

THE MILITANT

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roots of world financial crisis

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JUNE 16, 2008

Washington intensifies war in Pakistan's border region

BY SAM MANUEL

Defeating al-Qaeda and Taliban-backed militias in Pakistan's border regions with Afghanistan would be the first priority, says Gen. David Petraeus, if he is confirmed as the next head of the U.S. Central Command (Centcom).

U.S. and NATO officials have criticized Pakistani government talks with the militias aimed at signing "peace" agreements. During his Senate confirmation hearing, however, Petraeus hinted that the talks could be an opening to apply counterinsurgency lessons learned from fighting al-Qaeda in Iraq.

The U.S. military continues to widen operations against militia groups in Pakistan. U.S. warplanes and drones routinely violate Pakistani airspace, forcing Pakistan's military to file a formal complaint with U.S. and NATO commands in Afghanistan, reported a May 16 AP dispatch.

Petraeus currently commands U.S. forces in Iraq. His deputy, Lt. Gen. Raymond Odierno, has been nominated to replace him. The promotions of both men would integrate the two

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Momentum building for conference on Cuban Five

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

NEW YORK—Word has been spreading about the June 14 Working Conference to Free the Cuban Five. Supporters of political rights in a number of cities are planning to attend, as they begin to discuss plans for events in their own areas to broaden the defense campaign.

Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, René González, Ramón Labañino, and Fernando González have been

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As we go to press...

A federal appeals court in Atlanta today upheld the frame-up convictions of the Cuban Five. It remanded the sentences of three of them—Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, and Fernando González—to the trial judge for resentencing. The National Committee to Free the Five and other political rights defenders have called emergency protests, including one in San Francisco on June 6, 5:00 p.m., at Powell and Market Streets. Full coverage to appear in next week's *Militant*.

Las Vegas construction workers strike for safety

BY SAM MANUEL

Union construction workers in Las Vegas held a one-day strike June 2 after a crane oiler was killed on the job. Dustan Tarter, 39, was crushed between the crane's counterweight and track May 30.

Tarter became the sixth worker to die on the 66-acre MGM Mirage's CityCenter project run by the Perini

Building Company. In all, 11 workers have died on construction sites in Las Vegas in the last year and a half.

MGM spokesman Alan Feldman blamed Tarter, saying his death is "a very tragic reminder of the need for all workers to follow safety rules."

Workers say the company has been pushing to complete work on the \$9.2

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Reuters/Chip East

Rubble from May 30 crane collapse in New York. "Construction is a dangerous business," said the city's mayor, Michael Bloomberg. Construction workers said the bosses, in their drive for profit, pressure them to work under increasingly dangerous conditions.

New York crane collapse kills two more workers

BY DAN FEIN

NEW YORK—A crane collapsed on the Upper East Side of Manhattan May 30 killing two construction workers and seriously injuring one other.

Dead were crane operator Donald Leo, 30, who was a member of the International Union of Operating Engineers

balconies on the way down.

Investigators' initial report is that a bad weld in the crane's turntable was the cause. The turntable had been rebuilt last year after a crack was discovered.

The Manhattan district attorney's office has opened a criminal investigation. Investigators have seized boxes of documents and computers from the office of New York Crane and Equipment, which owned the crane.

"The inspectors are responsible for

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See Socialist Workers campaign statement on page 13

Local 14, and Ramadan Kurtaj, 27, a recent immigrant from Kosova.

Three days later, a man power-washing the facade of a building in Brooklyn fell four stories to his death. Housain Mosharrf, originally from Bangladesh, was not wearing a safety harness.

The three fatalities bring the number of New York construction workers killed on the job this year to 17.

The May 30 disaster occurred when the upper part of the crane, which includes the turntable, operators' cabin, and boom, snapped off the tower. The crane then crashed into the apartment building across the street, tearing off

Socialist Workers file petitions for ballot status in New Jersey



Militant/Amy Husk

Alyson Kennedy, SWP candidate for vice president, (in gray suit) delivers petitions to a worker at the state board of elections in Trenton May 29. Sara Lobman, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from New Jersey is at left. Campaign supporter Moses Williams is at right.

BY NANCY ROSENSTOCK

TRENTON, New Jersey—The Socialist Workers Party filed petitions here May 29 for ballot status in New Jersey. Alyson Kennedy, the SWP vice presidential candidate, turned in more than 1,600 signatures on behalf of herself and the party's candidate for president, Róger Calero.

At the same time more than 1,600

signatures for Sara Lobman, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate in New Jersey, and more than 200 for Michael Taber, the party's candidate for Congress in the 10th C.D., were submitted. In each case this is more than double the number required.

Kennedy said, "Working people in the United States and around

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Parents protest poor construction of schools after deadly China quake

BY SETH GALINSKY

Hundreds of parents of children who died when school buildings collapsed during the May 12 earthquake in China have turned mourning ceremonies into protests against shoddy construction and corrupt officials.

At least 10,000 of the estimated 67,000 killed were schoolchildren. Some 6,900 classrooms and school dormitories were destroyed. For most, the dead student was their only child, intensifying their grief and anger.

Many charge that school buildings used by the children of workers and farmers collapsed, while schools for more affluent families and government buildings remained intact.

“Look at this! A natural disaster I could understand, I could live with, but this was negligence,” said Jiang Xujun, whose 10-year-old son died in Mianzhu at Fuxing No. 2 Primary School. Showing a reporter for the London *Independent* the remains of the school, Jiang crumbled the mortar around brick debris in his hands. “Only dust was holding this building together.”

Angry parents surrounded the vice secretary of the Mianzhu city government May 24 and called her a liar for her report on the disaster, which failed to mention that 127 students had been killed.

The next day the parents organized to march to Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan Province, about 50 miles away. Jiang Guohua, a local Communist Party official, got down on his knees and

begged the parents to stop marching. They refused. Three hours later the police tried to block the march.

According to the *New York Times*, “After a tense stand-off, the marchers agreed to board government buses to Deyang, the county seat.” In Deyang, the vice-mayor promised an investigation into the causes of the school collapse.

At a May 27 gathering of parents of students from Juyuan Middle School in Djuiangyan, Liu Lifu, a quarry worker, grabbed the microphone. His 15-year-old daughter was killed along with her entire class during a biology lesson.

“We demand that the government severely punish the killers who caused the collapse of the school building,” Liu shouted.

The epicenter of the earthquake was in Sichuan, the third most populous province and one of the poorest in China. Many Sichuan workers and farmers send their children to boarding schools, which cost more, because schools are too far away for daily travel. Natives of the province are a large percentage of China’s 140 million migrants, who seek work in other parts of the country, in part to be able to afford sending their children to school.

Sichuan officials announced May 26 that they would make exceptions to China’s “one-child policy” for parents whose only child was killed or seriously injured in the earthquake. The Chengdu Population and Family Planning Committee said qualified parents could apply for legal permis-



Parents holding pictures of their children killed in May 12 earthquake in Sichuan Province, China, confront kneeling Communist Party official, who begs them to stop their protest.

sion to have another child.

The reactionary one-child policy was introduced in 1979. It imposes steep fines on those who have more than one child. Children beyond the first-born are termed “illegal” and can be denied government benefits, including the right to an education. In some cases women have been pressured into having abortions.

According to the *New York Times*, the family planning committee “announced... that if a couple’s legally born child was killed in the earthquake, an illegal child under 18 could be registered as a legal replacement. If the dead child was ille-

gal, it said the family would no longer be responsible for outstanding fines.”

“I’d say 90 percent of the people around here have only one child,” Wang Zix told the *Los Angeles Times*. “It takes a lot of money to raise children—we farmers have a hard time even supporting ourselves; how can we afford to pay fines to have more?”

Parents at Juyuan Middle School said they were told they would be compensated for the loss of their children.

“We don’t want their money,” said Luo Guanmin, a farmer whose daughter died in the collapse. “We just want the corruption to end.”

Cuban doctors aid relief effort in China

A Cuban volunteer medical brigade has been providing aid to victims of the May 12 earthquake in China since May 23. Operating out of People’s Hospital No. 1 in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, the Cuban personnel have attended to 638 patients as of May 29, according to the Cuban weekly *Granma International*.

The head of the Henry Reeve Brigade, Dr. José Rodríguez, said the Cubans were willing to stay as long as necessary. Many of the volunteers have experience providing medical care after other disasters, including earthquakes in Pakistan and Peru and the tsunami in southeast Asia.

There are 35 doctors and paramedics in the Cuban contingent, which is named after Henry Reeve, an American who fought in Cuba’s first war of independence against Spain, reaching the rank of brigadier general. He died in battle in 1876.

The task faced is “monumental,” the Cuban daily *Trabajadores* reports, since there are 25,000 victims of the quake in hospitals in the region.

The *China Daily* online edition ran an article May 30 on the brigade with the headline “Language no barrier for caring doctors.”

The most popular doctor among the Chinese children in the hospital is Cuban pediatrician Rafael Suri, the *China Daily* reports. “I talk to them and try to restore their confidence in life,” Suri told the paper.

—S.G.

THE MILITANT

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Cuban doctor treats child in rural community in Venezuela.

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Union holds hearing on ICE deportations



ATLANTA—"They handcuffed me and held me for eight hours without food, water, or letting me use the bathroom," said U.S.-born Mike Graves, who was detained in the December 2006 immigration raid at the Swift plant in Marshalltown, Iowa, for not being able to produce identification that he had left in his locker.

Graves, above, was testifying here May 29 at a hearing organized by the National Commission on ICE Misconduct and Violation of 4th Amendment Rights attended by some 150 people. The commission was formed by the United Food and Commercial Workers union in response to raids and deportations by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Justeen Mancha described how immigration cops busted into her home in Reidsville, Georgia, in 2006 after raiding a nearby poultry plant. Her mother, a U.S. citizen, had worked at the plant previously.

The Atlanta hearing was attended by representatives of the NAACP, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and Operation Rainbow PUSH. "This is a civil rights fight," said Janice Mathis from Operation PUSH in her testimony.

—EDDIE BECK AND SUSAN LAMONT

11th coal miner killed on job

BY BEN JOYCE

Adam Lanham, an 18-year-old coal miner, was killed May 30 at the Sentinel Mine in Barbour County, West Virginia, bringing the total number of U.S. coal miners killed on the job this year to 11.

The Sentinel Mine is owned by International Coal Group (ICG), which also owns the nearby Sago Mine, where unsafe conditions led to an explosion in 2006 that took 12 miners' lives.

Lanham had only five months' experience when he was run over by a scoop, a vehicle used to haul coal and equipment, the *Charleston Gazette* reported.

The mine's operator, Wolf Run Mining Company, was cited the previous week by the Mine Safety and Health

Administration (MSHA) for failing to report an accident promptly, the accumulation of combustible coal dust, not preserving the scene of an accident, and other violations. Accident rates at Sentinel have far exceeded the national average for eight of the past 10 years, according to MSHA. In a similar manner, the Sago Mine had been cited with 208 safety violations by MSHA the year prior to the deadly explosion there.

