

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Untold history of Blacks' fight for land in the United States
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 74/NO. 6 FEBRUARY 15, 2010

Gov't job proposals offer little for workers

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In his State of the Union talk January 27 and in appearances since then, President Barack Obama says job creation will be his “number one focus in 2010.” But his proposals, pegged around providing tax breaks to small businesses, offer little prospects for jobs for some 18 million workers currently unemployed.

In response to Republican criticism of big spending, Obama said in a January 30 radio address, “As we work to create jobs, it is critical that we rein in the budget deficits we’ve been accumulating for far too long.”

According to the Labor Department, the number of persons without jobs has nearly doubled over the past two years to 15.3 million, or 10 percent of the workforce. In addition there are 2.5 million persons “marginally attached” to the workforce who the government doesn’t even count. Add in the 9.2 million forced to accept just part-time hours and the actual number of workers without full-time jobs is 27 million.

Among those hardest hit are Blacks, with a 16.2 percent unemployment rate, and teenagers, who face 27.1 percent unemployment. With declining capitalist production, 2.1 million manufacturing jobs have been cut over the past two years and 1.6 million in construction.

“We’re still facing years of mass unemployment,” wrote *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman January 30.
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Supreme Court ruling undermines rights

BY SETH GALINSKY

The U.S. Supreme Court’s January 21 decision to overturn restrictions on political advertising paid by corporations also included a little-publicized reaffirmation of laws requiring disclosure of the names of contributors to political campaigns. The disclosure laws are a threat to the right of working people to participate in politics without the fear of government reprisal.

The decisions came out of a lawsuit by the conservative group Citizens United, which had sued the Federal Election Commission (FEC) over the restrictions. The FEC had refused to allow the group to air advertisements for a 90-minute movie criticizing Hillary Clinton as she sought the Democratic Party presidential nomination.

In a 5-4 vote, the Supreme Court ruled in the group’s favor that the law restricting some contributions from corporations and labor unions was an unconstitutional prohibition on free speech.

Liberals were “in shock,” according to National Public Radio, and President Barack Obama claimed the ruling will lead to a “stampede of special interest money in our politics.”

But the Supreme Court majority admitted that this part of their decision will have little impact on corporate spending. They noted that campaign donors already “find ways around campaign finance laws” without much difficulty.

The Campaign Legal Center, a liberal campaign “reform” group, called the 8-1 ruling upholding disclosure provisions
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Washington prepares for broader wars

Big increase in Special Forces, drones



U.S. Army photo

U.S. soldiers practice “riot” control in Kosovo. As economic crisis deepens Washington is preparing to use U.S. troops to face working people abroad and inside the United States.

BY SETH GALINSKY

The White House is proposing a \$708 billion war budget for the 2011 fiscal year. This includes \$159 billion for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. It projects the largest increase in Special Forces since the Vietnam War.

President Barack Obama is also asking for \$33 billion in “supplemental” funds for the Afghan war that he says are needed to pay for the 30,000 additional troops he authorized in December. This is the second time Obama has requested supplemental funds for

the war, a common practice under the George W. Bush administration that Obama had promised to end.

The budget request was released simultaneously with the Pentagon’s 2010 “Quadrennial Defense Review,” which flatly states that “the United States is a nation at war.” The Pentagon reports are issued once each presidential term and present the main lines of U.S. imperialism’s strategy and priorities.

Under what the report calls “rebalancing,” the report calls “rebalancing.”
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U.S. in ‘statistical recovery and a human recession’

BY CINDY JAQUITH

The U.S. economy is in “a statistical recovery and a human recession,” Lawrence Summers told bankers and politicians at the annual World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, January 30. Summers is the chief economic adviser to President Barack Obama.

Noting that one in five U.S. males between the ages of 25 and 54 are unemployed, Summers said those numbers might improve to one in seven or eight as the “recovery” proceeds.

Summers was the highest-ranking U.S. official to attend the forum. He holds the distinction of being one of the main architects of the Financial Services Modernization Act, signed into law by former president William Clinton in 1999. That legislation repealed the Glass-Steagall Act of 1933,

which established a legal separation between commercial banks and insurance companies, stock brokerages, and investment banks.

Many bank executives at Davos were clearly not experiencing a “human recession” in their own lives. Bonuses at the five largest U.S. investment firms soared 30 percent to \$36 billion in 2009, according to Bloomberg News, “and the Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed to a record.”

“We shouldn’t pour cold water on everything,” Deutsche Bank CEO Josef Ackermann told Bloomberg. “We, the eight or nine players in global investment banking, have a very good future.”

The “human recession” was the more apparent future for several European countries that sent representa-

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‘I like the paper; it educates me,’ says long-term subscriber

BY PAUL MAILHOT

“I like the paper. It brings out a lot of points about the Black struggle and the fight for jobs,” said Dwelley Cauley in Miami upon renewing his subscription. “It talks about working people in general, the hard times we face. And about how to get things done we have to band together. There is always something in there every time I get the *Militant*. It educates me.”

Cauley is a member of International Longshoremen’s Association Local 1416 and has worked on the docks at the Miami port for 18 years. Supporters of the *Militant* regularly sell the paper and set up a table with a display of Pathfinder books Saturday mornings during the union members “shape-up” for work. In addition to renewing his subscription to the *Militant*, Cauley bought a copy of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*. A longshoreman from Haiti, who also works at the Miami port, bought a copy of the book last week too.

Supporters of the *Militant* are on

a four-week campaign from January 16 to February 17 to visit current and previous subscribers to the paper, find out what they think about its working-class coverage of politics, and ask them to become long-term readers. Those who resubscribe are also being urged to take advantage of a special offer with their renewal to purchase *Malcolm X, Black Liberation*.
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High court decision is setback to Abu-Jamal

BY SETH GALINSKY

In a setback for the defense of death row prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned a federal appeals court ruling that he was entitled to a new sentencing hearing.

Janitors fight for new contract in Minnesota

BY TOM FISKE

MINNEAPOLIS—Janitors here, members of Service Employees International Union Local 26, voted overwhelmingly January 31 to authorize a strike against the companies who employ them to clean commercial office buildings in the Twin Cities area.

The decision enables the union to call a strike at any time, although union officials say they are hoping the employers will change their positions in upcoming negotiations. The contract, which expired January 8, affects 4,000 workers.

