

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

South Africans protest attacks on immigrants
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Truckers in Spain strike over soaring fuel costs

BY RÓGER CALERO

Independent truckers in Spain began a nationwide strike June 9 over rising fuel costs and low pay. They blocked a border crossing into France and organized “go-slow” protests that clogged highways leading into Madrid, the country’s capital, and other major cities.

Some 70,000 truckers have joined the indefinite strike throughout Spain, reported the National Federation of Transport Associations (Fenadismar), which called the action.

Owner-operators in Europe, as in the United States, are being devastated by skyrocketing fuel prices and other costs, as well as by the low rates they get for the freight they haul.

The price of diesel is 1.30 euros per liter—around \$7.73 a gallon—up from 0.95 euros per liter a year ago.

“We are the ones who move the merchandise that this country needs to function,” said Julio Villascusa,

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Four coal miners killed on the job in one week

BY BEN JOYCE

Four more coal miners were killed on the job the week of May 30–June 5, bringing the total number of coal mine fatalities in the United States this year to 14. That is twice the number of miners who died by this time last year.

William Hill was killed June 3 at the Myra Coal Mine in Pike County, Kentucky. He was clearing trees when the tree he was cutting down fell and crushed him. Hill was 33 years old and had just started working at the mine the week before.

At the Robinson Run coal mine in Shinnston, West Virginia, Gary Hoffman was killed while operating a locomotive used to haul equipment and workers in the mine. Hoffman, who had 34 years’ experience, was a member of United Mine Workers Local 1501.

Consol Energy, which owns the Robinson Run mine, is one of the largest coal mining companies in the United States. The Associated Press

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Protests answer denial of appeal for Cuban 5

Judges say three should have sentences reduced



Militant/Eric Simpson

Picket line in San Francisco June 6 following denial of appeal for Cuban Five

BY SAM MANUEL

A federal court on June 4 denied an appeal by five Cuban revolutionaries to overturn their unjust convictions, nearly 10 years since they were locked up by the U.S. government on frame-up charges.

The three-judge panel, however, vacated the sentences against three of the men, two who are serving life terms. It sent their cases back to the original trial judge for resentencing on the basis that the prison terms were

excessive.

Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, and René González have been locked up since September 1998. A federal court convicted and sentenced them on false charges in a 2001 trial that was riddled with violations of their rights. The five, resident in Miami, had for years been monitoring counterrevolutionary Cuban-American groups in Florida that

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Teachers strike against budget cuts in California



Militant/Pedro Vasquez

Teachers and students walk picket line at Manual Arts High School in Los Angeles June 6

BY VIRGINIA GARZA AND NAOMI CRAINE

LOS ANGELES—Tens of thousands of teachers walked off the job for an hour June 6 and picketed hundreds of schools throughout Los Angeles to protest severe cuts proposed in the state budget.

At the Franklin Elementary School, more than 100 teachers and parents rallied along with dozens of students. Many passing drivers honked in support of the spirited picketers, who chanted, “What do we want? Stop the

budget cuts!” Some of the parents had taken part in the recent 14-week strike by the Writers Guild.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has proposed cutting \$4.8 billion from public school budgets. According to the United Teachers of Los Angeles, which organized the June 6 job action, this could mean layoffs of up to 107,000 teachers statewide and increasing class sizes by up to 35 percent. Striking teachers said the plan would likely result in the elimination

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Puerto Rican independence fighters denounce colonial rule

BY OLGA RODRÍGUEZ

UNITED NATIONS—Nearly three dozen people from Puerto Rico, the United States, and several other countries testified on Puerto Rico’s colonial status before the UN Special Committee on Decolonization June 9.

A resolution cosponsored by the Cuban and Venezuelan governments calling on the U.S. government to end colonial rule of Puerto Rico was adopted by consensus at the end of the day. The 26th such resolution adopted at the annual hearing, it also renewed the decolonization committee’s request that the UN General Assembly place the question of Puerto Rico’s status on its agenda.

Puerto Rico’s governor, Aníbal Acevedo Vilá, was among those who testified. Despite calling for more sovereignty, his Popular Democratic Party continues to support the colonial status of Puerto Rico as a “commonwealth.” Several members of the New Progressive Party, which supports statehood for the island, also spoke.

A majority of speakers advocated independence, many detailing the effects of the 110-year history of oppression and

economic underdevelopment that has marked U.S. colonial rule of the island.

20 percent unemployment

Hiram Lozada Pérez, of the Puerto Rican chapter of the Association of American Jurists, pointed to today’s 20 percent official unemployment rate on the island and said, “they admit today that 72 percent of the population lives in precarious conditions of poverty and 44.9 percent live below the poverty

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Socialist candidate defends Puerto Rican independence struggle

The following is the statement by Róger Calero, U.S. presidential candidate of the Socialist Workers Party, to the UN Special Committee on Decolonization, June 9. Subheads are by the Militant.

Distinguished Chairman and honored committee members:

I join with my fellow fighters here in protesting the latest attempts by the U.S. government to harass and intimidate Puerto Rican independence fighters through the use of federal grand jury “investigations.” Washington historically has used grand juries as fishing expeditions to frame-up and jail independence advocates and working-class fighters, both in Puerto Rico and the United States.

I also join in condemning the recent moves by the colonial government to decertify the Puerto Rican Federation of Teachers. This attack builds on earlier assaults that the U.S. government—under the hypocritical cover of fighting corruption—launched against the water workers union, with FBI raids of union headquarters and intervening in the internal affairs of the union membership.

If the U.S. government and its political police get away with these attacks, they will be emboldened to go after other unions in Puerto Rico, and in the United States.

FBI war on independence movement

The FBI’s war on the Puerto Rican independence movement and the unions underscores the reality that Puerto Rico is a U.S. colony. My fellow fighters for independence here have offered a wealth of facts demonstrating that reality. They have explained why independence from Washington’s rule is a necessity for the people of Puerto Rico, if they are to freely determine their own future.

For further reading...

Puerto Rico: independence is a necessity



Rafael Cancel Miranda, a longtime leader of Puerto Rico’s independence struggle, explains the role U.S. imperialism has played on the island and how the fight for independence is a life or death question for working people there, as well as in the United States.

—\$5

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I’d like to add that the fight for Puerto Rico’s independence is also in the interests of the vast majority of the people of the United States.

A successful struggle for the freedom of Puerto Rico will deal powerful blows to our common exploiters and oppressors—the tiny class of billionaire families that rules the United States. It will show that it is possible to stand up to the world’s mightiest and most brutal imperialist power and break free of its domination. As long as Puerto Rico is under the U.S. colonial boot, Washington and Wall Street will be strengthened, and the fighting capacity and solidarity of working people in the United States will be weakened.

The U.S. government has used Puerto Rico as a launching pad for attacks on countries around the world, from its invasion of Grenada in 1983 to the military occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. The continued U.S. military presence in Puerto Rico reinforces Washington’s moves to step up its military intervention in Latin America. Under the banner of its so-called war on terror, the Pentagon recently announced the reestablishment of the Fourth U.S. Naval Fleet to carry out operations in the Caribbean and South American waters—targeting the people of Cuba and Venezuela and anyone else who stands up to Yankee domination.