Shortly after the Sago disaster, ICG founder Wilbur Ross smugly told *Fortune* magazine that the company still planned to more than double production at the mine in the coming year. Last year the Sentinel Mine produced 773,000 tons of coal, its biggest year since 1999.

New volunteer on 'Militant'

BY CINDY JAQUITH

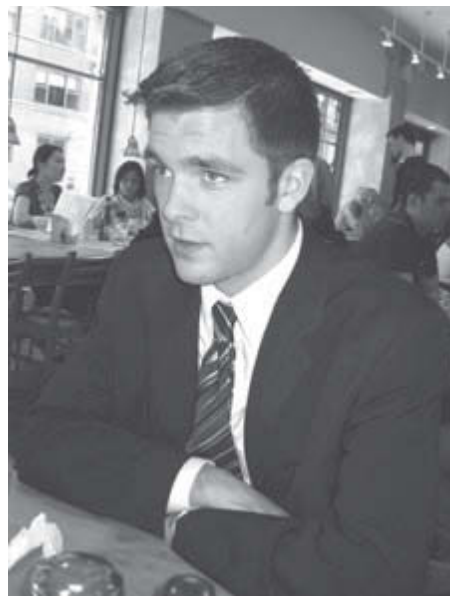
Ben Joyce has joined the *Militant* staff as a volunteer for the summer.

Joyce, 22, is a member of the Young Socialists National Steering Committee and is also the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress in New York's 7th District. He recently completed an international campaign tour of London, Edinburgh, and Stockholm with Alyson Kennedy, the SWP candidate for U.S. vice president.

In 2006 Joyce joined the chapter of the Young Socialists at the State University of New York in Albany. This year he continued his studies at the Borough of Manhattan Community College.

Joyce traveled to New Zealand and Australia in 2007 to take part in a series of meetings to discuss the Pathfinder Press book *Our History Is Still*

Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution.



Ben Joyce

Militant/Dan Fein

Detainees denied basic health care in ICE jails

BY SETH GALINSKY

In October 2007 Francisco Castaneda testified before Congress about repeated denials of medical care during his 11-month stay in an immigration jail. Several doctors had recommended a biopsy, but immigration authorities refused, saying it was an "elective procedure." Four months after testifying, Castaneda, a Salvadoran immigrant, died from cancer.

A federal judge in March allowed the Castaneda family to move forward with a lawsuit, ruling the denial of care was "beyond cruel and unusual punishment."

Castaneda's case is not an exception. "Dogs get better care in the dog pound," Catherine Rouse, a contract nurse at an Arizona detention center told the *Washington Post*. She quit after two months of work in 2007. "You don't treat people like that," Rouse said. "There has to be some kind of moral fiber."

The May 5 *New York Times* detailed the death in custody of Boubacar Bah, a 52-year-old tailor from Guinea, accused of overstaying a tourist visa. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) records show Bah was shackled and pinned to the floor of a medical unit, then left in a cell for more than 13 hours, despite repeated notations that he was "unresponsive" and foaming at the mouth. His family only learned he was ill four days later when another prisoner managed to call and even then the private company that runs the jail wouldn't give them any information. Finally, on the fifth day, a prison official called and gave them the name of a hospital. Bah

never regained consciousness and died on May 30, 2007.

The *Post* noted that 83 immigrants have died in, or soon after leaving, custody during the past five years. Among those who died are workers from Cuba, El Salvador, Mexico, Ghana, Korea, and Haiti.

The number of immigrants jailed has skyrocketed since the administration of President George Bush transferred deportation authority in 2003 to ICE.

Seven of the 23 immigration jails are run by private for-profit companies. Many are held at 279 local and county jails.

"These way stations between life in and outside the United States are mostly out of sight," the *Post* reports. "In deserts and industrial warehouse districts, in sequestered valleys next to other prisons, or near noisy airports. Some compounds never allow detainees outdoor recreation; others let them out onto tiny dirt patches once or twice a week."

Only one in 10 detainees has an attorney and even their lawyers have difficulty obtaining medical information or even finding clients, who are routinely moved without notice.

Making a phone call is often impossible. Phones frequently don't work, and requirements for using them—punching in an Alien Registration Number as opposed to an unrelated number printed on the prisoner's wristband—are baffling, the Government Accountability Office admitted last year. At the Elizabeth Detention Center in New Jersey, where Bah was held, 9 of 30 posted numbers for foreign consulates were wrong.

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U.S. drops charges against ‘20th hijacker’ at Guantánamo prison

BY DOUG NELSON

Without giving an explanation, the Pentagon dropped all charges May 10 against Mohammed al-Qahtani, the accused “20th hijacker” in the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. Al-Qahtani, who was first charged in February of this year, has been imprisoned at the U.S. naval base in Guantánamo, Cuba, since February 2002.

The Center for Constitutional Rights in New York, which represents al-Qahtani, said it has well-documented evidence that his “confession” was extracted through torture. *Time* magazine published in 2005 excerpts from a military log detailing one of al-Qahtani’s harsh and degrading interrogations, which lasted for 48 straight days as he was strapped to an intravenous drip and denied use of a bathroom.

The Defense Department is seeking the death penalty for five other Guantánamo inmates accused of involvement in the September 11 attacks: Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, Ramzi bin al-Shibh, Mustafa al-Hawsawi, Waleed bin Attash, and Ali Abd al-Aziz Ali. They are scheduled to face trial by military commission September 15.

In the military tribunal procedures established by Congress in 2006 the judge and “jury” are military personnel appointed by the Pentagon and the prosecution can use hearsay and secret evidence. Statements obtained through some forms of torture are permissible, as long as it was done before Dec. 30, 2005.

The defendant’s lawyers are requesting the cases be dismissed on the basis that holding the tribunal a few weeks before the November presidential elections is politically motivated.

The former prosecutor at Guantánamo, Col. Morris Davis, recently testified

that “There was that consistent theme that if we don’t get these [trials] rolling before the election, this thing is going to implode, and if you get the 9/11 guys charged it would be hard . . . for whoever wins the White House to stop the process.”

Morris got cold feet over using statements obtained through torture as evidence against Guantánamo prisoners and resigned his post in October.

Morris was denied a medal for honorable service at Guantánamo three weeks after he testified April 28 on behalf of Guantánamo prisoner Salim Hamdan, Osama bin Laden’s driver, who faces life in prison for supporting “terrorism.” Hamdan is scheduled to be tried by a military commission July 21.

Differences within the U.S. government over what to do with the Guantánamo prison camp and its long-term viability continue to develop as more becomes public about the treatment of prisoners there.

The Justice Department released a report May 20 detailing accounts by hundreds of FBI agents of what they considered inhumane treatment of prisoners in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Guantánamo. Some agents, the report says, started keeping a “war crimes file,” until they were told to stop. The FBI said it instructed its agents not to take part in, or witness torture.

An English translation of a book released in April, *Five Years of My Life: An Innocent Man in Guantanamo* by former Guantánamo prisoner Murat Kurnaz, has brought some attention to the plight of inmates there. Kurnaz, a German resident of Turkish descent, was detained by Pakistani police in December 2001 while on his way home after spending two months studying the Koran at mosques in Pakistan. The U.S. military found Kurnaz suspicious,



Prisoners arrive at prison camp at the U.S. naval base in Guantánamo, Cuba, January 2002.

paid a \$3,000 bounty for him, sent him to Kandahar, Afghanistan, and then shipped him to Guantánamo.

In 2004 he was classified as an “enemy combatant” at a Combat Status Review Tribunal in Guantánamo on the basis that Muslim pilgrims shared their food with him and that a friend he knew in Germany had become a suicide bomber. The friend, it turned out, was alive and in no sort of trouble in Germany.

Although the U.S. and German intelligence determined as early as 2002 that Kurnaz had “no connections to either Al Qaeda or the Taliban, and did not represent a terrorist threat,” he was imprisoned until August 2006. Although he was subjected to constant beatings and

tortured, he never confessed.

Sami al-Hajj, a cameraman for the al-Jazeera news network, was released from Guantánamo to Sudan May 2 in very bad health. After being taken from Pakistan while on business assignment for al-Jazeera, al-Hajj spend more than six years in Guantánamo without ever being charged. Al-Hajj and two other former Sudanese prisoners released with him are speaking out about their treatment. The U.S. government has banned the publication of al-Hajj’s sketches of his experience.

There are currently about 270 inmates left at the Guantánamo prison, of which the Pentagon plans to try about 80 by military commission.

SWP ‘blood money’ appeal raises nearly \$19,000 so far

BY DAVE PRINCE

The special appeal to members and supporters of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists to donate their “Economic Stimulus” checks to the Capital Fund is off to a good start, with \$18,898 in hand from 33 contributors as of the end of May.

Contributions to the Capital Fund are dedicated solely to long-term publishing projects over the next decade and beyond. The initial results point to a big boost for the fund. This appeal complements the *Militant* appeal to other readers of the paper to contribute their checks to the socialist press (see box on this page).

A number of the contributors to the Capital Fund have sent short, enthusiastic notes with their checks. A note sent with a check by an SWP member in San Francisco states, “With honor and pride.” A Houston party member writes, “I am at the bottom of the refund list (\$300), but it’s nice to send it to the party.” A San Francisco couple who are SWP supporters sent in a \$1,200 check, saying, “Here is our ‘blood money!’”

Members of the communist movement have maintained a proud tradition of contributing to the Capital Fund from contract-signing bonuses—employer bribes given in lieu of paying higher wages—and so-called safety and production bonuses. These blood money payments are intended to shut us up when life and limb are at stake. Communists also contribute to the Capital Fund their paid union time off to participate

in activities that struggle-minded union militants should go to anyway.

The special appeal is a good option. A supporter from Chicago writes, “Here’s a stimulus where it should go.” Another from New York writes, “Here’s the ‘pound of flesh’ sent me. It’s with great pleasure that I can turn this over.”

The appeal total also includes a contribution from a meat packer at Dakota Premium Foods in South St. Paul who wanted to kick in from his back wage lump sum won in the recent contract fight.

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

Donate Economic Stimulus checks to the ‘Militant’!

As unemployment climbs, inflation on basic necessities skyrockets, and utility cutoffs increase, the U.S. government is trying to bribe working people with tiny sums of money as part of its Economic Stimulus Act of 2008.

Class-conscious workers should reject this pittance for what it is: a ploy by the rulers to convince us that the government is doing something to alleviate the grind on our standard of living. We encourage readers to put this blood money to good use by contributing it to the socialist press.



Send contributions to:
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Montreal protest defends abortion rights



Militant/John Steele

Demonstration in Montreal of more than 800 June 1 to defend women’s right to abortion. The action was called to oppose Bill C-484, called the “Unborn Victims of Crime Act.” The bill would make it a criminal offense for someone to attack a woman with the intent of killing her “unborn child,” effectively giving legal status to the fetus. Slogans on placards written in French, English, and Spanish included: “Reject C-484, We will not go back,” and “Maternity, a choice; Abortion, a right.” In 1988, after years of widespread demonstrations and protests, the Canadian government was forced to legalize abortion.

