to years on end of what capitalist economists have proclaimed the “new normal” — lower living standards and worsening social conditions for the working class.

The exploiting class can plan and hope all they want, but what workers



Militant photos, above, Laura Anderson; right, Betsey Stone
Above, panel at Active Workers Conference final rally, June 21. Front row from left, John Studer, Ellie Garcia, Margaret Trowe, Frank Forrestal (speaking) and chair Tom Baumann. Right, audience during one of main sessions.

do will be the decisive factor, Barnes said. World developments and the thirst for political discussion we find in every section of the working class point to a different future. Without any predictions on timing or scope, we can expect working-class resistance will grow. And when it does, it will upset the rulers’ plans and open new opportunities for the communist movement to grow.

The mobilizations in Ukraine, and their echo in Russia, other former Soviet Republics, and eastern and central Europe, are a powerful example of how resistance by working people can change the political landscape, Barnes said.

Cuba’s proletarian internationalism

The Ukrainian uprising also offers striking confirmation of the SWP’s assessment that U.S. imperialism lost the Cold War with the fall of the Soviet Union and the Stalinist regimes in Eastern and Central Europe in 1989-91, Waters said in her report. Washington and the other imperialist powers can no longer count on the privileged social layer that dominated the Soviet bureaucracy — consolidated through Joseph Stalin’s counterrevolution against the proletarian course of V.I. Lenin and the Bolshevik conquest of power in 1917 — to brutally suppress working people under their rule and sabotage revolutionary struggles around the world.

Workers in this country, and wherever they enter into combat for the interests of their class, from Ukraine to Turkey, can learn from the Cuban Revolution, Waters said. Cuba is the only state in the world guided by proletarian internationalism. The 1975 Programmatic Platform of the Communist Party of Cuba states that the party’s policy is “subordination ... of the interests of Cuba to the general interests of the struggle for socialism and communism, of national liberation, of the defeat of imperialism and the elimination of colonialism, neo-colonialism and all forms of exploitation and discrimination.” These are not just words, but something Cuba’s working people have put into practice time and again.

Under the leadership of Fidel Castro and other veterans of the revolution that

triumphed in 1959, Cuba’s workers and farmers came to the aid of revolutionary struggles of toilers from Algeria to Bolivia to Vietnam. Hundreds of thousands of Cuban volunteer combatants were decisive in the fight of the Angolan people to defend their newly independent nation against invasions by the racist army of apartheid South Africa. Cubans have provided unprecedented medical aid to workers in need around the world, including to more than 25,000 victims of the 1986 nuclear disaster in Chernobyl, aid that continues to this day.

Our party shares this perspective, Waters said. And we proudly point to the steadfastness and revolutionary integrity of the Cuban Five, in the face of imprisonment and attempts by the U.S. rulers to break them, as examples of the kinds of fighters we need to build a party in the U.S. capable of taking political power and establishing a workers and farmers government.

Over the past year, members of the communist movement have begun to step up work with others to advance the international campaign to free the Cuban Five and in the process learn how to most effectively win new layers of working people to the fight. Recently socialist workers took part in the “5 Days for the Cuban 5” activities in Washington, D.C. Over the last six months, Waters said, we’ve gained experience in using prison paintings by Antonio Guerrero, one of the Five, that depict their experiences in the hole during their first year of imprisonment. This strikes a strong chord with workers, many of whom know someone close to them who has had similar experiences with U.S. capitalist “justice.” We can build and improve on these efforts, collaborating with others interested in taking these paintings to more and more working people — from union halls and community centers to trailer parks and churches.

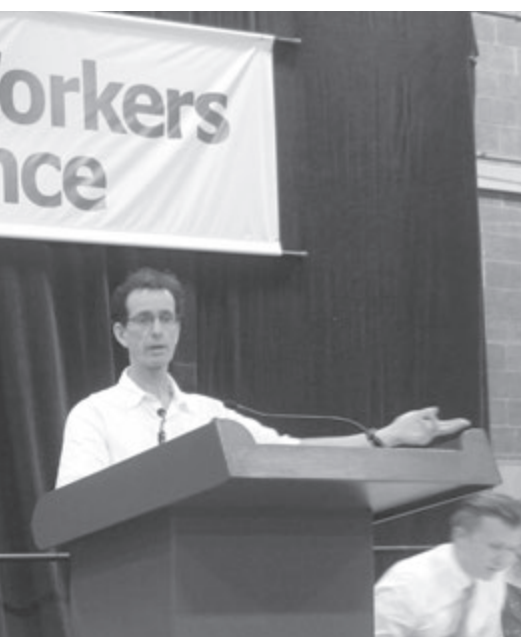
“Chernobyl was not an ‘accident,’ but a murderous consequence of Stalinism,” said Frank Forrestal, speaking on “Chernobyl, Angola, Rectification, and