I join with others here to demand the immediate release of all Puerto Rican independence fighters, locked in U.S. prisons. This year marks the 28th anniversary of the arrests of Carlos Alberto Torres, and Haydée

Puerto Rican independence fighters

Continued from front page level.”

Normahiram Pérez of the Puerto Rican Teachers Federation Support Committee in New York, which organized solidarity for the 10-day teachers’ strike on the island earlier this year, said Washington has sought to control public schools and the unions in Puerto Rico. She urged support to the Puerto Rican Teachers Federation, which is fighting decertification by the Acevedo Vilá government and a move by officials of the U.S.-based Service Employees International Union (SEIU) to replace it with a different union that is affiliated with the SEIU.

Elliot Monteverde Torres of the Hostos Grand Jury Resistance Campaign testified about independence supporters, including himself, who have been called to appear before federal grand juries supposedly investigating the pro-independence Macheteros group. He reported that he, along with Christopher Torres and Tania Frontera, “are not accused of committing any crime and there’s not a single accusation against us. Despite that, the U.S. government cynically tries to deny us our freedom because we have chosen—in the best traditions of the independence movement—not to collaborate” with the grand jury. Monteverde, along with



Above: Roberto Mercado, Right: Militant/Eric Simpson
Above: Demonstrators picket outside a federal courthouse in Brooklyn, New York, protesting the use of a federal grand jury against Puerto Rican independence supporters. Right: SWP presidential candidate Róger Calero.



Beltran, and the 27th year for Oscar López Rivera. They are among the longest-held political prisoners in the world. In February of this year, another Puerto Rican patriot, Avelino González, was arrested by the FBI, and denied the right to bail. He remains locked up in a U.S. prison in Hartford, Connecticut, awaiting trial because of his actions in support of independence.

Cuban Five

The arrests and harassment of Puerto Rican independentistas are also part of the U.S. government’s trampling of political rights here in the United States. In September, five working-class fighters known worldwide as the Cuban Five will have spent one decade in U.S. prisons. Serving outrageous sentences of up to life in prison, they were framed up on charges of “conspiracy to commit espionage” and other so-called “conspiracy” charges. What was their real “crime?” Fighting to defend their

country, Cuba, against murderous attacks by right-wing groups that operate on U.S. soil with Washington’s complicity. We say: free the Cuban Five now!

Puerto Rico’s colonial domination reinforces systematic discrimination, racist prejudice, and cop brutality against the 2.7 million Puerto Ricans living in the United States, along with Blacks and other oppressed nationalities. As long as Puerto Rico is a U.S. colony, Puerto Ricans will be subjected to second-class status here.

Puerto Ricans in the United States are overwhelmingly workers. They face the U.S. employers’ escalating assaults today on the wages, jobs, working conditions, and political rights of tens of millions of working people in this country.

Mr. Chairman, as the Socialist Workers Party candidate for president of the United States, I have had the opportunity to travel around the country and be part of the resistance

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another independence supporter from the island whose name has not been released by activists, is supposed to appear in federal court in Brooklyn on June 13.

Longest-held political prisoners

Many petitioners called for the release of Puerto Rican independence fighters in U.S. jails—Haydée Beltrán Torres, Oscar López Rivera, and Carlos Alberto Torres, who are among the longest-held political prisoners in the world. The fourth and newest, Avelino González Claudio, was recently arrested by the FBI in Puerto Rico and is being held without bail in a maximum security federal prison in Connecticut awaiting trial.

Róger Calero, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, said, “A successful struggle for the freedom of Puerto Rico will deal powerful blows to our common exploiters and oppressors—the tiny class of billionaire families that rules the United States. . . . As long as Puerto Rico is under the U.S. colonial boot, Washington and Wall Street will be strengthened, and the fighting capacity and solidarity of working people in the United States will be weakened.”

Following adoption of the resolution, Cuban ambassador Rodrigo Malmierca

said “The Puerto Rican people can always count on our unconditional solidarity. Cuba will continue to uphold the Puerto Rican people’s legitimate right to self-determination and independence to the bitter end.”

Representatives from the governments of Nicaragua, Panama, Bolivia, Venezuela, Syria, Ecuador, Iran, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Dominica gave their support to the resolution.

Others who spoke for independence included José Castillo, of the Nationalist Party; Rubén Berríos, Puerto Rican Independence Party; Frank Velgara, Vieques Support Campaign; Antonio Cafiero, president of the Permanent Conference of Latin American and Caribbean Political Parties; Romenio Pereira, Workers Party of Brazil; Ben Ramos, ProLibertad; Héctor Pesquera, Hostos National Independence Movement; and Wilma Reverón-Collazo, Puerto Rico Committee at the UN.

Following the hearing, a reception organized by the Puerto Rico Committee at the UN at the offices of SEIU Local 1199 and a forum sponsored by ProLibertad at Hunter College provided a way for those who participated to continue the discussion on the issues raised by the pro-independence delegation to the United Nations.

Young socialists launch summer school classes

This column is written and edited by members of the Young Socialists, a revolutionary socialist youth organization. For more information contact the YS at 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, New York, NY 10018; tel. (212) 629-6649; e-mail: youngsocialists@mac.com

YOUNG SOCIALISTS IN ACTION

BY BEN JOYCE

Young socialists will be attending Marxist summer schools in New York, Minneapolis, and Carrollton, Georgia, over the next three months. The summer schools will have twice-weekly classes on various revolutionary titles, providing an in-depth study of the history of the communist movement and its programmatic foundations.

Sponsored by the Young Socialists and Socialist Workers Party, workers, youth, and others interested in the working-class movement will collectively discuss these readings, some being introduced to revolutionary perspectives for the first time.

"The back and forth is useful," said Jessica Zannikos, a student at Hunter College who is participating in the New York summer school. "Everyone has a different level of knowledge and experience and it helps you learn things from a different perspective."

The first class in New York began a discussion on the forthcoming issue number 14 of *New International*, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory. The reading came from the introductory "In This Issue" piece

that explains the significance of each article in the magazine and the political conjuncture in which the issue appears.

Over the course of the summer, New York participants will study all four articles in the magazine—"The Clintons' Antilabor Legacy: Roots of the 2008 World Financial Crisis," by Jack Barnes; "Revolution, Internationalism, and Socialism: The Last Year of Malcolm X," also by Barnes; "The Stewardship of Nature Also Falls to the Working Class: In Defense of Land and Labor," a statement of the SWP; and "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 and Steve Clark.

"Marxist study, combined with action, will better arm us for the struggles we'll be a part of in the future," said Emily Paul, a leader of the Young Socialists in New York who is involved in organizing the summer school.

Other works to be studied in the summer program in New York include Marxist classics such as the *Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels; *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* by Engels; and *The History of American Trotskyism* by James P. Canon. A special educational weekend at the end of the summer will feature presentations and extended discussion of readings on the 1917 Russian Revolution.