—JOHN STEELE AND JOE YOUNG

ON THE PICKET LINE

Kansas City GM strike pushes back attack on seniority

KANSAS CITY, Kansas—Some 2,600 members of United Auto Workers Local 31 returned to work at General Motors' Fairfax plant here following a 17-day strike against the company's attempt to cut jobs and curtail seniority rights. Union members voted May 22 to approve the new contract.

The two main issues were seniority rights and combination and outsourcing of maintenance department jobs.

GM wanted more control over departmental and shift transfers that are regulated by seniority. The workers saw that as an attempt to eliminate seniority rights that give them more control over their work conditions. GM also wanted to combine some maintenance jobs and require production-line workers to do some maintenance work in their areas.

During the strike the union organized two rallies of active UAW members and retirees from locals in the area and other unions.

The agreement allows GM to out-

source parts supply through a separate warehouse. About half the workers—some 120—would be represented by the union. They will receive \$16 an hour. All workers in the plant will keep the \$1,250 bonus for the launch of the new Malibu, GM's best-selling car.

—Alvino Carrillo
Retired member, UAW Local 31

American Axle workers end 12-week strike

A 12-week strike by workers at American Axle and Manufacturing ended May 22 when members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) accepted a new contract containing steep wage cuts, stricter attendance rules, and a reduction in overtime pay. The UAW reported that the contract was approved with 78 percent in favor.

Under the agreement, pay for about 3,650 workers at auto parts plants in Michigan and New York will be cut an average of \$10 an hour. Workers who had been earning up to \$28 an hour will now make \$18.50, and in some cases as low as \$10 an hour.

Overtime pay, which had started after 8 hours of work in one day, will begin after 40 hours in a week.

Forge operations will close in Detroit and Tonawanda, New York. Workers can choose to take a buyout of up to \$140,000; some will also be eligible for a \$55,000 early retirement payment.

General Motors buys 80 percent of the axles, drive shafts, and stabilizer bars produced at American Axle. More than 30 GM plants shut down or cut output during the job action. GM said it lost \$800 million and produced 230,000 fewer vehicles due to the strike. But according the *Wall Street Journal*, "the strike also helped GM control its inventory" at a time of declining sales for trucks and SUVs.

Tiffany Gardner, 33, told the *Detroit Free Press* that although she knew the deal would pass, she decided to vote against it as her only way to protest. "At



Militant/Jean Luc Duval
Members of United Auto Workers Local 235 on strike against American Axle Manufacturing picket March 3, outside one of the company's plants in Detroit.

least I can say I did what I thought was best," she said.

"I had no choice but to vote in favor of it," Armando Hernandez, 43, told the *Free Press*. He said he worried that a "no" vote would hurt his chances of getting a buyout.

—Seth Galinsky

Mildred Loving: broke down bar to interracial marriage

BY NED MEASEL

WASHINGTON—Mildred Loving died May 2 in Central Point, Virginia. She was 68.

Mildred was part Black and part Native American; her husband Richard, a bricklayer, was white. Together, they launched a lawsuit, *Loving v. Virginia*, that resulted in the U.S. Supreme Court declaring that laws banning interracial marriage were unconstitutional.

Both Mildred and Richard grew up in Central Point, a predominantly Black town. Mildred's father was a tenant farmer; Richard drove a truck for a well-off Black farmer. They went to different schools as the Jim Crow segregation laws required. They married in 1958.

At the time of the June 12, 1967, Supreme Court decision 16 states, including Virginia, banned marriage between people of different races. Since they couldn't get a marriage license in Virginia, they married in Washington, D.C. They returned home and hung their framed marriage certificate on the bedroom wall.

What they didn't know was that Virginia law also forbade evading the interracial ban by marrying out of state and then returning as husband and wife. A few weeks later the county sheriff, a deputy, and the county jailer entered their unlocked home at 2 a.m., woke them by shining flashlights in their faces, and arrested the Lovings. They pled guilty to breaking Virginia's Racial Integrity Act of 1924, a felony.

The judge sentenced each of them to a year in jail but offered to suspend the sentences if they left Virginia and did not return together or at the same time for 25 years. Mildred and Richard accepted and moved to Washington, D.C.

In 1963, as mobilizations by Black working people against segregation reached a high point, the Lovings decided to fight the reactionary law preventing them from living together as a married couple in Virginia. They filed a lawsuit that eventually reached the Supreme Court.

The court ruled, "The Fourteenth Amendment requires that the freedom to marry not be restricted by invidious racial discriminations. Under our Con-

stitution, the freedom to marry, or not marry, a person of another race resides with the individual and cannot be infringed by the State."

In addition to the blow against segregation, the decision also strengthened the right to privacy in personal decisions as against state interference. It helped lay the basis for the right of women to choose abortion with the court's 1973 decision in *Roe v. Wade*. When the California Supreme Court overturned that state's ban on same sex marriage less than two weeks after Mildred Loving's death it heavily relied on its 1948 decision ending California's antimiscegenation law.

Richard Loving died in 1975. In 2007, on the 40th anniversary of the decision bearing their name, Mildred Loving issued a statement. "I believe all Americans, no matter their race, no matter their sex, no matter their sexual orientation, should have that same freedom to marry," she said. "Govern-



Mildred Loving and her husband Richard Loving in 1965. Their fight resulted in a landmark Supreme Court ruling overturning ban on interracial marriage.

ment has no business imposing some people's religious beliefs over others. Especially if it denies people's civil rights. I am still not a political person, but I am proud that Richard's and my

name is on a court case that can help reinforce the love, the commitment, the fairness, and the family that so many people, black or white, young or old, gay or straight seek in life."

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



June 17, 1983

NEW YORK—Maurice Bishop, prime minister of Grenada, brought a stirring message of working-class internationalism to an overflow crowd of more than 2,500 people at New York's Hunter College on June 5.

Bishop's speech, which was interrupted many times by standing ovations, capped a highly successful visit to the United States. His trip was a big step forward for the Grenadian revolution and deepened the understanding of it on the part of many American workers. It was another example that, despite the small size of the island country, Grenada is a big revolution.

Grenada is a predominantly Black, English-speaking, Caribbean island. In 1979 the Grenadian people overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Eric Gairy and established a workers and farmers government.



June 23, 1958

Police in Dawson, Georgia, are carrying on a reign of terror against Negroes. So far they perpetrated two legal lynchings—one with blackjacks, the other with guns. Other Negroes have been wounded, beaten, and jailed. In the Negro sections of town people are fearful and observe the unofficial 11 P.M. curfew imposed upon them by the police.

The police have neither been punished nor reprimanded for the two murders, as is to be expected under the American Way of Life (Southern Style). Nor is there much likelihood that they will be.

The facts about the wave of anti-Negro violence in this town of 4,500 people were made public by the *Washington Post* and *Times Herald*.

The danger for Dawson Negroes was so great that procedures similar to those of resistance movements under totalitarian regimes had to be used.



June 17, 1933

Battling heroically against strike breakers aided by deputy sheriffs, pickets of the Progressive Miners of America gave a splendid account of themselves at the Peerless Mine of the notorious Peabody Coal Co. in Springfield last Wednesday.

The battle started as 2,000 miners-pickets asked the scabs at No. 59 mine not to go to work. Immediately, firing by machine guns and rifles broke out from the mine tippie. Taking advantage of cover the pickets advanced and succeeded in disarming many of the gunmen.

Fighting continued in various parts of the city as groups of pickets supported by the heroic Womens' Auxiliary fought against efforts to disperse them.

Seven members of the PMA were shot, one seriously but 42 strikebreakers and thugs were sent to the hospital.

Titles on Cuba, U.S. politics popular at Tehran Int'l Book Fair

BY TONY HUNT

TEHRAN—The Tehran International Book Fair, held May 1–11 here at the Mosalla prayer grounds, attracted hundreds of thousands, with 2,017 publishers from 77 countries participating.

The breadth of publishing in the country was evident in the Farsi section of the fair. A vast hall housing Iranian publishers offering books in Farsi was particularly packed. A separate area selling children's books was also popular.

Translations into Farsi of classic works of literature, such as Shakespeare and Dostoevsky, were available as well as translations of a range of contemporary writers, such as Toni Morrison. Iranian novels and poetry were widespread, alongside computer manuals, language books, cookbooks, and books on sports.

'Capital' translated into Farsi

A publisher called Agah (Consciousness) had just released a new Farsi translation of *Capital: Volume I* by Karl Marx. The book is an attractive hardbound edition, which was prominently displayed in the publisher's stand near the entrance to the Farsi section. Another book available was a Farsi translation of the interviews with Fidel Castro by Ignacio Ramonet, published in English as *My Life: A Spoken Autobiography*.

Two dozen Pathfinder titles that have been translated into Farsi were also available. The publisher Golâzin was selling *Che Guevara Speaks*, now in its third printing, as well as *Sexism and Science* and *Problems of*

Women's Liberation, both by Evelyn Reed.

Another publisher, Talaye Porsoo, had new translations this year of *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* by Frederick Engels and *Genocide Against the Indians* by George Novack. This publisher reported sales of more than 500 books, with *Socialism and Man in Cuba* by Ernesto Che Guevara and *Feminism and the Marxist Movement* by Mary-Alice Waters the two top sellers.

There were two exhibition halls for foreign publishers. One had recently published titles where the sales were in dollars and subsidized by the government. Individuals at the undergraduate university level or higher, as well as institutes and government offices, could buy books with government subsidy.

There was a second, larger, subsidy-free hall open to the general public where publishers set their own prices in Iranian currency. Pathfinder Books London, which has participated in the Tehran fair since the early 1990s, was located there.

Interest in U.S. elections

A young visitor to the Pathfinder stand said he was trying to size up the Democratic and Republican candidates in the U.S. presidential race in terms of what their foreign policy might be toward Iran. He purchased *The Lesser Evil? Debates on the Democratic Party and Independent Working-Class Politics* by Jack Barnes.

Another young man stopped to check out books on the U.S. labor movement. He sat down to browse

'Teamster Power' is now out in English and Spanish

BY VED DOOKHUN

After being out of print for almost three and a half years, Pathfinder's book *Teamster Power* is now available along with *Poder Teamster*, the Spanish edition, translated for the first time. It will be a welcome companion to *Rebelión Teamster*, the Spanish edition of *Teamster Rebellion*.

Teamster Power has an attractive new cover; larger, more readable type; and features 24 pages of photos.

The book is the second of the four-

PATHFINDER AROUND THE WORLD

volume series by Farrell Dobbs on the 1930s strikes, organizing drives, and political campaigns that transformed the Teamsters union into a fighting industrial union movement in Minnesota and the upper Midwest. *Teamster Rebellion* is the first volume in that series. Farrell Dobbs was a leader of the communist move-

ment in the United States and organizer of the Teamsters union during that time.

Teamster Power describes how the men and women of Teamster Local 574 and its class-struggle leadership in Minneapolis extended union power throughout the Midwest through an 11-state over-the-road organizing campaign that brought thousands of truck drivers into the union.

Pathfinder also announced that for the first time ever, an indexed Spanish version of *The Revolution Betrayed* by Leon Trotsky is now available.

Other newly upgraded Pathfinder titles include *The First and Second Declarations of Havana* in French, which joins the Spanish and English and a soon-to-be published Arabic edition of that book.