Militant photos, top, Arnold Weissberg; below, Betsey Stone
Fifteen displays highlighted aspects of communist movement’s work around world. Conference participants bought more than 200 books on revolutionary history and theory.

rtunities to build proletarian parties today

olvement in labor skirmishes, defense of Cuban Revolution, other political activity



the Course Led by Fidel and Che: The Weight of Subjective and Moral Factors in the Proletarian-Led Transition to Socialism,” one of six classes at the conference.

We found interest in Ukraine about what the Cubans did in Chernobyl, he said, and in what it shows about the difference between the socialist revolution in Cuba and the Stalinist reality they had lived through for decades in Ukraine that they were told was socialism. And workers there found they could learn from the activities and political perspectives of the communist movement in the U.S.

Since the Stalinist counterrevolution in the 1920s, workers and farmers in the former Soviet Union and throughout Eastern and Central Europe have faced continual efforts by the ruling bureaucracy to break their spirit and drive them out of politics. These countries were what Marxists called degenerated or deformed workers states, reflecting both the remnants of the revolutionary battles that overturned capitalism, as well as the counterrevolutionary rule of Stalinist bureaucrats.

During this time class-conscious workers did resist and in some cases rose to fight for a communist course to retake and use the state power — its control of state property, planned economy and monopoly of foreign trade — in the interests of workers and farmers.

In hindsight, Barnes said in his political report, we can now see that the 1956 Hungarian Revolution was a turning point. Workers formed revolutionary councils across the country and fought to retake political power. We correctly thought those events could mark the beginning of proletarian battles in the region to re-establish the revolutionary course and fight for world socialism

charted by Karl Marx, Frederick Engels and Lenin. Working people waged mass struggles against Stalinist repression — including in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and Poland in 1980. But with each successive battle the proletarian revolutionary content and continuity receded, as did the leadership role of the working class and communist consciousness.

The revolutionary communist movement celebrated the popular mobilizations that led to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the crumbling of Stalinist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, and the coming apart of the Soviet Union in 1991. The emergence of a new capitalist class, a government serving their interests, and capitalist social relations on the ashes of the workers states is an unforeseen and new historical development.

The mobilizations in Ukraine offer stark proof that working people there, far from being cowed, are entering politics and making history. And they are going through experiences and facing challenges that are similar to those workers confront in the U.S. and the rest of the capitalist world.

In Russia, President Vladimir Putin and the capitalists he represents are motivated by fear of the spread of this infection from Ukraine, Barnes said. At the same time the rulers in Russia cannot extinguish political rights. Space for working people is opening up there as the exploiting class tries to put together a stable regime and advance capitalist development. Moscow has to allow members of Pussy Riot to freely travel around the world as they protest and denounce the Putin government. They haven’t even pulled their passports.

Internationally, Barnes said, bourgeois politics is shifting as well. Among the most striking manifestations is the rapid move of conservative and rightist parties leftward to the center, and winning elections as a result. This includes the May 16 electoral victory of the Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian People’s Party), a historically far right Hindu nationalist party, on a platform of “inclusive growth”; the May 26 win of the longtime right-wing U.K. Independence Party in the British elections for European Union Parliament, after expelling a local councilor from the party for making anti-gay and anti-African remarks; the remaking of the traditionally far-right National Front in France into a more mainstream conservative populist party and winning gains in March municipal elections. This month Mississippi Sen. Thad Cochran appealed to African-Americans to vote for him as a lesser evil in the Republican primaries, which they did in droves to defeat a Tea Party challenger.

There are expanding opportunities for communist political work around the world, using the *Militant* and Pathfinder books and taking the fight to free the Cuban Five and other political campaigns to Ukraine, Turkey, Bangladesh and elsewhere.