The summer school is part of a package of activities young socialists will be engaged in this summer and beyond. In several states, they will

Chicago protesters: charge cop who killed 2



Militant/Betsy Farley

CHICAGO—Chants of "What do we want? Justice!" in English and Spanish rang out June 3 as family and friends of Miguel Flores and Erick Lagunas joined a protest at the State Office Building in downtown Chicago. They were demanding the Chicago Police Department and Cook County State's Attorney's Office reopen the investigation into the two men's deaths. Flores, 22, and Lagunas, 21, were killed in a crash in November 2007 when their car was hit by an off-duty cop, John Ardelean.

Witnesses say the cop had run a stop sign and was driving on the wrong side of the road. Ardelean was initially charged with two felony counts of aggravated DUI, but the charges were dropped by prosecutors in May. The families are demanding the case be reopened.

—BETSY FARLEY

help carry out extensive petitioning efforts to collect signatures needed to get socialist candidates on the ballot. The petitioning efforts will supplement campaigning for SWP presidential candidate Róger Calero and his running mate, Alyson Kennedy, among youth and working people across the country.

From July 10 to 12, young socialists

will take part in a socialist educational conference in Oberlin, Ohio, sponsored by the YS and the SWP. The conference will focus on the political themes presented in *New International* No. 14 and from that starting point take up the key political questions in world politics today, charting a course of action for the communist movement.

Four coal miners killed in 1 week

Continued from front page

reports the company spent \$510,000 in just three months in 2008 for lobbying expenses regarding legislation on "labor matters including mine safety."

Hoffman is the second miner to die this year while working at a Consol mine. In February, a service technician was electrocuted while working on a mine access road in Pennsylvania. He was 51 years old with only one year's experience.

A number of this year's mine deaths have been among younger and less experienced miners. Of the four deaths to occur in the past week, one of them was 18 year-old Adam Lanham who had less than five months' experience when he was run over by a piece of hauling equipment.

Another was 25-year-old roof bolt-er Justin Wilkin, who had two years' experience when he was killed by the fall of a section of the roof at a mine owned by Gibson County Coal in Indiana. Less than a year ago, three others were killed at the same mine while it was under construction.

Brice Watzman, vice president for safety, health, and human resources at the National Mining Association, said in 2004 that over the next five to seven years, half the coal mining workforce will retire and be replaced by newer, younger workers. The newer generations will be confronted with the bosses' demand for more and more production despite the workers' lack of expe-

rience as the price of coal continues to rise. The price of coal from the Central Appalachian region, for example, has more than doubled in the past year, from \$40 per ton in early 2007 to \$90 per ton as of this April.

For further reading:

First and Second Declarations of Havana

Uncompromising indictments of imperialist plunder and manifestos of revolutionary struggle by working people the world over. —\$10
Also available in: Spanish, French, Greek, Arabic



Cuba and the Coming American Revolution

A book about prospects for revolution in the United States, where the political capacities of workers and farmers are today as utterly discounted by the ruling powers as were those of the Cuban toilers. —\$10
Also available in: Spanish and French



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FREE THE CUBAN FIVE! Working Conference

Saturday, June 14



Hostos Community College

149th St. and Grand Concourse, Bronx, New York
(Take 2, 4, or 5 train to 149th St.)

9:30 a.m.—5 p.m. (8 a.m. registration)

Plenary speakers: Leonard Weinglass, Cuban 5 legal team, representative of Cuban Mission to the UN

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- artists • civil libertarians and lawyers • community organizations

Launch Party for 19th U.S.-Cuba Pastors for Peace Friendshipment Caravan
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Pentagon reactivates Fourth Fleet for Latin America operations

BY RÓGER CALERO

The U.S. Navy announced April 24 the reestablishment of its Fourth Fleet to oversee operations of ships, aircraft, and submarines deployed in the Caribbean and Central and South American waters. Effective July 1, the fleet would become the naval component of the U.S. Southern Command, based at Mayport, Florida.

The Fourth Fleet will not have ships permanently assigned to it. Instead, like the Fifth Fleet assigned to the Persian Gulf, the fleet's function will be to staff, train, and equip all ships and submarines deployed to the area. The command structure is patterned after the naval component of the U.S. Central Command in that the admiral of the Southern Command in charge of all naval forces in that area will also command the Fourth Fleet.

Navy Rear Admiral James Steven-

son, the former commander of U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command, said April 30 that the Navy is "very mindful of the 40 percent of U.S. trade that goes on with those countries and the 50 percent of the oil imports from that region."

U.S. Navy officials said the fleet's operations will focus on countering "narcoterrorism" activities, joint exercises with military allies in the region, and "humanitarian missions."

The Fourth Fleet was first created in 1943 during World War II and discontinued seven years later. The U.S. Navy, however, maintains a constant and notable presence in the region.

A six-month naval deployment throughout the Caribbean and Central and South America, called Partnership of the Americas 2008, has been underway since April. As part of the military exercises, the USS *George Washington* aircraft carrier



Spc. Joshua Risner, 372nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment (US Army)

Soldiers and police from Caribbean countries, along with U.S. troops, held crowd-control practices during Tradewinds 2008 military exercise in the Dominican Republic in April.

conducted joint training exercises for nearly two months with Brazilian and Argentine naval units. Under the guise of carrying out "humanitarian missions" the U.S. Navy and Marines are also planning to conduct joint exercises with military units from 14 Latin American countries.

The U.S. military also carries out hundreds of surveillance flights from its bases in the region, and from the United States.

On May 17, a U.S. Navy aircraft entered Venezuelan airspace close to the island of La Orchila and just 80 miles off the coast of Venezuela, where a military base and a presidential residence is located. The Pentagon said the plane, which belongs to the Joint Interagency Task Force South, was on an "antinarcotics" mission from the Caribbean island of Curaçao.

The government of Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez protested this provocation, and another violation of its territory that occurred the day before when Colombian soldiers crossed into Venezuelan territory.

On May 14, Chávez warned the Colombian government not to allow the U.S. military to establish a base in La Guajira, a border region shared between the two countries.

Ecuadorian president Rafael Correa has said he will not renew Washington's 10-year lease on its naval base in the Pacific port of Manta when it expires next year. Chávez said U.S. ambassador to Colombia William Brownfield had suggested that the Manta base could be moved to La Guajira.

Campaign fights defamation lawsuit by mining giant against author, publisher in Canada

BY MICHEL PRAIRIE

MONTREAL—A collective of three authors and the publishing house Écosociété has launched a public defense campaign against a \$6 million defamation suit brought against them by Canadian mining giant Barrick Gold for their publication last April of *Noir Canada, pillage, corruption et criminalité en Afrique* (Black Canada: Plundering, Corruption, and Crime in Africa).

Written by Alain Deneault, in collaboration with Delphine Abadie and William Sacher, *Noir Canada* is a well-documented exposé of the role of Canadian mining companies in Africa and the support they receive from the Canadian government.

Barrick Gold objects to a section in *Noir Canada* about the company's responsibility for the 1996 expulsion of thousands of small-scale, self-employed miners and their families from the Bulyanhulu mine in Tanzania, in the course of which 52 miners were reportedly buried alive. The authors are calling for an independent public inquiry into what happened.