New International no. 5, with the lead article on "The Coming Revolution in South Africa," has now been published with an index and larger type size. This marks the completion of the project to upgrade the entire series of *New International* magazines with indexes and more readable type, making them more accessible to workers and youth.



Crowds browse titles from more than 2,000 publishers in a busy section of May 1–11 Tehran International Book Fair. Pathfinder Books London has participated in the fair since the early 1990s.

through three titles—*Labor's Giant Step*, *American Labor Struggles*, and *Teamster Rebellion*—and settled on buying the latter after reading a few pages.

Overall, the stand sold just short of 190 books. The most popular books this year were titles related to the Cuban Revolution. There was also a noticeable rise in interest in U.S. politics.

More than 40 Cuba titles were sold. The best seller was *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* by Jack Barnes, which book fair visitors found interesting because it addressed the possibility of a revolution in the United States.

Another good seller was *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story*

of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution. A documentary favorable to Fidel Castro, aired on state-run television during the fair, drew some visitors to the Pathfinder stand.

Close behind this were books and pamphlets on the fight for women's liberation. Books by Evelyn Reed were particularly sought after with *Is Biology Woman's Destiny?* the top seller. Collections of speeches by Malcolm X were also in demand with the stand nearly selling out of its stock. Several copies of *New International*, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory, were sold. The best selling *New International* was issue No. 12 with the lead article *Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun*.

U.S. moves ahead on missile 'defense' system in Europe

BY OLYMPIA NEWTON

The U.S. government is moving ahead with plans to install 10 missile interceptors in Poland and radar in the Czech Republic that would establish a missile "defense" system in Europe aimed at giving Washington nuclear first-strike capacity.

The system is part of establishing Washington's ability to use its more than 4,000 nuclear weapons unchecked. Washington wants first-strike capacity against all the other world powers with nuclear arsenals. It also wants to terrorize countries like Iran and north Korea whose governments do not bow to Washington's dictates.

U.S. officials have said activation of the sites in Poland and the Czech Republic would be delayed until there is an "imminent threat" from Iran. Of \$60 billion President George Bush requested be spent on the missile defense program over the next six years, \$10 billion is specifically earmarked to target Iran.

After successfully testing the system in the Pacific, Washington has pushed to establish a missile "shield" in Europe. The White House claims Iran is developing ballistic missiles capable of striking Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, and possibly other NATO powers. Most of the 28 countries that have ballistic missiles today have only short-range Scud missiles, which travel less than 300 miles—

too short to hit the United States but within range for many U.S. allies.

The plans have drawn criticism from the governments of Russia and China. "New elements could be added to this small component," said Russian general Yevgeny Buzhinsky May 27, "and we will have an entire web of antimissile sites around our borders." Buzhinsky said Moscow would take "asymmetrical" steps to match the installation of any U.S. antimissile technology in Poland and the Czech Republic.

At a May 24 summit in Beijing, Russian president Dmitri Medvedev and Chinese president Hu Jintao issued a joint statement condemning Washington's pursuit of a missile shield "in certain regions of the world."

Russia has more than 660 missiles capable of striking the United States; China has about 20. As of 2002, the last year for which data was available, the United States had 1,700 nuclear warheads deployed on intercontinental ballistic missiles, which have a range of 3,400 miles.

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U.S. intensifies assault

Continued from front page

major fronts of Washington's "global war on terror"—Iraq and Afghanistan—with the aim of stabilizing the military situation in Afghanistan through an escalation of counterinsurgency operations along the border with Pakistan.

Iraq and Afghanistan

Speaking before the Senate Armed Services Committee May 22, Petraeus said that as Centcom commander one of his first trips would be to Pakistan to meet with the head of Pakistan's military, Gen. Ashfaq Kayani.

Petraeus said more assistance should be given to the new Pakistani government, which is still developing a counterinsurgency strategy. The general said the U.S. military has a lot to offer in that regard.

U.S. secretary of defense Robert Gates struck a similar note May 30 speaking at a press conference on a U.S. air base in Guam. According to the Bloomberg news agency, Gates said Pakistan's government was in "transition" and needed more time before it could move aggressively against Taliban and al-Qaeda militias.

His remarks came a day after the head of U.S. troops in Afghanistan criticized Islamabad for not doing enough to eliminate Taliban and al-Qaeda bases in Pakistan that are used to organize attacks on U.S. and NATO troops in Afghanistan.

'Peace talks'

Just hours before Islamabad signed an agreement with Taliban-backed militias in the North West Frontier Province, John Negroponte, U.S. deputy secretary of state, warned against doing so. He said the outcome could be an increase in attacks in Pakistan, Afghanistan, or the rest of the world. He called on the Pakistani government to arrest Al-Qaeda-backed leader Baitullah Mehsud, with whom Islamabad is also attempting to negotiate an agreement in the South Waziristan region.

Under the agreement the Pakistani military would gradually withdraw from Swat, an area where the army took substantial losses last year in fighting Taliban allies. A group called Taliban in Swat pledged not to attack the army and would join in maintaining law and order. Sharia law would apply in the area but schools for girls that had been shut down by Taliban supporters would be allowed to operate as well as a UNICEF polio vaccinations program.

U.S. airstrikes

The Pakistani military said May 16 that as many as 14 people were killed when missiles fired from Predator drones struck a guesthouse complex in Damadola village.

U.S. and Pakistani officials said that a "high value" target was among those killed, according to NBC News. Local Taliban representatives said those in the guesthouses were attending a wedding.

The Pakistani military said it believes the attack was launched by U.S.-led forces in Afghanistan. U.S. war planes and drones violated Paki-

stani air space five times in mid-May, according to *Asian News International*.

In January 2007 Predators fired Hellfire missiles at another guesthouse in Damadola, killing 18 people. The target was al-Qaeda deputy leader Ayman al-Zawahiri but he had already left.

Pakistan instability

Washington welcomed the parliamentary elections in Pakistan in February that resulted in a new ruling coalition headed by former prime minister Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP). Bhutto was assassinated in December while campaigning in Rawalpindi.

In November Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf imposed a state of emergency and purged the Supreme Court in order to block legal challenges to his re-election the month before. Musharraf's political isolation made him an ineffective ally in Washington's fight against al-Qaeda and the Taliban.

Nawaz Sharif, who heads the Pakistan Muslim League-N, the second largest party in parliament, is now



Residents of Damodola, Pakistan, near Afghan border, stand amid ruins of house May 16, following a U.S. missile strike.

pressing to remove Musharraf and try him for treason. Sharif, a former prime minister, was ousted in 1999 by the military headed by then-general Musharraf.

Farzana Raja, a PPP spokesperson, said there had been "no specific talk" with Sharif about impeaching Musharraf. She said the PPP wanted to avoid a confrontation with the president and was focused instead on a package of constitutional amend-

ments that would strip Musharraf of the power to dissolve parliament or appoint top officials.

But the new government has its own factional fissures. The PML-N withdrew from the cabinet May 13 to protest the delay in reinstating judges dismissed in November. In making the announcement Sharif said the party would from this point on support the government on an "issue-by-issue" basis.

Iraqi gov't troops take control of Sadr City

BY SAM MANUEL

Thousands of U.S.-backed Iraqi government troops took control of Sadr City May 23, a Baghdad Shiite working-class suburb and stronghold of Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army militia. The move represents further progress by the U.S. government in stabilizing its client regime in Baghdad, headed by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.

Some 10,000 Iraqi government troops set up checkpoints and patrols throughout Sadr City following a cease-fire deal between al-Sadr and the government, reported the *Times* of London. For more than a year Sadr City has seen sporadic but fierce fighting by the Mahdi militia against U.S. and Iraqi troops. But this time Iraqi troops faced no resistance—"not even one bullet," commented an Iraqi officer.

At his confirmation hearing to be next head of the U.S. military's Central Command, Gen. David Petraeus

noted that U.S. troops are not involved in the occupation of Sadr City except for a small strip of the city where U.S. and Iraqi troops had already been operating.

The deal follows another cease-fire agreement in Basra after a massive offensive by Iraqi troops against the Mahdi militia there in March. Al-Sadr's supporters have weakened and divided in the face of the escalated U.S. military operations that began last year when the Bush administration sent an extra 30,000 U.S. troops to Iraq.

As in the Basra offensive, Tehran played a central role in pressuring al-Sadr to stand down in Sadr City and in negotiating the agreement, according to Stratfor. The private U.S. intelligence outfit speculates that Iran wants to bring the contending Shiite political groups to the bargaining table as it seeks an arrangement with Washington.

To counter Iran's influence the U.S.

government is encouraging Sunni Arab regimes to give more financial support to the Iraqi government. But at a May 29 conference Iraqi prime minister al-Maliki received no commitments from neighboring Sunni-led Arab regimes to help eliminate or reduce its nearly \$100 billion foreign debt. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait sent only low-level envoys to the meeting.

U.S. secretary of state Condoleezza Rice urged governments represented at the conference to extend debt forgiveness and open diplomatic offices in Baghdad. There has been no ambassador from any Sunni-led Arab nation stationed permanently in Baghdad since 2005.

Meanwhile, tens of thousands of Shiite supporters of al-Sadr protested across Iraq May 30 in opposition to a long-term security pact being worked out between Washington and Baghdad to replace the UN mandate used to justify the occupation of Iraq.

Socialists file for ballot status in New Jersey

Continued from front page

the globe are bearing the brunt of a world capitalist financial crisis. When elected, Róger Calero and I will fight for cost-of-living increases in wages and benefits of all workers, so when prices of consumer goods go up there is an automatic rise in income to match."

The socialist vice presidential candidate recently returned from Iowa. There she joined a protest march against the immigration raid at the Agriprocessors slaughterhouse. She spoke with workers who were arrested in the raid or lost their jobs because of it. "Our campaign calls for an end to immigration raids and deportations, and for the legalization of all undocumented workers," she said.

Kennedy also answered recent statements by Democratic candidate

Barack Obama and Republican John McCain, who both favor maintaining the U.S. embargo of Cuba.

The SWP calls for normalization of relations with Cuba, Kennedy said. "We call for an end to the embargo and an end to all restrictions on U.S. residents visiting Cuba. We demand freedom for the Cuban Five."

Lobman has participated in protests by truckers against high fuel prices and in rallies opposing the closing of hospitals in New Jersey. "When elected I will fight to open the books of the corporations running the hospitals to a committee of hospital and other workers. I will work in Congress for legislation guaranteeing health care and pensions, ensuring lifetime coverage and retirement income for all."

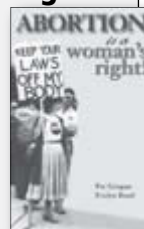
Lobman also called for the imme-

diated and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Iraq and Afghanistan.

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by Pat Grogan

Why abortion rights are central not only to the fight for the full emancipation of women, but to forging a united and fighting labor movement. **\$5**



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The Clintons' antilabor legacy: roots of 2008 world financial crisis

Excerpt from article in upcoming issue of 'New International'

This week we reprint the concluding section of "The Clintons' Antilabor Legacy: Roots of the 2008 World Financial Crisis" by Jack Barnes, the opening article in the just-published issue no. 14 of the Marxist magazine *New International*.