At the conclusion of the conference,



Left, Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, gives main political report to conference, June 20. Right, the day before Mary-Alice Waters, member of party’s National Committee, speaks on “The Cuban Five and Our Proletarian Course: Building Worldwide the ‘Jury of Millions.’”



three first-time participants joined the Socialist Workers Party — Sydney Coe, a forklift operator and Teamsters Union member who met the party when he was on strike at Davis Wire in Kent, Washington, in 2012, and José Acosta and Lara Canales from Edinburg, Texas.

“For two years I’ve been carrying out political activity with the party,” Coe told the *Militant*. “I thought it was time I took the next step. This means I can vote to help decide what we do.”

“I like that the conference focused on what to do,” Acosta, who is moving to Houston along with Canales to join the party branch there, told the *Militant*. “How to put revolutionary politics into practice. I’m interested in trying to build the party.”

Classes, closing rally

A class entitled “There Are No ‘Laws’ for the Transition from Capitalism to Socialism,” introduced by SWP National Committee members Steve Clark and Tom Fiske, expanded on Barnes’ remarks on what workers faced over decades in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and served as a complement to the class on Cuba’s revolutionary leadership’s internationalist course in Chernobyl and Angola.

Other conference classes included “The Fight for Women’s Emancipation, 1986 and 2014: What’s Changed?” “The Westward Expansion of Communism in Canada Comes Closer,” “Communism and Revolutionary Centralism: In

Defense of Marxism and Struggle for a Proletarian Party,” and “Defending the Party and Its Program: *Socialism on Trial* and *50 Years of Covert Operations in the US: Washington’s Political Police and the American Working Class.*”

There were more than 15 displays at the back of the hall with photos, captions, charts and other graphics on selling the *Militant*; broadening working-class support for the Cuban Five; trips to Ukraine, Egypt, Indonesia, Lebanon, Mali and elsewhere; the spread of communist literature in Iran and throughout the region; the work of party supporters in the production and distribution of books by Pathfinder Press; and others.

Also at the back of the room were tables of Pathfinder books for sale. Conference participants bought more than 200 to take home and study.

Friday night a documentary produced for Cuban television was shown on Cuba’s internationalist response to the Chernobyl disaster. Participants also took advantage of meal periods and social events to relax and continue discussion.

Saturday afternoon Barnes, Waters, Clark and Norton Sandler, who presented one of the classes, gave summary remarks tying the reports, classes and discussions at the conference together.

There are new openings for revolutionaries in the world, in Ukraine, Iran, Kurdistan and elsewhere, Barnes said. Political space is opening up in country

Continued on page 9



Active Workers Conference discussed openings to step up political activity in working class and win readers to *Militant* and books on revolutionary politics. Above, workers on strike against SEPTA Regional Rail in Philadelphia June 14. Second from left is Chris Hoeppner, SWP candidate for Pennsylvania governor and production worker at Hyundai rail car factory. Hoeppner and other supporters of *Militant* went to show solidarity and talk with strikers.

Socialism built on consciousness, active solidarity of masses

The excerpt reprinted here is from a Jan. 8, 1989, speech by Fidel Castro titled, “The Young Generation Must Improve and Defend Socialism,” which is included in In Defense of Socialism: Four Speeches on the 30th Anniversary of the Cuban Revolution. Castro is speaking about Cuba’s “rectification process,” which began in 1986. That political initiative sought to return to the communist course of the revolution’s earlier years, placing the consciousness and initiatives of working people at the center — as opposed to the administration of workers and farmers and other capitalist-style methods copied from the Soviet Union that were leading away from socialism. Copyright © 1989 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY FIDEL CASTRO

It would be an illusion to think that the whole difficult period for the revolution and for the nation is over. That would be an illusion that the current generation and the coming generations can never harbor. Imperialism has not renounced the idea of liquidating socialism in Cuba, of liquidating revolutionary ideology in Cuba; imperialism has not renounced the idea of liquidating our revolution. Imperialism might change its tactics, its weapons, but U.S. imperialism is too arrogant, too high-



Terry Coggan

“You don’t start from the premise that man is like a little animal who only moves when you dangle a carrot in front of him or whip him with a stick,” Fidel Castro said Jan. 8, 1989. Above, members of minibrigade volunteer their labor to construct workers’ housing in Havana.

handed, too haughty to renounce the idea of overturning the Cuban revolution, to renounce the idea of liquidating socialism in Cuba. ...