A union press release states that health insurance for the workers is “inadequate.” Union leaders also point out that some workers have lost 25 percent of their income because of the bosses’ cutting hours since the last contract was adopted three years ago.

“I’ve had my nightly hours cut back in the last year,” said Maribel Quiroz. “No one can afford to lose so much of their income.”

Five hundred janitors attended the union meeting where they voted to authorize a strike.

ing hearing.

Abu-Jamal was convicted and sentenced to death in 1982 on frame-up murder charges for the 1981 killing of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner. During his nearly three decades on death row, Abu-Jamal, a cab driver, radio reporter, and former member of the Black Panthers, has received worldwide backing for his fight for a new trial.

In 2008 the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 3rd Circuit upheld a previous ruling that the death penalty for Abu-Jamal should be set aside because the jury had received improper instructions. The Supreme Court’s January 19 ruling overturns that decision and sends the case back to the appeals court “for further consideration” in light of another ruling the previous week.

In that ruling, on the murder trial of neo-Nazi Frank Spisak, the Supreme Court decided that in spite of improper instructions to the jury, Spisak was not entitled to a new sentencing hearing.

The Supreme Court decision “likely moves Abu-Jamal significantly closer to execution,” reported the *Christian Science Monitor*.

In response to the ruling, supporters of Abu-Jamal are stepping up the circulation of a petition to U.S. president Barack Obama calling for a new trial. “The 1982 trial of Mr. Abu-Jamal was tainted by racism, and occurred in Philadelphia which has a history of police corruption and discrimination” the petition reads.

Pathfinder books are now online in Sweden



Militant/Catharina Tirsén

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—All Pathfinder titles published in Swedish can now be ordered online at adlibris.com, the biggest Internet book seller in the country. Adlibris.com sells some 35,000 titles each day. There is no shipping charge for delivery in Sweden within two to three days. Shipping costs for next-day delivery is around \$2.50.

Among the Pathfinder titles in Swedish on the site are the most recent books published, *Teamster-revolten* (*Teamster Rebellion*) by Farrell Dobbs, and *Ny International* (*New International*) no. 6 with the feature article “Revolution, Internationalism, and Socialism: The Last Year of Malcolm X” by Jack Barnes. Adlibris also carries many Pathfinder titles in English.

—CATHARINA TIRSÉN

U.S. in ‘a human recession’

Continued from front page

tives to Davos. Spain has 19.4 percent official unemployment, the highest in Western Europe. Greece faces a 12.7 percent budget deficit and the possibility of defaulting on its debts, even after the firing of thousands of government workers to cut costs. Latvia, despite its bailout by the International Monetary Fund, has 22.3 percent official unemployment.

Confronting a continued contraction of production on a global scale, the capitalists are once again seeking to increase their rate of profit by expanding their trade in debt, the same course that led in 2008 to the collapse of Bear Stearns and other major investment houses in the United States.

Bloomberg commented January 22 that “investor appetite for risk has never been greater. Several measures show perception of risk is at near historic lows. . . . The amount of debt used to finance European buyouts rose to

8.7 times earnings in the third quarter, the most ever.” U.S. hedge funds are “the most leveraged since 1998.”

Financial executives at Davos debated Obama’s latest move to respond to popular outrage over the profits banks are reeling in while millions remain jobless and/or foreclosed. Obama had announced January 21 what he claimed would be “common-sense” reforms of the banking system. The proposal is known as the Volcker Rule, named after Paul Volcker, former chair of the Federal Reserve. It calls for prohibiting commercial banks from owning or investing in hedge funds and limiting the use of federally insured deposit funds for “speculative” and “risky” investments, such as mortgage-backed securities.

“They can go ahead and impose the rule on Friday, and I can assure you that by Monday, we’ll find a way around it,” a senior banker at Davos told the *New York Times*.

THE MILITANT

U.S. troops out of Afghanistan!

Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia. While the U.S. government is widening its wars abroad it is seeking ways to cut back entitlements like Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. The ‘Militant’ covers the struggle against the wars abroad . . . and at home.



Protest against U.S. attack that killed six people in Mehtar Lam, Afghanistan.

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Cuban TV show explores issue of racist prejudices

The Associated Press article below appeared January 22 in *El Nuevo Herald*, the Spanish-language edition of the *Miami Herald*, under the headline “Cuban TV opens discussion on racism on the island.”

Both the TV program itself and the less-biased-than-usual account of it are of interest. The January 21 “Round Table” was the first of its kind, discussing the unparalleled advances of the Cuban Revolution in eradicating the legacy of centuries of slavery, as well as the ground that remains to be taken in the fight against racist prejudices. That *El Nuevo Herald*, a paper not widely reputed to be a source of objective reporting on the Cuban Revolution, ran the AP account is worthy of note.

The importance of the discussion of these questions in Cuba today was underscored by Cuban president Raúl Castro in a December 2009 speech to the National Assembly in which he stated, “I will use all my influence to make sure these harmful prejudices keep giving ground until they are eliminated for good, and that women and blacks are promoted to leadership positions at all levels on account of their merits and professional training.” The translation into English is by the *Militant*.



BY ANDREA RODRIGUEZ

HAVANA (AP)—Cuban state television broke the taboo on the subject of racism and broadcast a program with experts who discussed the challenges still facing blacks in obtaining equality under the island’s communist system.

“To many it seemed impossible that a panel (on TV) could take place on this topic,” said writer Heriberto Feraudy during the program on Thursday, thanking the host as he was called on to speak.

This Thursday’s edition of the Round Table—one of the leading television programs where the island’s authorities explain their positions on political questions, directed by Randy Alonso—was titled “A Cuban Battle against Racism.” This time it was dedicated to this social question.

Almost half a dozen experts each made comments recognizing that there is cultural discrimination on the island, in spite of the revolution’s insistence for decades in denying its existence and in spite of the legal efforts to grant recognition for all.

“This is a theme of our reality,” said economist Esteban Morales, a researcher for the Center for the Study of the Hemisphere and United States. “Something that we thought was resolved (racism) came to the surface during the Special Period (the crisis of the previous decade) . . . equality is the plan, the desire; inequality is what we encounter every day.”

Morales explained that when the revolution triumphed, the measures taken in face of the need to overcome poverty treated people equally without differentiating between whites and blacks. But in the 1990s, when economic scarcity engulfed the island, whites and mestizos suffered less.