"It has been seven years since William Clinton vacated the White House," writes Barnes, who is national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. "To hear tell from Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, other leading Democrats, and the former president himself, almost all today's ills—from the war in Iraq, to harder times for working people, to high finance's orgy of destruction, and more—can be laid at the foot of George W. Bush and the Republican Party. In the 2008 Democratic Party primary electioneering, Bill Clinton has taken to modestly describing 1993–2001 as 'the eight best years we've had in modern history.' (Yes, 'we.'). . . .

"In reality," says Barnes, "the Clinton administration consolidated an anti-working-class shift in Democratic Party domestic policy that increased the *political convergence* of the two leading parties of the employing class." He explains that "the most important elements of domestic and foreign policy alike widely attributed today to the Bush administration" in fact had their origins in measures taken by the Clinton White House together with the Republican-led Congress from 1995 through 2000.



Militant/Willie Cotton

"The Clinton administration granted a permanent profit bonanza to the employing class by rejiggering the basis on which annual cost-of-living adjustments are calculated in wage payments and Social Security and other benefits," Barnes explains. Without those changes, official price inflation figures today would be more than double the current estimate. Above: Truckers rally April 1 in New Jersey to demand relief from soaring fuel costs.

In the opening section of the article, reprinted from the 2001 edition of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, Barnes reviews the impact of this bipartisan convergence on working people in the United States and worldwide. He points, among other things, to Washington's nonstop

bombardment of Iraq and wars in Yugoslavia; elimination in 1996 of Aid to Families with Dependent Children ("welfare as we know it," in Clinton's infamous words); enactment that same year of the "Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act" and of the "Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act," the biggest assault on rights of the foreign-born since the end of World War II; and across-the-board cuts in social welfare spending.

The final section of the article printed below is based on a Dec. 1, 2007, talk by Barnes on "Our Transformation and Theirs: From Subprime to Subhuman," which was presented to a meeting of some 400 in New York City, as well as reports by Barnes to the SWP National Committee in late 2007 and early 2008.

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BY JACK BARNES

In the two decades prior to Clinton's inauguration in January 1993, capitalism had been hit by two deep recessions, in 1974–75 (the first synchronized slump in the imperialist countries since the Great Depression) and again in 1981–82, with an explosive burst of inflation in between. Working people faced steeply rising prices, meat and gasoline "shortages," and mounting joblessness. Even using Washington's own deceptive statistics (to which I'll return), inflation figures topped 13 percent in 1979, short-term interest rates peaked at more than 16 percent in May 1981, and the official unemployment rate nearly reached double digits in 1982–83.

During the Clinton years, as I described in *Cuba and the Coming*

American Revolution, the employing class in the United States moved aggressively to counteract downward pressure on its profit margins "by cutting real wages and benefits, speeding up production, lengthening the workweek, increasing part-time and temporary labor, and reducing government-funded social security programs."

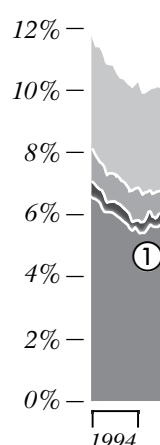
At the service of U.S. finance capital and its bondholders, Clinton doggedly pursued a federal "budget surplus," as well. The Democratic administration reaped the so-called "post-Cold War" peace dividend—temporary reductions in military spending made possible by the end of the Soviet Union and collapse of the Warsaw Pact, as U.S. imperialism prepared a transformation of its global military "footprint." Clinton cut the number of U.S. active duty troops by almost 25 percent over his eight years in office and, as a proportion of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP), trimmed the size of Washington's war budget by 37 percent.

But the Democratic White House didn't use the savings for "the people." In what we might call a domestic "class war dividend," it reduced federal expenditures on Social Security and other social payments, education, veterans benefits, public transportation, scientific research—every major category of government spending except health and Medicare (organized as a boon to insurance companies, HMOs, and medical businesses), agriculture (more fat subsidies for capitalist farmers and agribusiness), and "justice" (billions for additional and more heavily armed cops, and for courts, prisons, surveillance modernization, and death chambers).

The upswing in the business cycle during that period was a lengthy one by past standards, lasting ten years. But it was not "based on a historic acceleration of capacity-expanding capital investment," we pointed out in *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*. "It was not based on drawing more and more workers into plants, mines, and mills and massively increasing the production of salable goods." Instead, "the long upturn in the United States was the product of piling up an enormous mountain of debt and a giant increase in speculative derivative 'debt instruments'—one that we now know continued to inflate over the seven years since Clinton passed the baton to Bush.

Despite the "bourgeois triumphalism of much of the 1990s," this debt explo-

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New International

A Magazine of Marxist Politics and Theory

Issue No. 14

Also in this issue:

Revolution, Internationalism, and Socialism: The Last Year of Malcolm X

—By Jack Barnes

"To understand Malcolm's last year is to see how, in the imperialist epoch, revolutionary leadership of the highest capacity, courage, and integrity converges with communism. That truth has even greater weight today as billions are being hurtled into the modern class struggle by the violent expansion of world capitalism."

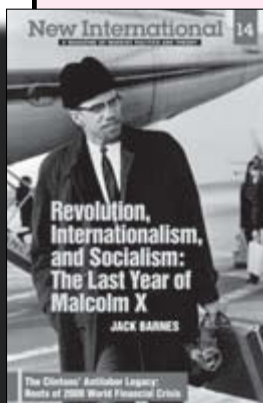
The Stewardship of Nature also Falls to the Working Class: In Defense of Land and Labor

—Statement of the Socialist Workers Party

The worsening of working conditions and degradation of the natural environment are a product of the capitalist mode of production, the reversal of which can only be achieved by a revolutionary political transformation of society.

Setting the Record Straight on Fascism and World War II: Building a World Federation of Democratic Youth That Fights Imperialism and War

—By the Young Socialists, Steve Clark



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sion was inexorably increasing “the vulnerability of world capitalism to sudden and destabilizing shocks,” we said. And that, it turned out, put it mildly!

To help us gain a better understanding of the roots of the current global financial crisis and its consequences for working people worldwide, it’s useful to take a closer look at several points touched on briefly or indirectly in *Cuba and the Coming American*

“Clinton doggedly pursued a federal ‘budget surplus’.... But the Democratic White House didn’t use the savings for ‘the people.’ In what we might call a domestic ‘class-war dividend,’ it reduced federal expenditures on Social Security and other social payments, education, veterans benefits, public transportation...”

Revolution that are being posed for the working class today with increasing sharpness.



(1) Long before U.S. capitalism’s financial house of cards began trembling in late 2007, the Clinton administration had laid the legislative foundations for the crisis by helpfully eliminating regulations bankers and other moneyed interests deemed “inconvenient.” In 1999 Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, formerly co-chairman of Goldman Sachs, and his deputy Lawrence Summers presided over repeal of the Glass-Steagall Act, which the U.S. rulers had been

forced to impose in 1933 in response to the wave of bank failures early in the Great Depression. The ruling class had used Glass-Steagall, among other measures, in order to stabilize the capitalist system by establishing a legal separation between, on the one hand, commercial banks (which make profits by taking in checking and savings deposits from individuals and businesses and lending those funds to businesses, home buyers, and others at higher interest rates) and, on the other hand, insurance companies, stock brokerages, and investment banks (the last of which make profits by raking in fees in return for their “services” to companies and governments in raising capital by issuing bonds, stocks, and increasingly other highly leveraged “financial products”).

The Financial Services Modernization Act, which Clinton signed into law in November 1999, facilitated the breaching of that wall, accelerating and magnifying the results of the workings of the laws of capital. Mergers of deposit banks, investment banks, brokerages, and insurance companies proliferated. Above all, the floodgates opened to a massive expansion of so-called derivatives, “securitized” debts, “off-balance-sheet” banking operations—in short, complex bets that the capitalist financial boom and mammoth acquisition of U.S. Treasury debt by the governments of China, Japan, and other countries would go onward and upward forever. Smaller and smaller amounts of collateral—sometimes little or no collateral—stood behind ever more leveraged loans, with less and less provision of any kind for the skyrocketing risk.

A case in point is Citigroup, the largest U.S. bank. The Clinton administration’s Financial Services Modernization Act became law shortly after Citigroup had been formed in 1998 through the merger of Citicorp (then the largest U.S. commercial bank), the giant Travelers insurance company, and the Salomon Smith Barney investment house. It was a blissful marriage, but without repeal of Glass-Steagall, an annulment would have been legally required within two years. In July 1999 Rubin turned the reins of Clinton’s Treasury over to Summers. And in October Rubin, shamelessly, took an initially \$40-million-per-year job as chairman of Citigroup’s executive committee! Not for nothing did many tag the new law the “Citigroup Authorization Act.”

Rubin, by the way, still occupied that position as of May 2008, after Citigroup had taken write-offs and losses of more than \$40 billion—yes, billion—over the previous fifteen months as a result of derivatives and other “debt instruments” gone sour. So much for the “magic” of a Goldman Sachs bond trader in face of the law of labor value!



(2) The Clinton administration actively worked to keep world gold prices low, thus



Justin Lane/New York Times/Redux

“Long before U.S. capitalism’s financial house of cards began trembling in late 2007, the Clinton administration had laid the legislative foundations for the crisis by helpfully eliminating regulations bankers and other moneyed interests deemed ‘inconvenient,’” Barnes writes. Above: Clinton signs Financial Services Modernization Act in 1999, which opened the gates for massive expansion of derivatives and highly leveraged loans.

helping to maintain a “strong dollar,” relatively low interest rates, and at least the appearance that inflation was being held in check.

Clinton’s “financial team” organized to promote the so-called gold carry trade. That is, imperialist governments and financial institutions lent gold from their vaults at cheap rates to major “bullion banks” (such as JPMorgan Chase, Citigroup, Goldman Sachs, and Deutsche Bank). These banks then sold the borrowed gold, reinvested the returns at higher rates, and gambled that the price of gold would go down by the time they had to buy back the precious metal to pay off their loans. So long as the carry trade worked (that is, so long as gold prices did not rise at an accelerating pace), the U.S. government achieved its goals and the bullion banks, as well as the largest gold-mining trusts, made out like bandits.

The Clinton White House also kept gold prices down by encouraging its rival imperialist governments and the International Monetary Fund to publicly sell off their own bullion reserves. It did so cynically, sermonizing that the proceeds could then be used for “debt forgiveness” to “help Third World countries” burdened by onerous interest payments. Testifying before Congress in April 1999, then Deputy Treasury Secretary Summers said that income from such gold sales could be used to support “the world’s poorest countries, especially those burdened by unsustainable debt.” He pledged that such gold sales could “be conducted in a manner that limits any adverse impact on gold holders, producers, and the gold market.”