The refusal of Écosociété and the authors to be intimidated has received significant support here. As of June 7,

more than 5,000 people and organizations had signed a petition initiated by Écosociété demanding that the Quebec government adopt a law banning suits like this one aimed at silencing critics and opponents of corporate interest. These are often called SLAPP suits (strategic lawsuit against public participation).

Among the signatories are the Canadian Labor Congress, Quebec Labor Federation, Confederation of National Trade Unions, and the Confederation of Quebec Trade Unions, as well as several well-known individuals.

During a May tour in Montreal, socialist candidate for U.S. vice president Alyson Kennedy met with *Noir Afrique* author Alain Deneault to learn more about the case and express

her solidarity.

Kennedy and her former coworkers, along with the United Mine Workers of America and the *Militant*, were targets of a similar lawsuit between 2004 and 2006 in Utah as part of a struggle to win a union at the Co-Op coal mine. Co-Op's owners charged in their suit that the miners, the union, the *Militant*, and other defendants defamed it by statements made about the lack of safety and the poor working conditions in the mine. The suit was dismissed in 2006 as the result of a sustained defense campaign in the labor movement.

A June 12 benefit concert will take place in Montreal for Écosociété and the three authors of *Noir Afrique*. For more information on the defense campaign see <http://slapp.ecosociete.org>.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



June 24, 1983

NEW YORK—A rally to support Nicky Kelly, an Irish political activist framed up on charges of robbing a mail train, took place here June 10. Kelly, a member of the Irish Republican Socialist Party, is serving a 12-year prison term in Portlaine Prison outside Dublin.

After Kelly's arrest in 1976, he was subjected to two days of severe brutality and then signed a confession dictated to him by police officers.

His appeal was turned down on a technicality and he was sent to prison despite the fact that the Irish Republican Army, with which Kelly has no connection, had publicly acknowledged its responsibility for the train robbery for which he was convicted.



June 23, 1958

In the three weeks of work without a contract the rank-and-file United Auto Worker members have demonstrated their solidarity and readiness for militant struggle against the Big Three auto companies.

With the expiration of the contract, the Big Three companies have refused to make payroll dues deductions. Management hopes to undermine the union's financial base and thus weaken its ability to fight in contract negotiations.

The plan sent out by top union officers suggests dues patrols, gate checks, etc. But even before any patrols appeared members rallied to the defense of the union and began paying up dues in mass. A St. Louis local reports more than 1,000 members showed up to pay dues in a single day.



June 24, 1933

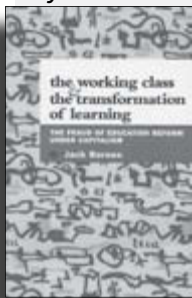
The militant mass character of the strikes, demonstrations and meetings of the Progressive Miners and the Women's Auxiliary of Illinois is shown by the reports published week by week in the *Progressive Miner*.

Everywhere except in those places where the armed National Guards prevent meetings, the miners and their wives gather in their thousands to discuss their problems. The whole of mining territory seethes with agitation and action.

The chief of police of West Frankfort, IL and his henchmen forcibly and brutally dispersed members of the Women's Auxiliary of the P.M.A. drill team which was practicing on a base ball diamond in that city. Several were beaten.

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

By Jack Barnes



"Until society is reorganized so that education is a human activity from the time we are very young until the time we die, there will be no education worthy of working, creating humanity."
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Cuban 5 denied appeal

Continued from front page

have carried out murderous attacks in Cuba with the complicity of the U.S. government.

This was the second appeal by the Cuban Five, as they have become known worldwide. In 2005 a three-judge panel of the same court, the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, threw out the convictions on the basis that the five men could not get a fair trial in Miami. A year later the full 12-judge court reversed that ruling, while allowing for appeal on other points.

In the June 4 ruling, one of the three judges, Stanley Birch, supported upholding the convictions but at the same time reiterated his belief that the defendants did not receive a fair trial in Miami and that their request for a change of venue should have been granted in the earlier appeal. “The defendants were subjected to such a degree of harm based upon demonstrated pervasive community prejudice that their convictions should have been reversed,” he wrote. During the 2001 trial, Judge Joan Lenard had rejected repeated defense motions for moving the trial out of Miami, where right-wing threats and widespread media bias created a prejudicial atmosphere.

The five were convicted on charges of “conspiracy to commit espionage,” failing to register as agents of a foreign government, and other false charges. Hernández was also falsely accused of “conspiracy to commit murder.”

The National Lawyers Guild, in a statement protesting the ruling, quoted Leonard Weinglass, an attorney for the Cuban Five, who noted, “Conspiracy has always been the charge used by the prosecution in political cases.” That way the government does not have to prove that espionage actually happened but can impose sentences (in the case of Gerardo Hernández two life terms plus 15 years) as if espionage had actually happened, Weinglass noted.

To sustain a conspiracy charge, the government must prove the existence of “an agreement to achieve an unlawful objective” but not that “the defendants accomplished the purpose of the conspiracy,” the ruling said in upholding the conviction of René González, who is serving 15 years.

Dissent on ‘conspiracy to murder’

The judges were split 2-1 in upholding the conviction of Gerardo Hernández on the charge of conspiracy to commit murder. The charge was in connection with the 1996 shootdown by the Cuban air force of two Brothers to the Rescue planes, a Cuban-American rightist outfit, which over the years had repeatedly violated Cuban airspace in increasingly aggressive actions. Its leader, José Basulto, has a long history of armed attacks against Cuba, including his involvement in the 1961 U.S.-organized mercenary invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs and an assault on a Cuban hotel in 1962.

René González and another Cuban, Juan Pablo Roque, had joined Brothers to the Rescue to obtain information on its plans for overflights and possible attacks against Cuba. The U.S. government alleges that on instructions from Havana, Hernández had told the two men to avoid flying

with the group during a range of dates on which the Cuban air force would “confront” the provocative flights.

Prosecutors also cited alleged remarks by Hernández after the shoot-down expressing approval of the self-defense action taken by the Cuban government. These two things, it said, constituted an “agreement” or “conspiracy” by Hernández in relation to the shootdown.

In a strongly worded 16-page dissent, Judge Phyllis Kravitch voted to overturn Hernández’s conviction, calling the government’s evidence “speculation” at best. She noted that Brothers to the Rescue had repeatedly violated Cuban airspace since 1994, flying low over downtown Havana on one occasion. The Cuban government, she wrote, twice filed written complaints with the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration about the incursions, warning that Cuba had the right to down any invading aircraft. Basulto even appeared on Miami radio boasting of the flights, but U.S. authorities took no action against him.

The judge noted that a conspiracy charge must be based on agreement to “achieve an unlawful objective,” but that the U.S. government failed to prove that Hernández’s goal was “to shoot down the planes in international, as opposed to Cuban, airspace.” The Cuban government says it shot down the planes within its own airspace.

Kravitch added that the government “failed to provide sufficient evidence that Hernandez entered into an agreement to shoot down the planes at all.”

Disproportionate sentences

On the basis of this unfounded charge, Hernández was sentenced to a double life term plus 15 years. René González was sentenced to 15 years, Fernando González to 19 years, Ramon Labiñino to life plus 18 years, and Antonio Guerrero to life plus 10 years.