Also during those years “concealing” the problem was seen as preferable, ex-



Militant photos (left) by Jacob Perasso, (inset) by Ben Joyce

Nov. 27, 2009, march by students in Havana to honor eight medical students executed that day in 1871 by Spanish colonial regime. Several black Cubans died trying to free medical students. Inset: Esteban Morales, one of panelists on Cuban TV show that discussed battle against racism.

plained Morales, in order to prevent this becoming a divisive factor during the island’s confrontation in defense of the communist system against attacks from its opponents, led by the U.S. government.

According to the National Office of Statistics, 65 percent of Cubans are white, 10 percent are black, and almost 25 percent describe themselves as mestizos.

Studies done at the beginning of the decade showed that in previous years whites and mestizos had more possibilities of acquiring dollars and foreign currency—therefore a higher standard of living—than blacks, who in general have a lower income.

According to sociologist Pablo Rodríguez even though there is coexistence and no incidents of racist physical vio-

lence have been reported, “there are verbal ones.”

“Racism (in Cuba) is on the defensive because there has been a discourse since the triumph of the revolution that stigmatizes” discrimination, he said.

Rodríguez, from the Center of Anthropological Studies, pointed to some of the research on the topic that showed that blacks on the island view their race with “negative” elements as opposed to “positive” ones for viewing whites.

At the end of last year, a document signed by public figures in the United States complained about racism in Cuba, but the criticism was rejected by their colleagues on the island who maintain that the revolution has done more for social equality for all racial groups than many governments in the world.

Supreme Court upholds disclosure laws

Continued from front page

a “silver lining” in the suit’s outcome. Only Judge Clarence Thomas dissented from the near-unanimous decision. The major capitalist news media barely mentioned the disclosure ruling.

The Supreme Court decision claims that disclosing the names of contributors to political campaigns and causes would not “prevent anyone from speaking.” But then the court notes that in cases where a “reasonable probability” of “threats, harassment or reprisals from either Government officials or private parties” exists, exemptions can be granted.

Thomas ridiculed the Supreme Court’s promise that “as-applied” challenges, a way to get an exemption to the disclosure rules, would protect free speech. This is “a hollow assurance,” he said.

National Public Radio noted, “The retaliation argument rests on some established precedents, including a lawsuit brought by the Socialist Workers Party in 1982.”

The lawyer for one conservative political group cited the SWP’s case to back their opposition to disclosure of contributor names in a similar case before the Supreme Court.

William Lacy claimed that harassment against donors to anti-gay-marriage groups he represents “has been far worse than any of the facts that were put before the Supreme Court in the Socialist Workers exemption.”

The Socialist Workers Party has won

exemption from federal disclosure laws since 1979. These exemption requests are part of the fight of workers and farmers and their organizations to engage in political activity, including election campaigns, free from government, boss, and right-wing spying and harassment.

In its 2008 exemption request to the Federal Election Commission, the SWP documented 77 incidents from 2002 to 2008 of “physical attacks on SWP campaign supporters and offices, threatening mail and telephone calls, job firings and discrimination, and harassment of SWP supporters and campaign efforts by federal and local law enforcement as well as private individuals.”

Among the incidents:

- The Sept. 11, 2004, firebombing of the SWP campaign offices in Hazleton, Pennsylvania.
- In October 2005, Lisa Potash, Socialist Workers candidate for city council president in Atlanta, was fired from her job at a Hormel meatpacking plant after her campaign was publicized in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*.
- On May 16, 2007 two FBI agents arrived unannounced at the home David Arguello, the 2006 SWP candidate for U.S. Congress in San Diego, and interrogated him about his political views and activities and his interest in unionizing his workplace.
- In July 2007 rightists, including members of the anti-immigrant group the Minutemen, demonstrat-

ed outside a Militant Labor Forum in Des Moines, Iowa, that included a speaker from the SWP and harassed those attending the forum.

A central argument in applying for the exemptions is the finding in the 15-year legal battle, won by the SWP in 1986, that exposed a decades-long campaign of harassment, spying, and disruption by the FBI and other political police agencies.

In 2009, the Federal Election Commission agreed to extend the SWP’s disclosure exemption for four years, two years less than the six-year extensions it had approved in 1990, 1996, and 2003.

In spite of extensive documentation of ongoing harassment of the party, renewal of the exemptions are not automatic. During the 2009 discussion in the FEC, commission member Ellen Weintraub, who voted for the shorter extension, said, “I hope that someday, perhaps next time, this will not be necessary.”

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

San Francisco

Oppose U.S. ‘Antiterror’ Operations—Defend Democratic Rights! No to Washington’s Wars! Speaker: Lea Sherman, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 12, 7:30 p.m. 5482 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

For further reading

FBI on Trial

The Victory in the Socialist Workers Party Suit against Government Spying



By Margaret Jayko

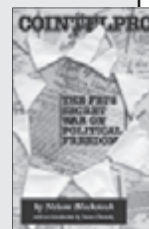
The 1987 victory in the 14-year SWP legal battle against the FBI, CIA, and other government spy agencies increased the space for politics and increased the confidence

of working people that you can be political and hold the deepest convictions against the government and it’s your right to do so and act upon them.—\$20

Cointelpro: the FBI’s Secret War on Political Freedom

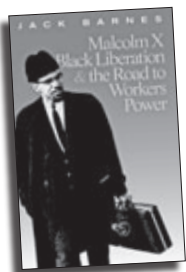
by Nelson Blackstock

Describes the decades-long covert counterintelligence program—code-named Cointelpro—directed against socialists and activists in the Black and anti-Vietnam War movements.—\$15



In New International no. 6: **Washington’s 50-Year Domestic Contra Operation** *by Larry Seigle* \$16

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pathfinderpress.com
or see distributors on page 8



Sell the book on ‘Workers Power’

CHICAGO

Ruthie Johnson said she “had been waiting” for *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, as she purchased the book. Supporters of the *Militant* here were visiting Johnson at her home last week to see if she would renew her subscription to the *Militant*, which she also did.

Johnson, who is Black, has been laid off since mid-2008 from her job of 25 years at a local hospital. She said many of her neighbors have lost their homes through foreclosure. Now studying accounting at DeVry University, she uses the *Militant* as a source for her economics class because it “has the facts” about how the crisis is impacting working people.