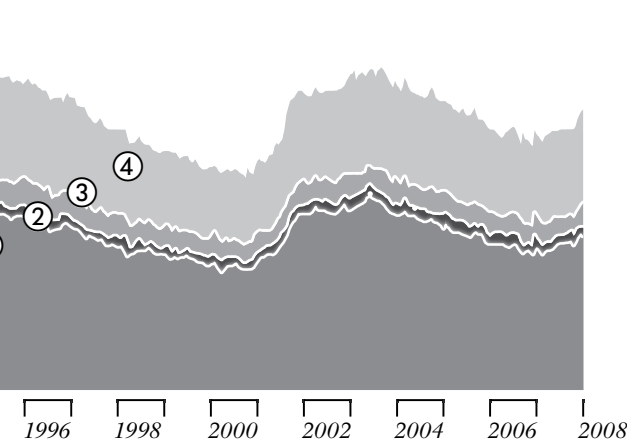
The upshot of this Clinton administration scam was not long in coming. In May 1999, at what were already the lowest world gold prices since the mid-1970s, Gordon Brown, the United Kingdom’s treasury minister—to-day its prime minister—announced that London would soon be-

gin selling fully half its gold reserves. Contrary to Summers’s assurance that such sales could be “conducted in a manner that limits any adverse impact,” Brown’s announcement set off such panic on world markets that gold prices dropped by another 10 percent over the next few weeks to a twenty-year low of \$253 per ounce, at which price he promptly sold more! As for helping “the world’s poorest countries,” it’s enough to recall that among the top global gold exporters are semicolonial countries such as Peru, Indonesia, Uzbekistan, Papua New Guinea, Chile, Ghana, Mali, and Tanzania, as well as South Africa—whose revenues from mining and exporting gold and other precious metals were devastated!

Over the next few years, the central banks of the United Kingdom, Switzerland, and Canada *did* sell more than half their gold reserves—at historically low prices—and substantial reserves were sold by other central banks too. The U.S. Treasury, meanwhile, sold virtually none of its own gold reserves—which, at nearly 9,000 tons, are by far the world’s largest hoard (more than a quarter of official world gold reserves). Beginning

Continued on page 10

the unemployed are “disappeared”



government’s “official” unemployment rate. This is the percentage of workers counted as part of the civilian labor force who Washington reports are unemployed.

“discouraged workers”—Washington’s term for unemployed workers who’ve looked for jobs over the past year but have been unable to find work for so long they haven’t bothered to look during the previous month. As a result of a statistical trick of hand implemented by the Clinton administration, workers who had not looked for work during the past year simply dropped from what Washington counts as the labor force—thus making roughly half of all “discouraged workers” disappear from government figures.

“marginally attached workers”—Washington’s term for unemployed workers who’ve looked for jobs over the past year but who have not done so during the previous month for any reason. “Discouraged workers” are a relatively small category of “marginally attached workers.”

workers working part time who want a full-time job.



Time magazine in February 1999 saluted Clinton’s Treasury secretary Robert Rubin (left), his soon-to-be successor Lawrence Summers (right), and Federal Reserve Board chairman Alan Greenspan for their successes in preventing “a global economic meltdown.” At the same time, the accelerating mountain of debt and derivatives their policies facilitated—hailed by Summers as “the foundation for a 21st century financial system”—instead laid the foundation for the 2008 world financial crisis, the worst since the global depression of the 1930s.

Clinton antilabor legacy

Continued from page 9

in 2002 gold prices began a slow, and in a few years accelerating, climb. By May 2008 the value of Washington's reserves had more than tripled from \$67 billion to nearly \$225 billion.

Now that's a plan to help "the world's poorest countries"! And to get the best of your fellow imperialist "friends," to boot!



(3) To help mask the rising social toll of the profit system, the Clinton White House simply erased millions of jobless workers from the government's monthly unemployment figures.

Clinton learned this disappearing act from a previous Democratic administration. During John F. Kennedy's first year in office in 1961, he had grown anxious about the political kickback from a sharp rise in joblessness that year. So he appointed a committee to look for a solution—not a so-

"...in 1994 the Clinton administration decided that only workers who had been looking for a job for less than a year would be counted as part of the workforce! That's how Clinton, with the wave of a statistical wand, disappeared millions more jobless workers. And they keep being disappeared to this day."

lution to put people back to work, but to do better at keeping up appearances. A few years later the federal government slapped a label on workers who had been unable to find jobs for so long that they had stopped looking. Calling them "discouraged workers," it no longer counted them as being unemployed. Voilà! The "unemployment rate" dropped overnight!

Clinton, who also confronted high joblessness at the opening of his first term, took things a step further. Although since the 1960s "discouraged workers" had no longer been counted as unemployed, they were nonetheless included as part of the overall labor force. Evidently that still revealed too much of the actual situation facing

working people. So in 1994 the Clinton administration decided that only workers who had been looking for a job for less than a year would be counted as part of the workforce!

That's how Clinton, with the wave of a statistical wand, disappeared millions more jobless workers. And they keep being disappeared to this day.



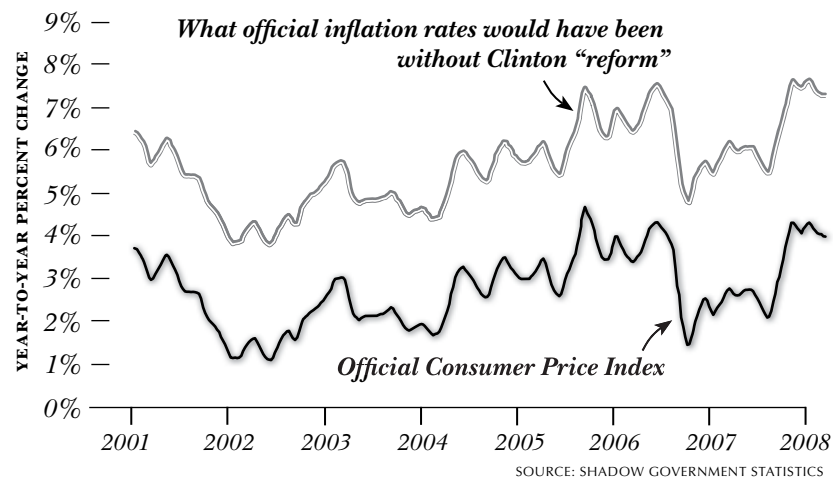
(4) Finally, the Clinton administration granted a permanent profit bonanza to the employing class by rejiggering the basis on which annual cost-of-living adjustments are calculated in wage payments and Social Security and other benefits to tens of millions of workers and working-class families in the United States. This is a decisive question for working people, as shown by the fact that real wages in this country today—even by government statistics—are some 10 percent lower than they were thirty-five years ago in 1973.

In 1997 the Clinton administration, acting on proposals by a bipartisan commission it had convened, ordered that the government's main yardstick of inflation—the Consumer Price Index (CPI)—henceforth be figured in a way that substantially reduced official price figures. This magic was produced by two tricks in particular.

First, Clinton's commission claimed to have unearthed an astounding oversight in the way inflation figures had been figured since such statistics had begun being kept decades earlier. In the past, if the price of steak went up, for example, that increase had been reflected in CPI figures. But it suddenly dawned on the commissioners that when steak gets too pricey, "people" simply start buying hamburger instead. So the cost of hamburger should replace the price of steak in the CPI. Shazam! No inflation in meat costs! And as one cynical commentator noted, "The new system now promises you hamburger, and then dog food, perhaps, after that?"

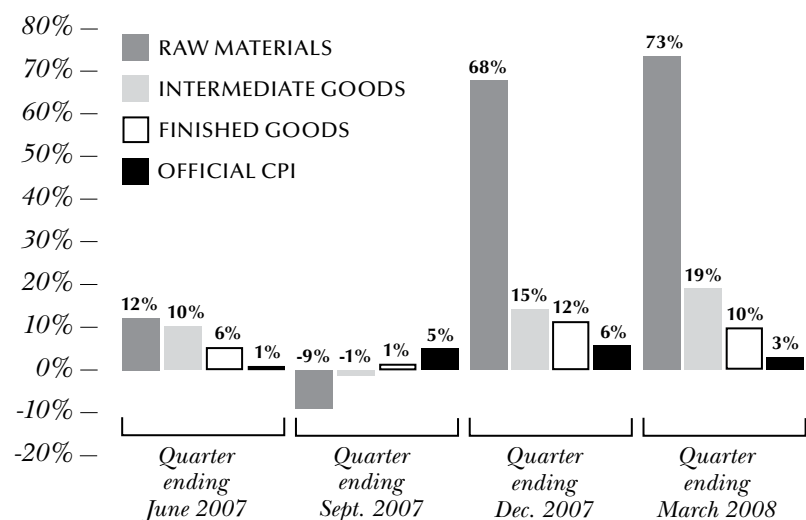
The Clinton administration also introduced what it called "hedonics"—from the same root as the word "hedonism"—into calculations of inflation. Lo these many decades, the commissioners discovered, statisticians had been overlooking that the "pleasure" working people and others derive from the goods we buy increases as new models are introduced. Cars may become more expensive, but now we can lock or unlock them as we walk across the parking lot. And as we're sending off the next pay-

Effects of Clinton's inflation index "reform"



Wholesale prices skyrocket

Quarterly price increases April 2007–April 2008



TOP: Employing class reaps billions from reduced cost-of-living adjustments in wages and Social Security benefits due to Clinton's inflation index "reform." **BOTTOM:** Grossly understated character of "official" price statistics is also revealed by Washington's own figures on sharply rising raw-material and other wholesale prices from April 2007 to April 2008.

NEW INTERNATIONAL

ment for that new computer, we should keep in mind that its speed and memory have expanded—so it's actually getting more and more fun, as well as less and less expensive per laugh!

What's the bottom line? Whereas the U.S. government's official annual inflation figure in late 2007 was deduced to be 3.2 percent, it would have been 7 percent—*more than double*—calculated by the methods used by every administration prior to the change imposed by Clinton and the Republican-led Congress. And that means hundreds of billions of dollars in extra profits for the employing class—who are now paying much less in cost-of-living adjustments to workers in wage agreements and for Social Security, health, workers comp, and other benefits.

What does that mean in the everyday life of the working majority in the United States? In early 2008, less than half a year after the official inflation figure just cited, the U.S. government announced that its so-called Consumer Price Index was now running a bit higher, at a 4 percent annual rate. But a closer look at that very same price data (even using the government's own crooked methods) reveals that the costs of necessities such as groceries, gasoline, and health care had risen by an average of more than 9 percent over a year earlier. That included a 13 percent hike for milk and other dairy products, 7 percent for bread and cereals, 8 percent for hospital care (who believes it was only that much?), and a whopping 33 percent both for gasoline and for home heating fuel.

Yet the Social Security administration announced that in 2008 the some

50 million people receiving retirement benefits will receive a "cost of living" increase of 2.3 percent in their monthly checks—a measly \$24 a month for the average recipient. And tens of millions of other working people will be lucky to get an inflation adjustment of any kind in their take-home pay.

These Clinton administration changes came on top of the statistical swindle inaugurated two decades earlier, when gasoline and food prices, especially, skyrocketed during the mid- and late 1970s. Washington, in its bipartisan wisdom, at that time conveniently decided that federal monetary policy would be better served by a figure that "smoothed out" price fluctuations that are supposedly out of the ordinary. So in addition to the inflation figures the government had been calculating and releasing for decades, it began issuing what it called "core inflation" figures—which left out energy and food costs!