We face a tremendous historic challenge. Who will win? Who will prevail? The selfish, chaotic, and inhumane capitalist system? [Shouts of “No!”] Or the more rational and humane socialist system? [Shouts and prolonged applause] This is the challenge that now faces not just Cuban youth and the Cuban people, but the youth and peoples of all the socialist countries.

Of course this is a task for all of us and especially the new generation, which will have to make a special effort to better itself.

We must have a clear understanding of what we face and the battle in which we are involved to improve socialism in our country. And perhaps the greatest challenge is that this is a battle to improve socialism without resorting to the mechanisms and style of capitalism, without playing at capitalism. [Applause] That’s what we are trying to do in the process of rectification.

A few days ago I said that we’re starting to see some results of this process. We have seen some examples; to mention one, the contingents of construction workers. I believe that we have with us a group of the young people working in the Havana contingents. [Applause]

In these days we have witnessed great feats: we have seen what the Blas Roca Contingent did, what the Sixth Congress Contingent did, what the contingents that built ExpoCuba did. [Applause] We have seen what the minibrigades did there, we have seen what the contingents in different provinces are doing. And we have seen the principles these groups of workers are applying, which have nothing in common with capitalist methods of motivation nor capitalist methods of organization. [Applause] I am sure there are no groups of workers like that anywhere else.

This shows what man can do; what man can do when there is faith in man, trust in man, when you don’t start from the premise that man is like a little animal who only moves when you dangle a carrot in front of him or whip him with a stick. [Applause] The minibrigades, contingent workers, and hundreds of groups of workers in our country that are now making great efforts, and we could say thousands of groups of workers, don’t act or do what they do because of a carrot or a stick. [Applause] ...

What carrot or what stick was used on the Sixth Congress Contingent, which in barely a year has just finished building — and done an excellent job — a big hospital in the capital? [Applause] What carrot or what stick motivated the minibrigade and contin-

gent members who in barely a year — because the bulk of the work was done in a year — have built the tremendous ExpoCuba project? [Applause] What carrot or what stick was used on the citizens who put in 400,000 hours of voluntary work in building the Miguel Enriquez Hospital? [Applause] What carrot or stick led thousands of senior high school and technological students to put in millions of hours of voluntary work on social projects? [Applause]

What carrot or stick led secondary school students in the citrus project in Jagüey to harvest more than 400,000 tons of citrus fruit? [Applause] ... What carrot or stick motivates hundreds of thousands of students who work three hours a day in the schools in the countryside? [Applause and shouts of “For sure, Fidel, give the Yankees hell!”]

But in relation to other fields, we could also ask: What carrot or what stick motivated the fighters of the Rebel Army who for two years confronted and defeated the army of the tyranny? [Applause and shouts of “For sure, Fidel, give the Yankees hell!”] What carrot or stick motivated many thousands of teachers, doctors, or workers who have rendered internationalist service? [Applause] What carrot or stick motivated the 50,000 Cuban fighters in Angola who made possible the victory? [Exclamations and prolonged applause]

A final question for the list, which could go on forever: What carrot or what stick motivated the 300,000 Cubans who honorably fulfilled their internationalist missions in Angola over the last thirteen years? [Exclamations and prolonged applause]

So are we or are we not correct in trusting in people, in their consciousness and spirit of solidarity? Are we or are we not right in feeling people can really do what they set out to do; that people can live in a society that is more humane, more just, more generous, and more based on solidarity than is capitalism, where the law of the jungle prevails? Could a society educated in the selfish ideas of capitalism carry out a single one of these things we’ve mentioned? That’s why our confidence in the future of the revolution is so unshakable.

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Ukraine workers aid refugees from east

Continued from front page

Sergei Podgiriak, a worker in section two of the mine, told the crowd, speaking about the attackers, reported DTEK media center. But “your actions drive people away. What happened yesterday was a crime.”

“Such terrorist activities at the mines in Donbass have become a habit” for the paramilitaries, Mikhailo Volynets, president of the Independent Trade Union of Coal Miners of Ukraine, said after the attack. “The Sverdlovsk Antratsyt and Rovenki Antratsyt mines were seized by separatists in May. They shut down Metinvest company mines in Sukhodolsk and Molodogvardeisk. The separatists seek to destabilize the region, deprive miners of their work and destroy the economy.”