Two African American women and a Haitian worker also bought the new book here along with introductory subscriptions to the *Militant* at meetings to discuss the earthquake in Haiti.

Laura Anderson, who works at Quantum Foods, a meatpacking plant near Chicago, reports four coworkers have decided to renew their subscription and get the new book.

Arnulfo Rodriguez said his experiences of how the bosses try to divide workers who are Black and Latino made him want to read *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*. Rodriguez said a boss at another plant had pointed to one of his Black coworkers and said, “Watch him.” Rodriguez would not, and he and his co-

worker went to the office to make this clear to the boss. Rodriguez explained, as he told the story, “He was Black and I am Latino, we should be on the same side.”

Anderson also said that one of the African American workers in the plant has decided to subscribe to the *Militant* for the first time. After looking at the supplement, which includes the introduction to the new book, and having a discussion on the reconstruction governments that existed after the Civil War (when Black freed slaves and white farmers fought together to advance their living conditions), he said, “The one thing those in power can’t stand is when Black and white get together.” We are following up with him to make sure he gets the book the next time we talk.

—Alyson Kennedy

LONDON

Within days of receiving *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* here campaigners sold 10 copies of the book along with subscriptions to the *Militant*.

The first two books and several subscriptions were sold at a Stop the War protest held in front of the government-organized London Conference on Afghanistan January 28. Later that day a book and a subscription were bought at a weekly sale outside the School of Oriental and African Studies in the city center. Four participants at the Progressive London conference snatched up



Militant/Naomi Craine

Participants in immigrant rights rally in Phoenix January 16 pick up copies of the *Militant* and *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*.

the book and five *Militant* subscriptions were sold.

Campaigners sold two copies of the book and three subscriptions from a book table in the workers’ district of Dalston. A young Ghanaian woman was keen to get the book but didn’t have the funds on hand. She met up with us the following day to get the book and sign up for a subscription to the *Militant*.

In five sales visits in London and Manchester, 27 copies of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers’ Power* have been purchased by commercial bookshops so far. Three of the shops are putting up displays to draw customers’ attention to the book.

—Ólöf Andra Proppé

DES MOINES

“It just blows me away,” said one participant at the 12th annual “I’ll Make Me a World in Iowa” celebration as he pulled out his wallet to purchase a copy of *Mal-*

colm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power and an introductory subscription to the *Militant*.

In all, 15 people bought 16 copies of the book after discussions about the Black liberation struggle and the road to workers power. One participant, who works at the African American Museum of Iowa in Cedar Rapids, bought a copy for himself and one for the museum.

The celebration is attended by thousands of African Americans and others from all over Iowa each year. It includes musical performances; a health fair; a food court with soul food and other delicacies; and a large area of exhibitors, including banks, businesses, churches, clubs, fraternities, sororities, and others. The Socialist Workers Party had a table there. It was busy all day. The large display of Pathfinder’s new book, *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, attracted people’s attention, along with a broad selection of other books by Pathfinder.

—Maggie Trowe

‘I like the paper; it educates’

Continued from front page
tion, and the Road to Workers Power for only \$10.

The chart on this page shows that many areas are ahead of schedule to

meet their quotas after two weeks of the four-week effort. The international goal for the drive is 375 renewals, which we are now well on pace to go over even though local quotas do not yet add up to the goal. In the course of this effort many new people are also subscribing to the *Militant*.

In New York, Nancy Boyas-ko reports that 31 people have already renewed their subscriptions. Supporters of the *Militant* there had set 45 as their quota. “We are having success everywhere we get into discussions about the working-class politics of the *Militant*, and the road to workers power,” Boyas-ko reported. “This week three workers at the garment plant where Dan Fein, a supporter of the *Militant*, works decided to renew their subscriptions, and they all bought copies of the book. We sold a renewal to a professor who we are working with around defense of the Cuban Revolution. A student who was in the office said, “Hey, can I get one of those too?” We picked up several more by doing house visits to people who subscribed to the *Militant* in the fall.”

The *Militant* welcomes local reporting of the campaign to win long-term readers. Results of the campaign, who we are selling to, and what their responses are, help make for lively coverage of the effort.

Subscription Renewal Drive

Jan. 16 – Feb. 17, 2010 Week 2			
Country	Quota	Sold	%
UNITED STATES			
Boston	10	8	80%
Houston	12	9	75%
New York	45	31	69%
Washington D.C.	25	15	60%
Twin Cities, MN	25	14	56%
Chicago	20	11	55%
Atlanta	18	9	50%
Seattle	16	7	44%
Miami	20	8	40%
San Francisco	20	7	35%
Los Angeles	25	8	32%
Des Moines, IA	20	6	30%
Philadelphia	25	7	28%
Other U.S.		2	
U.S. Total	281	142	51%
CANADA	20	9	45%
UNITED KINGDOM			
Edinburgh	8	4	50%
London	12	4	33%
UK Total	20	8	40%
AUSTRALIA	15	2	13%
NEW ZEALAND	10	7	70%
SWEDEN	8	7	88%
Total	354	175	47%
Should be	375	188	50%

New feature supplement to appeal to French-speaking workers, youth

BY MICHEL PRAIRIE

MONTREAL—This week the *Militant* is printing as a separate feature supplement the French-language translation of the introduction to *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States. The book was recently published in English by Pathfinder Press and a Spanish-language translation is scheduled for mid-March. The French-language version, *Malcolm X, la libération des Noirs et la voie vers le pouvoir ouvrier*, will be printed in April.

In his introduction, Barnes says that *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* “is a book about the dictatorship of capital and the road to the dictatorship of the proletariat.” It is a “book about the last century and a half of class struggle in the United States—from the Civil War and Radical Reconstruction to today—and the unimpeachable evidence it offers that workers who are Black will comprise a disproportionately weighty part of the ranks and leadership of the mass social movement that will make a proletarian revolution.” And it is “a book about the last year of Malcolm X’s life,” about how this revolutionary leader assassinated in 1965 “became the face and the authentic voice of the forces of the coming American revolution.”