Not surprisingly, whenever there's a spike in prices on grocery lines and at gas pumps, capitalist politicians and government spokespersons start talking up "core inflation." A recent cartoon depicted a filling station proprietor trying to calm down an enraged driver at the pump: "Yes, it's an outrage. But it's not a *core* outrage!"



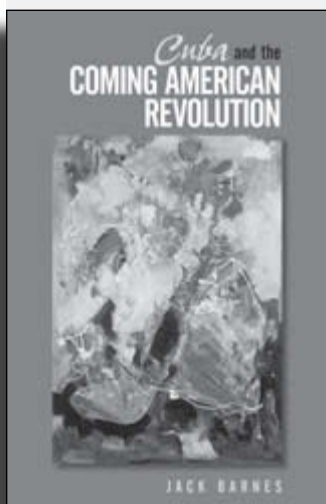
When the Financial Services Modernization Act was adopted in 1999, Clinton's new treasury secretary Lawrence Summers hailed it as "the foundation for a 21st century financial system." Indeed it was!

May 2008

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution

By Jack Barnes

With a new foreword by Mary-Alice Waters



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

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Socialist candidate for U.S. president tours Australia, New Zealand

BY RON POULSEN

SYDNEY, Australia—"As the candidate of the Socialist Workers Party for president of the United States, I stand in solidarity with the struggle of the Aboriginal people," Róger Calero told a public meeting here May 23 attended by 160 people. Calero was invited to give greetings by the Aboriginal Rights Coalition at the opening of its "Black and White Unite for Rights" conference.

The two-day conference was called to organize opposition to the federal government takeover of Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory.

Chauncey Robinson, a leader of the Young Socialists from San Francisco, accompanied Calero on his five-day visit to Sydney. She spoke at the Black rights conference May 24, expressing her appreciation at being able to learn more about the struggles of Aboriginal people, noting that their fight was "part of the same worldwide struggle" of working people against the attacks by the bosses and their governments.

The two socialists joined a teachers' protest rally May 22 of more than 2,000. It was the main action of a one-day statewide strike by high school and technical college teachers against proposed changes to school staff-

ing arrangements by the state Labor government. Transfers of teachers to schools in remote, regional and urban working class areas will be adversely affected under the plan.

Calero and Robinson were invited by Clare Corbould, a lecturer in U.S. and African American history, to address a class of about 150 students at Sydney University.

Calero had three radio interviews, including in Spanish on SBS, a national network.

At a Militant Labor Forum, Calero and Robinson were joined on the platform by Linda Harris, Communist League candidate for Bankstown city council.

The event was attended by 27 people, including immigrant workers from Niger, Sierra Leone, Chile, El Salvador, Indonesia, and the Solomon Islands.



BY MIKE TUCKER
AND FELICITY COGGAN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—"Is your campaign hoping to pressure the two main parties to adopt more proworker ideas, or is your focus to win the presidency?" a student asked Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president Róger Calero.



Militant/Chauncey Robinson

SWP presidential candidate Róger Calero speaking to a teacher at rally of 2,000 striking teachers in Sydney, Australia, May 22 called by the New South Wales Teachers Federation.

The candidate was speaking at a meeting hosted May 19 by the Students Association at the University of Auckland. He was accompanied by Chauncey Robinson, a leader of the Young Socialists in San Francisco.

"Working people need to chart a course of class independence from the capitalist parties," Calero replied. "These parties can't be pressured or reformed—they represent the interests of the wealthy handful of families that rule the United States."

"Our campaign focuses on the need for the trade unions to break with the Democrats and Republicans," he said. "We need a labor party based on unions that defend workers from the unrelenting offensive of the employers. Struggles by working people in

the United States will never win if they remain tied to the Democrats and Republicans."

"We are running a serious campaign to win," he continued. "The socialist platform offers the only solutions to the grinding unemployment, low wages, speedup, and unsafe work conditions faced by our class."

Calero returned to this point later that day at a meeting hosted by the university's Centre for Latin American Studies. He said a labor party would campaign for legalization of undocumented immigrants, in order to defend the unity of the class from the bosses' attempts to pit worker against worker.

"The bosses have used immigration to try to drive down wages and they've become dependent on immigrants' labor," explained Calero. "Raids and deportations are not aimed at throwing immigrants out of the country, but at intimidating workers and promoting divisions. That's why the fight for legalization is a decisive question for the working class as a whole."

The candidate took up this question at a meeting the next day hosted by the Pacific Media Centre at the Auckland University of Technology. "A vanguard layer in the working class is emerging," he explained. "The fight of undocumented workers illustrates this. It's the most important fight in the U.S. class struggle today. It points the road to the transformation of the labor movement that is essential to the advances working people need to make."

Socialist vice-presidential candidate speaks to meat packers, restaurant workers in Twin Cities

BY REBECCA WILLIAMSON

SOUTH ST. PAUL, Minnesota—On a tour stop in Minnesota the Socialist Workers Party candidate for vice president, Alyson Kennedy, met with workers who are part of important labor battles in the area.

She talked with several members of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) Local 789, involved in the struggle at Dakota Premium Foods, a beef slaughterhouse here. One of the workers, Ricardo Orozco, from the boning department, had invited Kennedy to meet with several Dakota workers at the restaurant where he holds a second job. Orozco, Julian Santana, one of the shop stewards in the plant, and two other workers explained how they had beaten back the company's attempt to break their union and win a contract.

Orozco referred to the continuing harassment and pressures on workers in the plant since their contract was approved on May 14. He told Kennedy, "We've got to fight and keep fighting. If we hadn't fought all these months we wouldn't even have a union today."

At the end of the discussion some of the workers volunteered to help with the socialist campaign, including petitioning to put the SWP candidates on the November ballot.

Kennedy also met with Victor Taday, a worker fighting his firing and those of 14 other workers at D'Amico Restaurant. The workers have been organizing picket lines and other actions against the unjust firings.

Taday explained the bosses met with the workers last year to tell them they had received government no-match letters claiming there were inconsistencies in the workers' Social Security numbers. The workers were told they would not lose their jobs unless a proposed new law was passed forcing the company to dismiss them. The law was never passed but in March the company fired the 15 workers anyway.

The fifteen workers all had between 10 and 15 years at the restaurant and were making between \$12 and \$14 per

hour and had several weeks' paid vacation. They have now been replaced by workers paid \$9 an hour with no upcoming vacations.

Taday described to Kennedy a strike he was part of in his native Ecuador before moving here. "I was one of 400 government workers, a driver," he said. "We struck for three weeks and defended our union."

Rebecca Williamson works at Dakota Premium Foods and is the SWP candidate for Congress in the 5th District.

Phil 'PJ' Hardy: cadre of Marxist movement

BY WENDY LYONS

Phil Hardy, known to many as "PJ," died of lung cancer in San Diego on May 12.

Hardy joined the Young Socialist Alliance in 1967 as a student at the University of Illinois in Champaign. Like many others of his generation he was inspired by the battle for Black rights and the example set by Malcolm X. He was attracted to the Cuban Revolution, the Vietnamese national liberation struggle, and the beginnings of the movement to end the U.S. war against Vietnam.

An educated Marxist cadre, Hardy helped build branches of the Socialist Workers Party in Portland, Oregon; Houston; Los Angeles; San Diego; and New York. Those who worked with him knew him as a competent and hard worker, with a wry sense of humor.

He was active in a dynamic statewide SWP election campaign in California in 1970. During that one year there were massive demonstrations and student strikes after the May 4 killing of four students when the Ohio National Guard fired into an antiwar protest at Kent State University. On August 26, a Women's Strike for Equality drew tens of thousands in New York and other cities, heralding the dawn of the women's movement. On August 29, more than 20,000 Chicanos marched against the Vietnam war in Los Angeles.

In the late 1970s and well into the 1980s Hardy worked in the Pathfinder print shop in New York. This was a period of rapid expansion of the number of titles being published. He served as bookkeeper, before the widespread introduction of computers, using paper ledgers and an adding machine.

PJ helped instill a culture of carefully accounting for each penny, making it possible to meet the publishing projections of the movement.

He remained in San Diego after the SWP branch there was dissolved in the late 1980s. He actively supported the work of the party, making generous financial contributions. He remained an avid reader of the *Militant* and Pathfinder books throughout his life.

A little more than a week before he died, PJ attended the May 1 rally for immigrant rights in San Diego. In a note he sent about a financial contribution he was making he commented: "The reinvigoration of the U.S. working class by these immigrant fighters and their supporters, at the same time that the 'fictitious capital' bubble is showing lots of leaking, has encouraged me tremendously."

How 1912 textile strike beat frame-up of union militants

Below is an excerpt from one of 10 narratives from American Labor Struggles 1877–1934, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for June. It describes the results of a hard-fought two-month textile strike in 1912 in Lawrence, Massachusetts. Workers of different nationalities—Russian, Syrian, Italian, German, Polish, Belgian, Armenian, English, Irish, Portuguese, Austrian, Jewish, French-Canadian, and Lithuanian—had forged unity to win, despite differences of language and custom. They subsequently won release from prison of two class-struggle leaders of the strike, Joseph Ettor and Arturo Giovannitti, who were also leaders of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). Copyright ©1936 Samuel Yellen. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY SAMUEL YELLEN

Although the strikers returned to work, they regarded their victory as not yet complete. Their leaders, Ettor and Giovannitti, were still in jail awaiting trial as “accessories before the fact” to the shooting of Anna Lo Pizzo. The workers felt that, before the strike could be termed a victory, Ettor and Giovannitti would have to be



Workers face off with militia in strike by 20,000 textile workers in 1912 in Lawrence, Massachusetts. Their militant actions won strike and freedom of class-struggle militants.

freed. This feeling was manifested in the banner inscribed “Open the jail doors or we will close the mill gates,” which was exhibited when the children who had been sent to other cities were welcomed back to Lawrence. . . .

As soon as the strike was ended, the Lawrence workers and the I.W.W. took active steps to secure the freedom of the indicted men. An Ettor-Giovannitti Defense Committee of 12 was organized, with William D. Haywood as chairman. Legal, publicity, and financial departments were formed. The financial department collected and expended \$60,000 during the course of the defense. The publicity department helped to form Ettor-Giovannitti Defense Conferences in New York, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Chicago, Boston, San Francisco, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and other large cities in the United States. Agitation, by means of protest parades, demonstrations, and meetings, mounted steadily. In New York a huge meeting was addressed on May 21 at Cooper Union by Morris Hillquit. At Boston there was a great demonstration, September 15, on the Common. The wave of agitation, as it swept higher each week, frightened the Lawrence and Massachusetts authorities. Charges of conspiracy to intimidate the workers in various textile mills were brought against Haywood, William Trautmann, William Yates, Et-

tor Giannini, Edmundo Rossoni, Guido Mazerreli, James P. Thompson, and Thomas Holliday, all of them, curiously enough, members of the Ettor-Giovannitti Defense Committee. Indictments were returned against them, and they were released on bail.