On June 11, members of the miners’ union at the Lviv Coal Company processing plant in western Ukraine picketed the Kiev offices of the Cabinet of Ministers, reported the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine. They have not been paid for February, March and April. “We have been in constant struggle for scanty wages since 2012,” Olga Shkorporad, president of the union local at the plant, told demonstrators, demanding action from the Poroshenko government.

Meanwhile, tens of thousands of workers have fled Slovyansk, Donetsk and other areas in the east where separatists are operating, seeking refuge largely in central and western Ukraine. The number grew by 16,400 over the last week alone, the United Nations

High Commissioner for Refugees reported June 27, to a total of 54,400. Refugees cite “worsening law and order, fear of abductions, human rights violations and the disruption of state services” as the reasons for their flight, the U.N. said.

The overwhelming majority of assistance to refugees is being organized by volunteer groups like Euromaidan SOS in Kiev, which was set up to aid families of those killed in the battles that overthrew the regime of President Viktor Yanukovich in February.

“The press publishes reports of people taking advantage of our help, of people in refugee shelters asking for vodka and cigarettes instead of food,” said Alesey Ryabchyn, a student who moved from Donetsk two weeks ago with his wife and daughter and is now volunteering with Euromaidan SOS. “Don’t believe such stories. This conflict has brought out the best in the Ukrainian people. Our priority is helping those in need, no matter what side they’re on.”

A woman and her husband decided to take in some refugees, she posted on her website francevna1. Two women, Anna and Valya, from Kramatorsk came.

“A real information war is underway where they came from,” the woman said. “They thought that people in central Ukraine hated the Donetsk people, that horrific Banderites are standing on the roads to Kiev — those from Maidan — with rifles, to shoot at people from Donbass.”

“You know, when I tell my guys how we were greeted here, nobody will believe me,” she said Anna told her.

Prison censorship

Continued from front page

cations that educate the public to what is actually occurring in these prisons.”

The proposed regulations define as “contraband” any written materials or photographs in the hands of prisoners that indicate “an association with a validated member or associate of a Security Threat Group.” The so-called STGs include prison gangs or any group of three or more inmates that prison authorities designate as a threat.

“Whoever wrote the new regulations must have had us at the *Bay View* in mind,” Mary Ratcliff, editor of the paper, told the *Militant* July 1. *Bay View* has “a large number of subscribers in prison and among the public and offers inmates an opportunity for a dialogue with the public.” Through letters and articles from prisoners, “we report on what’s happening where journalists are not allowed to go,” she said. “The new regulations seek to end the dialogue, to cut off access to knowledge.”

Marie Levin, the sister of Sitawa Nantambu Jammaa, a leader of last year’s prison hunger strike, is one of many who sent letters of protest to the CDCR. “The hunger strikes were the reason the prisoners were able to get out the word to the public about prison conditions,” she told the *Militant*. “Now the rule is that if three or more get together and try to communicate about this with the outside, they can be punished.”

“My brother has educated himself in prison,” Levin said. “He loves literature. He will read a book many times and pass it on to others. He watches the news. They need books and newspapers to read and to communicate beyond the prison.”

At a June 17 public hearing here on the rule change, Joe Stein, chief of the Standardized Procedures Unit of the CDCR, answered questions about the new rules. Asked if an inmate could be punished for possession of a banned book or magazine such as *Playboy*, he answered “yes.” Some 200 publications are currently banned, he said.

“I’m concerned about this designation of books or photographs as contraband,” Nancy Leman, a former truck driver from Sacramento, told the hearing. “Anyone simply because of a tattoo, or having a photo of a relative, could be targeted.”

Betsey Stone, who has covered the California prisoners’ hunger strike for the *Militant*, spoke at the hearing about fights waged for the right of the socialist paper and other publications, including *Prison Legal News*, the *San Francisco Bay View* and *Prison Focus* to be received by prisoners.

“It’s crucial that prisoners have the right to study, read, write and communicate with others on the outside,” Stone said. “Especially needed are books about workers’ struggles. The fight for the First Amendment rights of prisoners is in the interests of all working people.”

In a related development, the *Militant* on June 12 filed an appeal seeking to reverse the first known censorship of the paper in a federal prison in decades. The warden at the high-security U.S. Penitentiary in Florence, Colorado, had confiscated an issue of the newsweekly on the basis that it supposedly contained “articles pertaining to the Revolutionary Communist Party in the USA and the need to overthrow the system.” The appeal, filed by attorney David Goldstein, pointed out that the move was a violation of the First Amendment, as well as prison regulations.