Introducing, discussing, selling *Malcolm X, Black Liberation and the Road*

to Workers Power to workers and youth, and studying it with them is at the center of a several month international campaign by supporters of the *Militant*. Having the introduction in French as a special supplement for just 50 cents, in addition to the English- and Spanish-language versions printed last fall, will help introduce the book to workers, students, and others whose first language is French or who are more comfortable reading in French. This is the case with the majority of working people in Quebec and with a growing number of immigrants from Haiti and Africa in the United States and several countries in Europe.

Supporters of the *Militant* in Montreal are ordering 500 copies. “Once we looked at our experiences using the English supplement to sell the new book,” said Bev Bernardo of the Communist League in Canada, “we realized what a tremendous boost having the French version will be.”

There is a prepublication offer for *Malcolm X, la libération des Noirs et la voie vers le pouvoir ouvrier*. The book can be purchased for US\$10 with a new or renewal subscription to the *Militant* or with the purchase of one or more of the Pathfinder titles: *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*, or *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?* including in French, at a discounted price. (See ad on page 6.)

Haiti: From slave revolt to Duvalier dictatorship

(First of two parts)

BY CINDY JAQUITH

What lies behind the seemingly endless cycle of economic devastation, corrupt governments, and imperialist intervention that has marked Haiti's history for more than two centuries? In this two-part series the *Militant* will review the rich history of class battles in Haiti and the factors that have thus far blocked Haitian workers and farmers from wresting control of their destiny from the grip of imperialist plunderers and local capitalist misrulers.

In the early part of the 18th century, Saint Domingue, a French colony on the Caribbean island of Hispaniola, had one of the richest, most productive agricultural economies in the Western Hemisphere, allowing French landowners to reap giant profits from the sale of sugarcane and coffee.

In the late 18th century the French revolution replaced the monarchy with the rule of the rising capitalist class. That event had strong reflections inside Saint Domingue, where many—not only slaves, but some slave owners, other whites, and mulattos—chafed at continued French colonial rule.

In the midst of the clashes with Paris, the slaves rose up in 1791, forming their own army under the leadership of Toussaint L'Ouverture and Jean Jacques Dessalines. Over the course of several years the slave rebellion brought the troops of Napoleon Bonaparte to their knees, abolished slavery, and declared independence from France.

In 1804, the former slaves established the first black republic, naming it Haiti. Some of the old slave plantations were broken up and many freed Africans became small farmers. The new government, heavily composed of officers from the slave army, sought to generate revenue by imposing heavy taxes on the countryside.

The social layer that replaced the French rulers attempted to continue the lucrative trade in sugar and other agricultural products. But they were starting with an economy wracked by more than a decade of civil war and military intervention. Many of the plantations had been destroyed in the course of the fighting. Most ex-slaves, including some of those now administering the country, were only beginning to learn how to read and write.

Paris and other colonial powers in the Caribbean were determined to dominate Haiti and continue the exploitation of its land and labor. Washington feared the example the first black republic would set—for blacks in other nations of the region and most importantly for the millions of African slaves in the United States.

To maximize the economic isolation of the new Haitian government, Washington imposed a trade embargo. It also demanded the Haitian government make reparations to French slave owners for their "losses" when slavery was overthrown!

In 1825 the Haitian government agreed to pay 150 million francs back to the French colonialists. The only way they could do that was to borrow money from French, and later, U.S. and German banks, placing the country further in debt. By 1900, 80

percent of the Haitian national budget went to debt relief, wrote Richard Kim in the January 15 *Nation* magazine. By 1947, after 122 years of payments, the government had covered about 60 percent of its debt. The massive transfer of wealth to foreign banks stunted Haitian agriculture and prevented the development of modern industry, slowing the rise of a working class.

1915 U.S. invasion

Toward the end of the century U.S. capitalism was emerging as a powerful force in Latin America, rivaling the colonial powers of France, Spain, Holland, and Britain. In 1915 Washington invaded Haiti to ensure that it continued repaying its "debt" to France and to end a factional struggle in the government that threatened stability in the region. The troops stayed until 1934.

During Washington's direct occupation of Haiti a few development projects were carried out, mostly to provide sufficient infrastructure to export the wealth produced by Haitian farmers to imperialist countries, according to Mark Danner, author of *Stripping Bare the Body: Politics, Violence, War*. Some elite Haitians were sent abroad to study and return. In this way the U.S. government hoped to create a stable middle class beholden to Washington.

After a succession of short-lived, corrupt capitalist governments, François Duvalier won the 1957 presidential elections in Haiti. He quickly sought to eliminate opposition from within the officer corps, the Catholic Church, and bourgeois rivals by organizing a private paramilitary force, the Tontons Macoutes, to terrorize opponents.

The brutality of the regimes of Duvalier and his son became an international scandal, but Washington continued to apologize for them. Answering critics a couple of months before the elder Duvalier's son, Jean-Claude,



Painting depicts slave army in Haiti battling troops of French colonizers in late 18th century. Over the course of several years, the slave rebellion brought troops of Napoleon Bonaparte to their knees, abolished slavery, and declared independence from France.

was overthrown, U.S. secretary of state George Shultz claimed the Haitian ruler was "making a concerted and significant effort to improve the human rights situation in Haiti."

The Duvaliers were an important counterweight in the Caribbean to the Cuban Revolution, which had triumphed in 1959.

The country's economy became even further distorted. When the younger Duvalier fled in 1986, the average income of Haitians was lower than it had been in 1957 when his father took office.

1986 uprising overturns Duvalier

In the wake of the Nicaraguan and Grenadan revolutions in 1979, and revolutionary struggles in El Salvador and Guatemala, an uprising exploded in 1986 in Haiti, forcing Jean-Claude Duvalier to flee the country. This victory demonstrated to the world the capacities of Haiti's workers and farmers despite the centuries of oppression and exploitation.

At the same time, the toll of decades of Duvalierism, with no rights to freedom of speech, assembly, or association, meant the toilers had yet to build elementary organizations like trade unions and farmers associations.

Most importantly, they had no revolutionary party with a perspective of organizing the toilers in a struggle to take state power out of the hands of the tiny Haitian capitalist class and begin to construct a society based on the needs of the majority of producers.

No leaders emerged in the anti-Duvalier struggle with the perspective of the leadership of the Cuban Revolution, which rejected any compromise with U.S. imperialism or the wealthy Cuban property owners, and relied on mobilizing the power of workers and farmers to overthrow capitalism and begin reorganizing Cuban society.

In the second article we will take up what has unfolded in Haiti since Duvalier's overthrow and the challenges before Haitian working people today.