Toward the day of the opening of the trial, September 30, there began to spread among the textile workers a strong sentiment for a demonstration strike. Ettor and Giovannitti sent letters to a mass meeting at Lawrence on September 25, requesting that the idea be abandoned, since such a strike might prejudice public opinion and would certainly cost the workers much misery. Nevertheless, the workers were determined on this means of protest against what they regarded as a crying injustice, and Local 20 of the I.W.W. decided to support them. Accordingly, on September 30 about 15,000 textile workers at Lawrence quit work in a 24-hour demonstration strike. Never before had so revolutionary a strike—in fact, a political strike—occurred in the United States. . . .

The prosecution, in the 58 days of trial, attempted to prove that Ettor and Giovannitti had incited the strikers, and hence Caruso, to violence and murder; but both the evidence and witnesses presented were easily discredited. Much was made by District Attorney Atwill, for instance, of a declaration by two de-

tectives from Callahan Detective Agency that in an Italian speech Giovannitti had commanded his listeners to sleep in the daytime and to prowl around at night like wild animals. The two detectives were forced to admit, however, that they had destroyed the notes of the incriminating speech; nor was their character as witnesses above suspicion. Caruso produced a complete watertight alibi: three witnesses swore that he had been at home eating supper when Anna Lo Pizzo was shot. It was soon apparent that there was no evidence on which to convict.

Since the prosecution had often assailed their political and economic principles, Ettor and Giovannitti requested and received permission to deliver closing speeches to the jury. They made no attempt to conceal, euphemize, or soften their unalterable and fundamental opposition to the existing order of society, Giovannitti indeed, declared:

Let me tell you that the first strike that breaks again in this Commonwealth or any other place in America where the work and the help and the intelligence of Joseph J. Ettor and Arturo Giovannitti will be needed and necessary, there we shall go again, regardless of any fear and of any threat. We shall return again to our humble efforts, obscure, unknown, misunderstood soldiers of this mighty army of the working class of the world, which, out of the shadows and the darkness of the past, is striving towards the destined goal, which is the emancipation of human kind, which is the establishment of love and brotherhood and justice for every man and every woman on this earth.

On Tuesday morning, November 26, the jury returned a verdict of not guilty. Ettor and Giovannitti, free once more after 10 months in jail, were cheered and embraced by crowds outside the courthouse. That afternoon they addressed a mass meeting at Lawrence, at which more than 10,000 workers hailed them and celebrated the completion of the Lawrence strike victory, the accomplishment of their display of solidarity.

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June

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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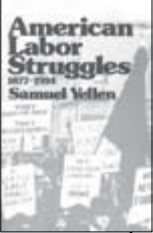
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12 The Militant June 16, 2008

No construction worker has to die!

We devote this week's editorial space to the following statement released June 3 by Martín Koppel, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress in the 15th District in New York.

The May 30 crane collapse in Manhattan, which killed two construction workers and seriously injured one, was not an “accident” and it was not unavoidable, as bosses everywhere are claiming. Mayor Michael Bloomberg shamelessly asserted, “Construction is a dangerous business and you will always have fatalities. We have no reason to believe there was anything we could do to prevent this.” That is a lie.

Just three days later, yet another building worker died in Brooklyn after falling four stories from a scaffold. That makes 17 fatalities at New York construction sites so far this year—and nearly 100 since 2005. Nationwide, some 1,200 construction workers are killed on the job *every year*.

These workers are being killed by the employers’ profit drive. Construction bosses are pushing to maximize their cut of the booming New York building market. They press workers to labor faster and under more dangerous conditions. Profit, not the safety of working people or the general public, comes first for the capitalist class, its government, and its twin political parties.

When such disasters make the news, Democratic and Republican politicians squawk about the need for more regulations and government inspections. Once in a while a boss is fined, a work site is temporarily shut down, or safety officials are shuffled to make it look like the authorities are taking action. But the government safety agencies are sub-

servient to the bosses’ interests. The paltry fines that employers pay are simply part of their overhead expenses.

The Socialist Workers Party candidates say: *No construction worker has to die!* Work *can* be done safely. The only way is through workers organizing into unions, and using union power to enforce safety. That includes refusing to work if conditions endanger lives and health.

An example for all workers was set June 2 by union construction workers in Las Vegas, who walked off the job and shut down MGM Mirage’s City Center and another multibillion-dollar project. They acted in face of murderous speedup that has led to 11 workers being killed at Las Vegas construction sites in the last year and a half.

Bosses try to intimidate undocumented immigrants into accepting dangerous conditions and low wages. Organizing immigrants into unions and fighting for the legalization of all foreign-born will help strengthen the entire labor movement.

Life-and-death questions such as job safety must be taken into the political arena. Working people need to break with the Democrats and Republicans, who from city hall to Washington represent the wealthy ruling class. We need a labor party, based on a fighting union movement, that will mobilize working people to take on the employer class and defend the interests of the majority.

We can also learn from the example of fellow working people in Cuba who, by replacing capitalist rule with a workers and farmers government, have been able to enforce their control over job safety to an unparalleled degree.

NY crane collapse kills two more

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the crane collapsing,” said Shawn, a construction worker at a site in Harlem who declined to give his last name. “They just inspect the perimeter. These welds they say might have been bad, well, they should have inspected the weld offsite. The inspectors cut deals.”

Paul Davis, an electrician at the same site, said, “The company is fully responsible. On the nonunion jobs, the companies don’t care about safety. Everything is different between union and nonunion sites—the pace, the pay, the benefits. When you get pushed, that’s when accidents happen.”

Pointing to the building he was working on, Davis added, “We’re good enough to build this, but not good enough to live here. The corporate class will live in these buildings when we’re done.”

Ten weeks ago, on March 15, seven people were killed in mid-Manhattan when a crane fell. Shortly after that the city’s building commissioner, Patricia Lancaster, was forced to resign.

Several residents in the neighborhood where the crane fell May 30 had called the city’s hotline to say

the crane appeared unsafe. A city inspector found no problems when the crane was erected on April 20 and 21. But the following day, the inspectors suspended work at the site after the crane failed a load test. The stop-work order was lifted on April 23, but it failed a second test that same day. Work was allowed to resume on April 26.

New York City is in the midst of a construction boom. For the last three or four years, the amount of money spent on construction has grown by 18 percent annually, according to the New York Building Congress. It will be more than \$30 billion this year.

New York mayor Michael Bloomberg has rezoned large areas of the city to accommodate larger buildings. The number of construction permits for new buildings or major renovations has jumped 23.3 percent in the last five years.

Bloomberg held a news conference after the collapse and said, “Construction is a dangerous business and you will always have fatalities. . . . We have no reason to believe there was anything we could do to prevent this.”

New Zealand meeting held on Cuban 5

BY MIKE TUCKER

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—“The campaign to win the release of the Cuban Five is international,” explained Chauncey Robinson at a public meeting here May 19 organized by the New Zealand Institute for International Affairs at the University of Auckland.

Robinson, a member of the Young Socialists from San Francisco, spoke alongside Róger Calero, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president. Some 30 people attended the presentation.

The five working-class fighters are serving sentences ranging from 15 years to a double life term in U.S. prisons.

“They have been unjustly imprisoned for a decade,” Robinson told the meeting, describing the efforts of the five to monitor the activities of Cuban American counterrevolutionary groups based in Florida.

“Washington has used this case to attack workers’

rights and constitutional protections,” said Calero, explaining how the homes of the five had been wiretapped and searched in secret by FBI cops. “But they couldn’t prove espionage or other illegal acts against the U.S. government,” so they laid “conspiracy” charges, “which are vague enough that they don’t require proof of having done anything.”

“I can see many echoes between the Cuban prisoners’ fight and the protests of the Tuhoe people against the ‘antiterror’ police invasion last October,” said Calero, who had met some of these fighters for Maori rights a couple of days earlier.

In prison the Cuban Five have faced further violations of their rights. “Washington has tried to break their morale,” Calero said. In standing up to these attacks and supporting others fighting for justice, the Cuban Five “are in the front ranks of the class struggle in the United States today together with others who are resisting the capitalist rulers’ attacks.”

Cuban Five case

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fighting for their freedom for 10 years now. They are serving long sentences on false charges such as “conspiracy to commit espionage” and, in the case of Hernández, “conspiracy to commit murder.”

Their frame-up, unfair trial, and harsh treatment in prison have led growing numbers of people to demand their release. They have become an example to others fighting for justice, from meat packers jailed for working without proper papers, to supporters of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, threatened with federal prosecution if it does not register as an “agent of a foreign principal.”

The conference will hear presentations by Leonard Weinglass, a member of the Cuban Five legal team; a representative of the Cuban mission to the United Nations; and Gloria La Riva, a leader of the defense campaign, who will outline some of the fall activities to broaden out support for the five. A new short video documentary will be shown that includes interviews with the wives of four and the mother of one of the Cuban Five.

Workshops will offer an opportunity to exchange experiences on how to reach out for support among Black and other community groups, students, unionists, civil libertarians, religious organizations, and others.

The conference will project a stepped-up campaign to win visas for Adriana Pérez, the wife of Hernández, and Olga Salanueva, the wife of René González, who have not been allowed to visit their husbands for 10 and 8 years, respectively. Other proposed fall activities include a petition campaign, campus and other speaking engagements, a September 13 national demonstration in Washington, D.C., and a national conference in October.

People are planning to come to the conference from New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Philadelphia, Boston, Miami, Washington, D.C., and other areas, mostly from the East Coast.

In New York, several university and high school students plan to participate in the conference, including students at Hunter College, where meetings on the campaign to free the Cuban Five and Puerto Rican independence fighters have taken place.

“I’ve been talking to people at my school to make them aware of the defense campaign,” reported Harry D’Agostino, a student at Elizabeth Irwin High School who is building the June 14 conference.

Activists in New Jersey have sent out a mailing about the conference to a range of academics in the region who are supporters of civil liberties and oppose U.S. policies toward Cuba.

In Texas, two students, Aron Duhon and Shannon Kitchen, are planning to attend the June 14 conference. They are planning a showing of *The Trial*, a documentary on the Cuban Five, at Lamar University in Beaumont. “It doesn’t make sense that they’ve been in jail almost 10 years,” said Duhon. “We need to let people know about this. They need to be free.”

Las Vegas strike

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billion complex, which has a 4,000-room hotel-casino, condominiums, boutique hotels, and an entertainment center. It is scheduled to open in 2009.

“We have the most dangerous work on the site—no ifs, ands or buts,” an ironworker who declined to give his name told the city’s KLAS-TV. “We’re all behind this,” he said of the strike. “Whatever has to be done to stop men dying continuously.”

Union members returned to work after the company agreed in talks with the Nevada Building and Construction Trades Council to increase safety training and allow union officials full access to work sites at all times.

State safety regulators found that a pattern of company safety violations contributed to deaths on a number of sites in the city, the *Las Vegas Sun* reported in March. Among them were inadequate training, use of faulty equipment, and failure to cover holes in decking or provide temporary floor or nets beneath work areas. Many of those findings were later overturned in informal conferences between the companies and the state Occupational Safety and Health Administration. The workers were blamed instead.