While upholding the convictions of all five, the court was unanimous in ruling that the sentences for Labañino, Guerrero, and Fernando González were excessive and had no basis in the law. It found that the government



Roberto Mercado

Supporters of the Cuban Five picket in front of the Federal Building in New York City on June 6, protesting a federal appeals court decision to uphold their convictions.

failed to show that Labañino or Guerrero had transmitted any “top secret” documents to Cuba, and failed to prove that González was a “manager” of the group.

Constitutional rights violations

The government’s case against the Cuban Five is built on “evidence” taken secretly from their homes and computers by FBI agents under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA). Under that 1978 law—an attack on constitutional protections against unreasonable searches and seizures—a secret court was set up inside the U.S. Justice Department to rubber-stamp requests by federal cop agencies to spy on U.S. residents without having to apply for a warrant at a regular court.

The June 4 ruling upheld the trial court’s decision not to suppress evidence obtained under the secret

searches, stating that the government had certified that the request was proper. “When, as here, the applications contain the required certifications, they are subject ‘only to minimal scrutiny by the courts.’ The reviewing court has no greater authority to review the certifications of the executive branch than the FISA court has.”

The ruling upheld trial judge Lenard’s decision to bar the defendants and their attorneys from viewing the full documents presented as evidence, on the basis that some documents might contain classified information. Defense attorneys were allowed to view heavily censored documents or “summaries.”

Attorneys for the Cuban Five say they will ask the full court to reconsider its ruling. They said they are also considering appealing the case to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Picket lines back call to release Cuban 5

BY BEN JOYCE

Supporters of the Cuban Five demonstrated in a number of cities around the world June 6 to demand the release of the five, and to protest the ruling of a federal court of appeals that upheld their convictions.

The Cuban Five have been incarcerated in U.S. prisons since 1998. They were railroaded to jail on frame-up charges that included failure to register as foreign agents, conspiracy to commit espionage, and other conspiracy charges. The five were denied bail and held in solitary confinement for 17 months before being convicted in a trial that was characterized by the use of “secret evidence.”

Several dozen people took part in a picket line and rally in downtown San Francisco to protest the ruling. Speakers addressing the rally included Gloria La Riva of the National Committee to Free the Five, and Ali-

cia Jrapko of the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five. Jrapko spoke on the phone with Gerardo Hernández, one of the five, prior to the rally. She reported that he told her, “We’ll do all the time we have to do, 30 years, 40, whatever, and as long as a single one of you is outside resisting, we are also going to resist, until justice is done.”

Hernández said he wasn’t surprised by the court ruling. “This is the same justice system that has incarcerated Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier, and the Puerto Rican political prisoners for more than 20 years,” he said.

Following the speakers, organizers played a recorded message from Abu-Jamal, a Black rights activist facing execution after being framed up by Philadelphia police in 1981.

Alianza Martiana, a Cuban American coalition that favors normalization of relations with Cuba, held a

press conference in Miami to protest the decision.

In New York, more than 60 protesters picketed at the Federal Building. The picket featured signs reading “Free the Cuban Five now!” and “Visas for the wives of the Cuban Five”! A rally following was addressed by attorney Lynne Stewart, Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate Róger Calero, and others.

“The case of the five is an example of how the legal system and prison system is used by the ruling class to keep working people in check,” said Calero. He pointed to the growing prison population in the United States and how workers are often targeted by the same measures used against the five.

Actions in support of the Cuban Five also took place in London; Montreal; Boston; Los Angeles; Seattle; Minneapolis; Chicago; Washington, D.C.; and Stockholm, Sweden.

‘New International’ No. 14: powerful tool for fighters

BY PAUL PEDERSON

Issue 14 of *New International*, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory, has just been published. The four articles it contains explain the consequences for the working class of the deepening world disorder of capitalism and the need to build proletarian parties that can take political power out of the hands of the exploiters.

The feature article, by Jack Barnes, is titled “Revolution, Internationalism, and Socialism: The Last Year of Malcolm X.”

IN REVIEW

In it, Barnes explains how a socialist revolution opens “the possibility of *using* the state power of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is far and away the most powerful instrument fighting toilers can ever wield, to advance the battle to eradicate racism, national oppression, women’s second-class status.”

The article—which will appear as part of an upcoming Pathfinder book *Black Liberation and the Fight for Workers Power*—shows how Black workers have occupied a weight in the front ranks of working-class struggles disproportionate to their percentage among working people in the United States. Barnes calls this a “startling record,” and points out “the same cannot be said of the big majority of oppressed nations or nationalities in general in other parts of the world.”

The article traces the conclusions that follow from this about the social forces that must combine to carry out a socialist revolution in the United States.

A correct understanding of the vanguard role of Black workers in revolutionary class battles in the United States



New International No. 14 explains the social roots of so-called natural disasters: Left, New Orleans, Louisiana, after the levees broke under the impact of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The book also chronicles the historic role of Black workers in the front ranks of the U.S. class struggle. Right, young people march into battle against segregationist forces in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1963.



gave the communist movement the confidence, Barnes explains, “to recognize the revolutionary significance of the political development of Malcolm X.”

Malcolm X, the article explains, was an example of the fact that “in the imperialist epoch, revolutionary leadership on the highest level of political capacity, courage, and integrity converges *with* communism not simply *toward* the communist movement.”

This article gives the reader a clearer appreciation of the development of Malcolm X as a world-class revolutionary leader, who in the course of the class struggle began moving toward becoming a communist. This fact holds important lessons about the historical process of development of leadership of the revolutionary working-class movement worldwide.

With the sputtering out of the presidential bid of Hillary Clinton, the first article in the magazine—“The Clintons’ Antilabor Legacy: Roots of the 2008 World Financial Crisis,” also by Jack Barnes, could not have come out at a better time. It is a compilation of two pieces, published in 2001 and 2008.

Together they present the antilabor shift in domestic policy that the Democratic White House and Republican Congress converged on during the Clinton years.

The first section was originally published in the 2001 edition of the Pathfinder book *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*. It describes the steps taken by the U.S. ruling class in those eight years: from the expansion of the U.S.-led European military alliance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, up to the borders of the former Soviet Union, to the dismantling of Aid to Families with Dependent Children—the biggest single erosion yet of the federal social security system by the U.S. ruling class.

The latter section, which was printed in last week’s issue of the *Militant*, was written after the opening of the world financial crisis in 2007. It points to the economic policies carried out by the Clinton administration that added fuel to the mania of debt speculation and leveraged betting on Wall Street, while further eroding the standard of living of working people.

Labor and nature

The third item is a statement of the Socialist Workers Party titled “The Stewardship of Nature Also Falls to the

Working Class: In Defense of Land and Labor.” It is a companion piece to the article “Our Politics Start with the World,” which appeared in *New International* No. 13.

This piece answers well the campaigns of hysteria—like the recent global warming panic—that aim to divert attention from the real source of the degradation of the conditions of the worker and the natural environment: the profit system.

It traces the social origins of what are often presented as “natural” or “environmental” disasters—from the devastation caused by the 2004 tsunami in the Indian Ocean, the 2003 heat wave in France, and Hurricane Katrina in 2005, to the “scarcity” imposed by capitalism that has led to widespread protests over food prices.