(To be continued)

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



February 15, 1985

NEW YORK—On February 1, New York City police commissioner Benjamin Ward reinstated the cop who murdered Eleanor Bumpurs here last October. Stephen Sullivan, who shotgunned Bumpurs to death, had been suspended for one day after being indicted on manslaughter charges. Ward put Sullivan back on the job at full pay.

"I'm damn mad about it," said Mary Bumpurs, daughter of the slain 66-year-old Black woman. "Ben Ward is just saying that he doesn't give a damn about a Black woman being killed."

Sullivan and several other Emergency Service Unit cops burst into Eleanor Bumpurs' apartment on October 29 and tried to evict her for being four months behind in rent. The cops claim that Sullivan killed Bumpurs because she threatened them with a kitchen knife.

City officials hope that the Sullivan indictment will appease Blacks, who are increasingly concerned about cop and other racist violence.



February 15, 1960

FEB. 7—A lunch-counter anti-discrimination sit-down action by Negro college and high school students in Greensboro, N.C., yesterday forced the downtown F.W. Woolworth and S.H. Kress stores to close up. A number of white students supported the protest which was directed against refusal of the stores to serve Negroes at the lunch counters.

The action was begun at the Woolworth store Feb. 2, forcing it to close almost immediately its segregated stand-up snack bar for Negroes. The students sat at the "whites only" counter, chatting quietly, studying and reading newspapers. About 60 students were involved.

A group of white teenagers and some adults identified as members of the Ku Klux Klan tried to counter the action by also occupying seats and then giving them up to white patrons. Four of the white youths had hunting knives strapped to their belts.



February 16, 1935

In defiance of an expulsion threat made by President Mike Tighe of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, delegates and members from 78 locals met in Pittsburgh February 3 in a conference called to consider steps toward the organization of the steel industry.

The initiators of this progressive movement are by and large the same militants who took over the 1934 annual convention of the A.A. and forced through a program for general strike action, over the protest of the International officials.

Approximately 400 steel workers came to the conference. The fact that the bureaucrats, after first indicating that they would tolerate the conference, launched an attack outlawing it, undoubtedly kept many delegates away. The conference illustrated that the job of building a real, national progressive movement in steel has just begun.

The untold history of Blacks' fight for land

The following is the fourth installment in a series of excerpts the Militant is running from Pathfinder Press's latest book, *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. We encourage our readers to buy, read, and discuss the book. This excerpt is from the chapter titled "Jim Crow, the Confederate Battle Flag, and the Fight for Land," which is from a talk Barnes gave to a socialist conference in 2001.

Communist workers must take seriously the *history* of current struggles by farmers who are Black. We need to recognize their place in an ongoing continuity reaching back to the U.S. Civil War and Radical Reconstruction—the Second American Revolution—and the decades of reaction that followed in the countryside, towns, and cities across the South.

Many of these farmers are fighting to continue cultivating land that their kin have farmed for generations. For a Black family in the U.S. South to have held onto land for that long means that previous generations fought and survived the lynch-mob terror of organized white-supremacist night riders that continued, and often accelerated, in the wake of the defeat of post-Civil War Radical Reconstruction. This came closer to fascist violence on a broad scale, and over an extended period, than anything else ever seen in this country.

In the decade following the defeat of the slavocracy in 1865, the rising northern industrial bourgeoisie—now reknitting links with powerful landholding, commercial, and emerging manufacturing interests across the South—settled once and for all that it had no intention

of meeting the aspirations of freed slaves for the radical land reform captured by the popular demand for "forty acres and a mule." Doing so, first of all, would have deprived these exploiters of a cheap supply of jobless laborers. What's more, the bourgeoisie correctly feared that an alliance of free farmers, Black and white, together with the growing manufacturing and manufacturing working class in the cities, could pose a strong challenge to intensifying exploitation in town and country, North and South.

Defeat of Radical Reconstruction

In 1877 the U.S. rulers withdrew federal troops from the states of the old Confederacy. These troops had been the armed force of last resort standing between the freed Black toilers, on the one hand, and gangs of well-armed reactionary vigilantes, on the other. Throughout the closing decades of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, successive generations of organizations such as the Knights of the White Camelia, the White League, the Ku Klux Klan, the White Citizens' Councils, and many others—named, unnamed, or renamed—carried out an unrelenting reign of terror against the Black population in the South.

This systematic violence helped the capitalists drive toilers who were Black into virtual peonage as sharecroppers and tenant farmers, and made it possible for Jim Crow segregation to be imposed and codified into state law in one southern state after another. These gangs were also organized to break the spirit of any class-conscious worker or farmer anywhere in the South who wasn't Black—"nigger lovers"—and to prevent them from linking arms with toilers who were Black in common



Left, rally in Washington, D.C., April 2009 against discriminatory farm lending by U.S. Department of Agriculture. Right, 50,000 march in Columbia, South Carolina, Jan. 17, 2000, to demand removal of Confederate battle flag from state capitol.

struggles for land, for public education, for cheap credit and railway rates, for labor union rights, or anything else in the interests of the oppressed and exploited. Anti-Catholic, anti-Chinese, and anti-Semitic prejudice and discrimination reached new heights. . . .

As we work alongside farmers who are fighting to stay on the land, we should know this history—*our* history. The land isn't just a way to make a living. Nor is it just a symbol. The current resistance is often a link in battles that go back more than a century and a quarter. Together with fights by workers and the labor movement, these hard-fought battles by generations of farmers helped hold off some of the most reactionary consequences of the defeat of Radical Reconstruction that would have set back, much further than they did, the struggles of working people in the United States. And they helped make possible a new wave of struggle decades later, North and South, that by the end of the 1960s had brought the Jim Crow system crashing down.

The battles for Black freedom in rural counties, small towns, and cities across the South, and extending to the North, helped in turn to transform the possibilities for workers and farmers alike throughout this country, and throughout

other parts of the world under assault by Washington. The conquests of this mass proletarian-based movement laid a foundation, among other things, for a common struggle with common demands by working farmers in the United States today, as part of a fighting worker-farmer alliance resisting the profit-driven course of the capitalist class. It attracted, politicized, and gave courage to several generations of youth who would provide the energy for struggles against the Vietnam War, against discrimination in all government employment and the armed forces, for the defense and extension of civil liberties and civil rights, for women's emancipation, and for an accompanying broad political radicalization.