Ratcliff said the *Bay View* was notified in April this year that the warden at the maximum-security prison in Florence had censored the July 2013 issue of the paper on the basis that it discussed individuals incarcerated within the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

Hundreds attend Active Workers Conference

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after country and obstacles to circulate communist literature are shrinking.

The discussion we find ourselves in wherever we go is: What is the road forward? What will it take for us to overthrow capitalism? As workers go through growing struggles, they need to construct and strengthen proletarian parties capable of taking power, Barnes said, as the Cubans did in 1959.

Pathfinder literature is crucial to the political work of the party, Waters said. She spoke about the efforts of the party’s supporters organized in the Print Project, who proofread, design, prepare ads, oversee the printing, run the warehouse and shipping, and organize visits to libraries and bookstores to expand circulation of Pathfinder books.

The supporters held a meeting the day after the conference to plan the next steps in their work, as well as efforts to raise regular monthly contributions to the work of the party.

The concluding rally Saturday evening focused on opportunities coming out of the conference.

John Studer described the experiences of the *Militant*’s second reporting team to Ukraine, where they met with unionists and workers from the Chernobyl and Zaporizhia nuclear plants, iron ore miners and steelworkers in Kryvyi Rih, manganese miners in Marganets, rocket plant workers in Dnepropetrovsk, and with rail and gas workers in Kharkiv. We are already planning our next return trip, Studer said. He detailed their meeting with 12 women, organizers and beneficiaries of the Cuban program to provide free

medical care for those affected in Chernobyl.

Karen Lemieux from Montreal outlined the perspective of members of the Communist League in Canada to build a second branch, for the first time since the 1990s, in western Canada.

Ma’mud Shirvani reported on the expansion of sales of revolutionary literature in Farsi, in Iran, Afghanistan and elsewhere. Over the last five years, Shirvani said, Talaye Porsoo publishing house has sold more than 50,000 books reprinting selections from Pathfinder Press titles.

Ellie Garcia, an aerospace worker in Los Angeles, described her experiences working on the job and in broader politics with a growing number of co-workers who look to the *Militant* newspaper for political news and perspectives.

Frank Forrestal announced plans for a *Militant* reporting team leaving straight out of the conference for Turkey to meet with coal miners in the area around Soma, where more than 300 were killed in a May 13 fire at the Eynenez mine.

One of the participants at the conference was Yase-min Aydinoglu, a nurse from Elmira, New York, originally from Turkey, who volunteered to go on the team and help with translation. She said she came “to get more of a feeling of the current political situation,” and was looking forward to the trip. “We’re going there for accuracy,” she said, “to find out what the miners are doing and what’s happening.”

For three days following the conference the Socialist Workers Party held its 47th Constitutional Convention, which will be covered in a coming issue.

Kurds advance fight for own nation

Continued from page 2

to Baghdad June 23 to push Maliki to reach agreement with Sunni and Kurdish politicians in the newly elected Parliament. He flew to Erbil the next day hoping to convince Kurdish leaders to remain within Iraq.

Kerry then headed to Saudi Arabia to pressure Saudi King Abdullah to support the formation of a new Iraqi government. The Saudi government has called Maliki an “Iranian agent.” But worried that ISIS could threaten not just Iraq and Syria, but the Saudi kingdom, Abdullah pledged to back the U.S. plan.

As part of the setup put in place by Washington after removing Hussein, the prime minister’s post is reserved for a Shiite Arab, the speaker of the Parliament

for a Sunni and the ceremonial presidency for a Kurd.

But when the newly elected Parliament met July 1, Kurdish and Sunni parties walked out, after Maliki’s Shiite-dominated coalition was unable to reach agreement on their candidate for prime minister.

Thousands of Sunnis and Shiites have fled areas where fighting between ISIS and the Iraqi army have taken place in the west.

Bashir Khalil, a Shiite and his wife Nidal Khalil, a Sunni, were among those who fled Mosul after ISIS took over, taking refuge in Kurdish territory near Erbil. “We don’t want this one or that one,” Nidal Khalil told *Today’s Zaman*, referring to the Maliki government and ISIS. “Neither of them cares about us poor people.”

‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

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