This system, it concludes, “will inevitably continue to ravage humanity and the planet we inhabit. It cannot be stopped without uprooting capitalism itself.”

Character of World War II

The final piece included in this issue is “Setting the Record Straight on Fascism and World War II: Building a World Federation of Democratic Youth That Fights Imperialism and War.” This letter was sent by the national leadership of the Young Socialists in the United States to the leadership committees organizing the 16th World Festival of Youth and Students in April 2005. That gathering drew some 17,000 delegates from 144 countries to Caracas, Venezuela, in August of that year, under the banner of anti-imperialist solidarity.

The letter was prompted by a proposal to dedicate the final day of the conference to a celebration of the victory of the Allied powers in World War II.

Using the example of the Communist Party in the United States, the letter traces the anti-working-class role of the Stalinist parties, which following the dictates of Moscow, lined up behind the banner of their own ruling class in the imperialist slaughter.

Above all what this edition of *New International* points to is the necessity and possibility of making a socialist revolution in the United States. It is a necessary tool for understanding the character and impact of the ruling-class offensive against wages, working conditions, and living standards of working people worldwide. And it shows, through clear historical examples, the road down which working people must advance towards ending the dictatorship of capital and taking political power in their own hands.

Latino immigrants are workers most likely to be killed on the job

BY DOUG NELSON

Latino immigrants are 50 percent more likely to be killed on the job than other workers, according to government statistics from 2006, the most recent available.

Two-thirds of the 990 Latino workers killed on the job in 2006 were immigrants, although immigrants only make up about half the estimated 19.6 million Latino workers in the United States.

A disproportionate number of Latino immigrants work in some of the most dangerous industries, such as construc-

tion, where bosses have used the greater vulnerability of undocumented immigrants as a spear point in their productivity drive at the expense of safety.

Overall workplace fatalities in the United States have been on the rise since 2002. The construction boom claimed the lives of about 1,300 workers in 2006. A major cause has been the rise in workplace deaths from falls. Among Latino workers, falls from a higher level have recently outstripped all other specific causes of job fatalities, increasing fivefold since 1992.

New International

A Magazine of Marxist Politics and Theory

Issue No. 14

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 Clintons’ Antilabor Legacy: Roots of the 2008 World Financial Crisis

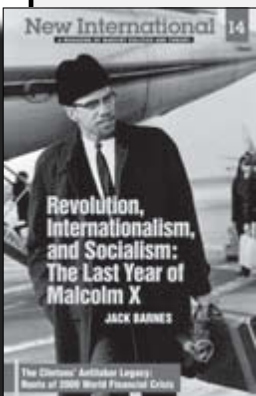
—By Jack Barnes

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

—Statement of the Socialist Workers Party

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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Myanmar: How British imperialism undermined economic development

BY PATRICK BROWN

First of two articles

AUCKLAND, New Zealand, June 1—The aftermath of Cyclone Nargis continues to wreak a mounting toll on the people of Myanmar. Some 134,000 people are estimated to be dead or missing. United Nations officials say that an estimated 2.4 million are homeless.

The devastation across a large part of Myanmar, known as Burma until 1989, illustrates not only the storm's power, but the country's underdevelopment—a consequence of its subjugation by British colonialism and modern imperialism, and by the military caste that rules it today.

This article—the first of two examining the historical background to Burma's crisis—will discuss how London's plunder of the country helped pave the way for the rise and consolidation of the military regime that has shown such contempt for working people in the wake of the cyclone.

Colonial conquest

Starting in 1824, it took three wars for British-led colonial forces based in India to bring Burma to heel. Burma's royalty had built an empire that lasted more than 1,000 years based on strong military regimes. The British colonial power completed its conquest in 1886, annexing Burma to India.

The British spurned the traditional structure of Burmese society. They staffed the upper layers of the civil service with English-speaking people from India.

In addition to expanding rice production and processing, they stepped up exploitation of the country's rich mineral resources and teak forests, building only the infrastructure needed to develop foreign trade.

Such industries usually employed workers brought in from India and, to a lesser extent, China. Away from the cities, Burmese rice farmers, crippled by debt, were often replaced by tenant farmers of Indian origin.

Burmans, the majority nationality, could not even turn to the army as a reliable source of employment. Brit-

ish military officers recruited first from the Karen, Chin, and Kachin nationalities. In 1940, only 12 percent of troops were Burman.

By World War II Burma was a major exporter of rice and petroleum. But development was skewed to the interests of the British colonial system.

Independence struggle

Burmese resistance to colonial rule, growing through the early 20th century, took many forms, from labor actions, to militant student protests, to peasant revolts. Buddhist monks played a prominent part in many demonstrations. The movement reached its peak in the late 1930s.

The independence struggle in neighboring India had a big impact. So did struggles and political currents in labor and independence movements around the world, including the Russian Revolution of 1917.

By the time the Burmese Communist Party (BCP) was formed in 1939, however, the revolutionary Bolshevik-led government in Moscow had been replaced by the narrow, nationalist bureaucracy headed by Joseph Stalin with its counterrevolutionary foreign policy. Through the 1940s and '50s, the BCP molded its participation in the independence struggle to the needs and dictates of Moscow and Beijing.

Perturbed by growing opposition to its rule, London granted Burma nominal independence in 1937. It was too little, too late for the independence leaders, who welcomed the outbreak of World War II and the defeat of British forces in Burma by the Japanese invasion. Tokyo further raised their hopes by convening a meeting of 30 Burmese leaders and promising to back a new Burmese Independence Army.

The independence fighters quickly became disillusioned with their Japa-



Myanmar forces march in Yangon. The country has been under military rule since 1962.

nese backers. Forming the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) in 1944, they began fighting alongside the British army. In March 1945 they declared official support for the Allies and helped to retake Rangoon.

Elections in 1947 for a constituent assembly saw a sweeping victory for the AFPFL leaders. Three months later Aung San, a leader of the interim government and the father of present-day opposition leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, was assassinated, along with other government leaders. In October Prime Minister U Nu and his British counterpart, Clement Atlee, signed the treaty of independence in London.

With the legacy of colonialism weighing heavily on it, independent Burma faced significant barriers to progress. The economy had been laid to waste by World War II.

No national revolutionary leadership had emerged that could build on the momentum of the anticolonial struggle and mobilize working people to defeat imperialism and carry out a revolution for sovereignty and social progress.

An AFPFL-led government was elected in a landslide in 1951. Prime Minister U Nu declared the government to be both socialist and Buddhist. Some key British firms were nationalized. A slow-moving land reform was initiated.

With economic difficulties on the rise, elections in 1956 saw increased returns for the opposition National United Front, which acted as a front for the BCP. With the government breaking up along factional lines, U Nu invited the military to intervene in 1958.

The military's officer corps began stepping into the political and economic vacuum left by the colonial regime, which had retarded the development of modern indigenous classes.

Restored to power, Prime Minister U Nu announced plans to nationalize a number of import firms in January 1962, which would have taken the Burmese Economic Development Corporation out of military hands.