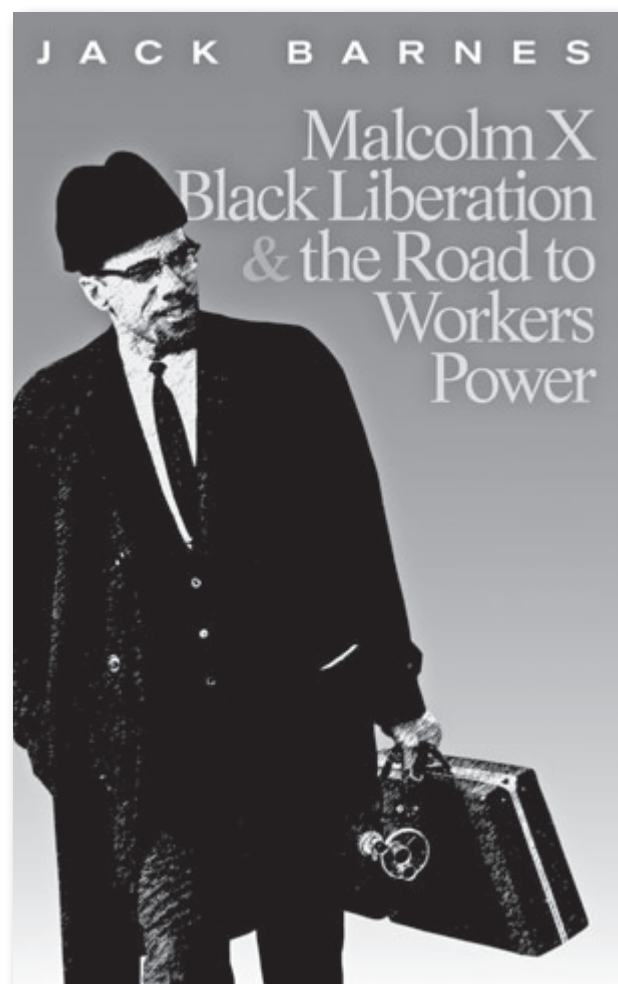
Fight to bury Confederate battle flag

The results of history remain alive for us, unresolved contradictions that never completely go away so long as the class questions posed by giant social and political conflicts remain unsettled and have yet to become a weapon in the hands of militants today. The full consequences of the defeat of Radical Reconstruction will only be uprooted following the victory of a proletarian revolution in this country. That's why struggles over state governments displaying the Confederate battle flag, or over statues or holidays in tribute to political or military leaders of the slaveholders' rebellion, continue to have weight in the class struggle many decades—indeed almost a century and a half—after it was routed in a bloody civil war. . . .

When displayed today, that flag is an emblem of, and encouragement to, reactionary forces who are determined to preserve as much as they can of the consequences of a bloody counterrevolution that shaped the trajectory of the U.S. class struggle in the twentieth century. It is a rallying point for forces who are *acting* on that determination. It is a symbol of the fight by deadly enemies of labor to turn back the gains of the civil rights movement and to divide and weaken the working class in this country. It is the flag of cowards on the highways, assaulting the dignity of Blacks day in and day out with stickers and medallions on their rearview mirrors, windows, and bumpers. It is the banner under which, only a few years ago, brutal and bloody assaults against Blacks were launched. And, most important, it remains a banner under which such assaults—against African Americans, immigrants, Jews, abortion clinics, gays, and other targets of reaction—often *are* and *will be* launched until the capitalist roots of that Dixie rag are ripped out of the ground by the toilers of this country and replaced by the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power

New from Pathfinder Press



"This is a book about the dictatorship of capital and the road to the dictatorship of the proletariat. A book about the last century and a half of class struggle in the United States, and the unimpeachable evidence it offers that workers who are Black will comprise a disproportionately weighty part of the ranks and leadership of the mass social movement that will make a proletarian revolution. . . ."

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‘Lenin’s Final Fight’ invaluable for today

Book documents battle to defend proletarian course in Russian Revolution

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

An upgraded edition of *Lenin’s Final Fight* with a new introduction by Jack Barnes and Steve Clark has just been published by Pathfinder Press. The Spanish edition *La Última Lucha de Lenin* is now available and the English version will be out in mid-February.

The book documents the political battle led by Vladimir Lenin within the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union between September 1922 and March 1923 to continue advancing the political course that brought the workers and peasants of Russia to power five years earlier.

These lessons are invaluable for working people today. “As capitalism in the twenty-first century enters its deepest economic and social crisis since the

1921 desperate living conditions facing working people produced “the gravest” crisis in Soviet Russia since the October 1917 revolution, Lenin noted. There was growing discontent among considerable sections of the peasantry and among workers.

In response, the government adopted a series of economic measures known as the New Economic Policy (NEP). The requisitioning of peasant surpluses enforced during the civil war was replaced with a graduated tax on peasants’ harvests. The government legalized small markets for farm products and later for other goods. Privately owned enterprises were permitted in rural and small-scale industry.

Widening class inequalities

Lenin and other Bolshevik leaders were fully aware that these measures, which were necessary to revive production and trade, widened class inequalities between and within the working class and peasantry and generated new petty capitalist layers, especially rich peasants and traders known as the “Nepmen.”

Would the workers and peasants prove capable of defending and advancing their state power? This was the central question being posed. Lenin explained, “The fate of our republic will depend on whether the peasant masses will stand by the working class, loyal to their alliance, or whether they will permit the ‘Nepmen,’ i.e., the new bourgeoisie, to drive a wedge between them and the working class, to split them off from the working class.”

In a report to the March 1922 11th Communist Party congress, printed in the opening chapter of the book, Lenin, while noting the need for continuing NEP measures, insisted it was time for the party to “call a halt” to further retreat.

“It was resistance within the central party leadership to adopting and implementing the measures necessary to halt the retreat that, half a year later, erupted in the multifront political battle by Lenin to reassert the revolution’s proletarian course,” the introduction states.