Two months later military chief Ne Win deposed the government and set up a 17-officer Revolutionary Council. Military rule had begun.

To be continued.

South Africans protest attacks on immigrants

Continued from page 2

children, who escaped.

As part of the campaign the union is also demanding conversion of single-sex hostels into family units.

The ANC Youth League denounced the attacks. We "condemn with contempt those who participate in these criminal activities using the name of the ANC and singing revolutionary songs like 'Umshini Wami' ['Bring Me My Machine Gun'] while perpetrating crime," the statement said. "If any of our members are found to be participating in these activities, we expect our structures to take the harshest possible action against them." "Umshini Wami" is a song associated with ANC president Jacob Zuma. It became a rallying cry for his supporters when he campaigned against Thabo Mbeki, the president of South Africa, for the ANC post.

It was nearly two weeks after the violence started before Mbeki made a television and radio broadcast. He described the attacks on fellow African brothers and sisters as criminal acts "opposed to everything that our freedom from apartheid represents."

The reality is that the ANC-led government's policy on immigrants is not substantially different from that of the apartheid regime before it. The capitalist class in South Africa relies on im-

migrants as a form of cheap labor, especially in the mines and on the large farms.

Commercial farms located on the border and along immigration routes have been recruiting immigrant workers. The employers encourage conflicts between the immigrants and Africans born in South Africa in order to promote divisions and disunity in the working class.

Since 1994 immigration to South Africa from the rest of Africa has increased. As social and economic conditions deteriorated in Zimbabwe since 2000, the number of workers and peasants from Zimbabwe has increased, displacing the number from Mozambique, previously the highest in South Africa.

An estimated 5 million undocumented workers are in South Africa. Along with the influx came an increase in detentions and deportations. In 2005 there were 210,000 deportations, up from 167,000 the previous year. Deportations of Zimbabweans has increased from 46,000 in 2000 to more than 97,000 in 2005. That figure reached almost 80,000 between May and December 2006 alone.

New International No. 5

A MAGAZINE OF MARXIST POLITICS AND THEORY

*New, upgraded 2008 edition
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The Coming Revolution in South Africa By Jack Barnes

Explores the social character and roots of apartheid in South African capitalism and the tasks of toilers in city and countryside in dismantling the legacy of class and racist inequality.

The Future Belongs to the Majority By Oliver Tambo

Why Cuban Volunteers Are in Angola Speeches by Fidel Castro



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Court ruling on Cuban 5

The June 4 ruling by a federal court denying the appeal of the Cuban Five to have their convictions overturned has shone a spotlight on this important defense case. Supporters of the five can use this appeal to focus attention on the continued injustice against these Cuban revolutionaries who have been held in U.S. jails on frame-up charges for a decade.

The judges were unanimous in their opinion that the sentences handed down to three of the five men were excessive and not based on the law. Two of the five face life imprisonment. Many working people and youth are appalled that all five have been held for nearly ten years already and say Enough!

Those fighting for the release of the Cuban Five will get a hearing among many working people, who will recognize in their convictions the kind of treatment that they, their relatives, or coworkers have faced from the cops and the courts.

The case of the Cuban Five raises a broad range of workers' rights issues. "Evidence" was used in court against them in violation of Fourth Amendment protections against unreasonable search and

seizure. They were held in solitary confinement for 17 months before their trial. Visas have been denied for the wives of two of the men to visit them.

The injustice of this case is even registered by two of the judges who heard the appeal. Judge Stanley Birch, while concurring with the ruling, reiterated his strongly held opinion that the five could not get a fair trial in Miami and that their request for a change of venue should have been granted.

In the case of the conviction of Gerardo Hernández on "conspiracy to commit murder" charges, Judge Phyllis Kravitch dissented, calling the government's case "speculation" at best. Kravitch said the government had failed to prove that Hernández conspired in the shooting down by the Cuban air force of planes that had repeatedly violated Cuban air space.

International actions will take place in September and October to mark the 10th anniversary of the Cuban Five's imprisonment. Supporters can use the light that had been shed on the case with this new ruling to build the broadest support possible for the fall actions.

Truckers in Spain strike over fuel costs

Continued from front page

Fenadismer's president, June 9. "If we don't have the money to keep buying fuel to offer this public service, well, then this country comes to a halt."

Truckers are demanding government regulation that guarantees a minimum price for their loads above costs.

"We are not asking for subsidies," said Desirée Paseiro, a spokesperson for Fenadismer. "What we want is for us to move the truck, the government must guarantee that we can charge what the service costs, at a minimum."

"We can't charge \$50, when in fuel alone we are spending \$100," said Paseiro.

The social democratic government of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, has instead offered truckers emergency credit and early retirement incentives. Zapatero has refused to set minimum rates, claiming that it would run against "fair" competition.

In the northeastern region of Cataluña, where 40 percent of gas stations have run out of fuel due to the strike, the government plans to distribute fuel to gas stations in tanker trucks escorted by the cops. An estimated 15 percent of gas stations in Madrid have run out of fuel.

Supplies of food and other goods are also being affected. The Spanish newspaper *La Capital* reported that auto plants have had to suspend production on several assembly lines due to lack of parts. If the strike continues, some may have to stop production entirely.

"The main ones hurt are the drivers themselves,

who don't earn anything each day of the strike," said Jorge Somoza, a truckers' representative, responding to accusations from bosses' associations that the strikers are hurting consumers.

In recent weeks there have also been protests by independent truckers in France, Portugal, and the United Kingdom. Truckers in Portugal suspended their strike June 10, after one day, to allow for negotiations with the government on relief measures.

In Spain, thousands of fishermen have been on strike since May 30 to demand government relief from soaring fuel prices. Some 10,000 of them protested in Madrid outside the Ministry of Agriculture. They gave out 20 tons of fish to the public, reported the British daily the *Guardian*.

Fishermen in Italy and Belgium have also protested.

Teachers strike

Continued from front page

of some programs, such as dance and language studies.

School superintendent David Brewer tried unsuccessfully to get a restraining order to prevent the walkout. Parents received recorded messages from school officials beforehand stating that he agreed with the teachers' demands, but did not support their action. Administrators said 75 percent of the 48,000 teachers in the Los Angeles Unified School District participated in the job action.

LETTERS

California nurses dispute

I am wondering why there hasn't been any coverage of what is happening in the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) in the *Militant*.

I have 4 friends who are members of SEIU. One is a nurse in an SEIU-organized hospital. The California Nurses Association (CNA) is trying to break the nurses away. The steward there took CNA flyers out of nurses' mail boxes.

Another friend is a steward for the United Healthcare Workers-West (UHW) at Kaiser Santa Clara. The UHW is spending money on lawyers to defend itself against attacks by SEIU instead of a strike fund.

The members seem to be getting misinformation and distracted from what the real issues are. An article could be an important contribution to health care and other workers organized by SEIU

*Lenore Sheridan
San Jose, California*

Obama truth kit

Will you or the Young Socialists be publishing an Obama "truth kit," to tell the truth about Obama's proposed policies, like you did for Eugene McCarthy in 1968? This could be quite valuable to reach young people who are drawn to the Democrats this year, as in 1968.

Your coverage of the corrupt

building practices that increased the toll of the recent Chinese earthquake was valuable. But how about a comparison of the Chinese government's response, especially compared with Washington's response to Katrina? That could be revealing as well.

*Chuck Cairns
New Hyde Park, New York*

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

Calero

Continued from page 3

by working people to these assaults. This resistance includes protests by independent truckers in response to the squeeze of skyrocketing fuel costs. It includes the one-day strike last Monday by construction workers in Las Vegas, who walked off the job to protest the murderous speedup that has led to 11 workers being killed in construction sites there in the last year and a half. They are the same conditions that recently led to the deaths of two more construction workers in a crane collapse, just a few blocks away from this building in New York City.

Legalize all immigrants now

I have had the opportunity to be part of the mass working-class protests that have taken place around the United States to demand "Legalization of all immigrants now! and Stop the raids and deportations! Millions have taken to the streets over the past two years on May Day.

In recent weeks, workers in Iowa have protested factory raids by immigration cops, who have arrested and sentenced hundreds of meatpacking workers to jail. Their response is, "We are workers, not criminals!" This resistance by immigrant workers has become the biggest obstacle to the U.S. rulers' antilabor attacks—and the most important aid to the Puerto Rican people's struggle for self-determination.

The U.S. rulers have the arrogance to tell the people of Puerto Rico that they can not survive on their own, that independence will bring them ruin. But the living example by the Cuban workers and farmers and their revolutionary leadership shatters that myth. Cuba's socialist revolution shows that by taking political power, it is possible to win genuine independence from U.S. imperialism. Cuba provides an example for working people everywhere—including right here in the United States.

The condemnation by this committee of Washington's colonial rule of Puerto Rico will serve the interests of the overwhelming majority of the people of the United States and of those fighting everywhere for self-determination and against oppression.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of this committee, for the opportunity to present these views before you today.



Militant/Jenny Shegos

Workers protest May 18 against an immigration raid at a meatpacking plant in Waterloo, Iowa, which swept up 390 workers on May 12.

Correction

A photo box headlined "Union holds hearing on ICE deportations," in the June 16 issue, gave an erroneous impression about hearings being organized by the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) on factory raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement cops.

The purpose of these hearings is not to oppose the deportation of undocumented workers. The union officials have used the hearings to criticize only ICE's arrest and harassment of U.S. citizens and legal residents. Included in the panels at these hearings have been cops. Democratic Senator John Kerry, an opponent of immigrant rights, served on one panel.

Leon Trotsky on fight for communist continuity

The Challenge of the Left Opposition (1926–27), one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month in June, is the second volume in a series documenting the struggle in the Soviet Communist Party to defend V.I. Lenin's revolutionary internationalist course against a rising privileged caste headed by Joseph Stalin.

The excerpt below is by Leon Trotsky, a central leader of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. It was addressed to the Soviet delegation to the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI) some months after the sixth ECCI plenum in March 1926. The Communist In-

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

ternational, or Comintern, was founded under Lenin's leadership in 1919.

Trotsky takes up the interrelation between the Stalinists' bureaucratic practices, opportunist policies, and their break with revolutionary internationalism, codified in the theory of socialism in one country. Copyright ©1980. Reprinted by permission.

BY LEON TROTSKY

The USSR and the Comintern

1. The theoretical untenability and practical danger of the theory of so-



Leaders of the Left Opposition after their expulsion from Communist Party in 1927. Standing from left to right: Khristian Rakovsky, Yakob Drobni, Aleksandr Beloborodov, Lev Sosnovsky. Sitting: Leonid Serebryakov, Karl Radek, Leon Trotsky, Mikhail Boguslavsky, and Yevgeni Preobrazhensky.

cialism in one country is quite obvious, or at least is becoming more and more obvious, to every revolutionist who has at all assimilated the Marxist view of the fundamental problems of historical development. Politically speaking, this theory is a completely uncritical camouflaging of what exists in the USSR and of everything that is coming into being, in all its contradictions and in an elemental and chaotic way. In this sense the theory of socialism in one country weakens and blunts the vigilance and alertness of the party in regard to capitalist tendencies and forces in both domestic and world development. It nourishes a passive fatalistic optimism, beneath which bureaucratic indifference to the destinies of socialism and the international revolution is able to hide more successfully than otherwise.

2. No less fatal a role would be played by this theory, if it is legitimized, in relation to the Comintern. If Soviet socialist construction is viewed as an inseparable component of the world revolution, as a process inconceivable apart from the world revolution, then the relative importance of the Communist parties, their role, their independent responsibility, would increase and come more to the fore. If on the contrary the same old point of view is upheld that Soviet power, resting on the alliance of workers and peasants,

will build socialism absolutely independently of what occurs in all the rest of the world—on the one condition that the Soviet Republic be protected from military intervention—then the role and significance of the Communist parties is immediately moved to the background.

The assurance that socialism will be fully victorious in our country regardless of the course of the revolution in other countries means that the chief task of the European Communist parties in the immediate historical period—a task that will be adequate for the victory of socialism—is not to win power but to oppose the interventionist attempts of imperialism. . . .

The problem of taking the fullest possible advantage of every genuinely revolutionary situation is pushed into the background. A false and consoling theory is constructed according to which time, in and of itself, “works in our favor.” However, we cannot forget that we are living in conditions where we have a chance to catch our breath and by no means in conditions where the victory of socialism “in one country” is automatically assured.

We must take advantage of the breathing spell as fully as possible. We must prolong it as long as possible. But to forget that what is involved is precisely a breathing spell—i.e., a more or less prolonged period between the 1917 revolu-

tion and the next revolution in one of the major capitalist countries—means to trample underfoot the worldwide laws of historical development; it means in fact to renounce communism.

3. The ultraleftists charge that the united front policy means a retreat by foreign parties from independent revolutionary positions to the line of *assisting* the Soviet state by building an imposing “left” wing within the working class in each country. The theory of socialism in one country meets the ultralefts’ criticism half-way, nourishes it, and within certain limits justifies it. The left deviations, without ceasing to be manifestations of “infantile disorders,” receive new nourishment, for their leaders appear as defenders of the independent revolutionary role of the Communist parties and of the responsibility of those parties not only for the fate of their own country but also for that of the Soviet Union, against the bureaucratic optimism according to which the cause of socialism in the Soviet Union is assured in and of itself, if only nobody “interferes” with it. In this aspect, which will inevitably become a more and more prominent one, the struggle of the left groupings becomes a progressive factor and may accordingly transform the best elements among them.

On the Comintern Program

It follows from the above that we now have a new and decisive confirmation of the idea that a correct orientation, not only of the policies of the USSR and of those of each Communist Party separately but also of the Comintern as a whole, is only conceivable if it begins with the world economy, which, in spite of its contradictions and the barriers that divide it—in fact, to a significant extent, because of them—is a single worldwide unit. . . .

What is needed is a concrete analysis of the complex of world economic relations viewed as an internally coherent process, with an indication of the interrelated perspectives for Europe, America, Asia, etc. This is the only Marxist way to pose the question and would in passing strike a deathblow at the anti-Marxist theory of socialism in one country.

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