Proletarian internationalism

By late 1922, the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, which included 21 autonomous republics and regions, was collaborating with soviet republics in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belorussia, Georgia, and Ukraine to form a voluntary Union of Soviet Socialist Re-



Travelling school for peasant children in Soviet Union. Vladimir Lenin (inset) stressed political priority of literacy programs and schools as part of broader efforts to open education and culture to toilers and to party cadres working in government bodies.

publics. Joseph Stalin instead proposed their “entry” into the Russian Federation. Lenin opposed this as a violation of the Bolsheviks’ long-standing proletarian internationalist course. He also took issue with how communists from Georgia were treated in a dispute over national rights.

Lenin wrote, “Internationalism on the part of oppressors or ‘great’ nations, as they are called (though they are great only in their violence, only great as bullies), must consist not only in observance of the formal equality of nations but even in an inequality, through which the oppressor nation, the great nation, would compensate for the inequality which obtains in real life. Anybody who does not understand this has not grasped the real proletarian attitude to the national question; he is still essentially petty bourgeois in his point of view and is, therefore, sure to descend to the bourgeois point of view.”

In the course of this dispute and others Lenin called for removing Stalin as the party’s general secretary.

The political battle waged by Lenin within the Soviet Communist Party leadership in 1922–23 did not end in victory. The introduction explains, “The civil war devastation, above all the deaths and political exhaustion of broad sections of the most conscious and selfless cadres in the working-class vanguard, compounded by the defeats of revolutionary struggles throughout Europe and Asia, weighed too heavily in the scales.”

Triumph of Cuban Revolution

However, the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 marked a renewal of the example of a communist government following the course that had been halted with the defeat of Lenin’s final fight.

Experiences over the past century, the introduction notes, “have confirmed that the proletariat’s conquest of state power and expropriation of capitalist-owned land and industry have no automatic bias toward the construction of socialism. The proletarian dictatorship opens the transition from capitalism to socialism. The victorious workers state can then either go forward toward socialism—as an integral part of the world revolutionary struggle against imperi-

alist exploitation and oppression—or backward toward laying the basis for capitalist counterrevolution. Advances are made possible by resolute communist political leadership, by deepening politicization of a growing working-class vanguard—prepared for the inevitability of the unexpected and unforeseen—and, above all, by new victories in the world revolution.”

A talk by then Cuban president Fidel Castro at the University of Havana in 2005 discusses aspects of this question. “Some people thought that socialism could be constructed with capitalist methods. That is one of the great historical errors,” stated Castro. “One of our greatest mistakes at the beginning of, and often during, the revolution was believing that someone knew how to build socialism.”

Barnes and Clark add, “That could only be discovered in practice by the combat-tested and politicized toilers themselves.”

Those seeking to end capitalist exploitation and oppression through charting a course for the working class to take political power will find invaluable lessons to build upon in *Lenin’s Final Fight*.

For further reading

Lenin’s Final Fight by V.I. Lenin

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At stake was whether the Russian Revolution would remain on the proletarian course that had brought workers and peasants to power in October 1917. \$20

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IN REVIEW

decades spanning the first and second imperialist world wars,” the introduction states, “programmatic and strategic matters in dispute in the communist workers movement in the early 1920s once again weigh heavily in prospects for the working class worldwide to advance along its historic line of march toward the conquest of power.”

The introduction summarizes the central questions in this fight that affected the lives of tens of millions. “Control over revenues from the Soviet republic’s import and export trade; structural changes to facilitate improving the class composition of state and party bodies; a transformation of the organization of agricultural production and exchange; special steps to guarantee equality of rights and self-determination for nations and nationalities formerly oppressed by the tsarist empire; increased political priority and funding of literacy programs and schools as part of broader efforts to open education and culture to the toilers and to party cadres working in government bodies; civil treatment of party members and coworkers as an unqualified precondition for leadership.”

“The battle was not primarily over economic policy or methods of administration,” the introduction notes. “It was a political fight over the class trajectory of the Soviet republic and Communist Party.”

By late 1920 working people in the young Soviet republic emerged victorious from nearly three years of civil war, launched by Russia’s toppled landlords and capitalists who were assisted by invading armies from 14 imperialist powers, including London, Paris, Tokyo, and Washington.

As the civil war deepened in 1918, the Soviet government mobilized the working class to expropriate the capitalists, consolidate a state monopoly of foreign trade, and initiate centralized economic planning, bringing into existence the world’s first workers state.

The civil war, however, devastated the country. By



Rebel Army combatants and supporters celebrate liberation of city in Las Villas Province, Cuba, December 1958. Triumph of Cuban Revolution in 1959 marked renewal of communist leadership after defeat of Lenin’s final fight.

Women's role in Cuba's 1956–58 revolutionary war

Printed below is an excerpt from Marianas in Combat: Teté Puebla and the Mariana Grajales Women's Platoon in Cuba's Revolutionary War 1956–58, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for February. Brig. Gen. Teté Puebla, the highest-ranking woman in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces, joined the struggle to overthrow the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1956, when she was 15 years old. She describes her participation in the formation of the Rebel Army's first all-women's platoon and how the fight to transform the social and economic status of women is inseparable from Cuba's socialist revolution. Mary-Alice Waters, who interviewed Puebla, is president of Pathfinder Press. Copyright © 2003 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

WATERS: The founding of the Mariana Grajales Women's Platoon marked a milestone in the Cuban Revolution. It demonstrated in practice the social course a victorious Rebel Army would fight for. As Karl Marx put it, you can judge any society by the status of women.

What led to the unit's formation?

PUEBLA: In May 1958, as the dicta-



Courtesy Teté Puebla

Fidel Castro with members of the Mariana Grajales Women's Platoon in La Plata, Cuba, Sept. 4, 1958. Next to Castro (fourth from left) is Teté Puebla. The platoon's commanding officer, Isabel Rielo, is fourth from right.

torship's military offensive began, the army stepped up its repression against the population of the Sierra Maestra. Wherever the army went, women were raped, children were killed, entire villages were bombed and burned down. Peasants had to leave the Sierra. Sánchez Mosquera was one of the most infamous of Batista's commanders, but there were others.

They would announce they'd killed a lot of Rebel Army soldiers. But that wasn't true; the people killed were peasants. They were dragged out of their huts at gunpoint. They used to tie the men to poles while raping the women. Then they'd kill everyone. Whole families would be wiped out.

They were bombing villages, too. One of these was Cayo Espino, which was of no military value. Our commander [Fidel Castro] has spoken about this, but for those of us who were there these crimes affected us deeply, they outraged everybody.

There was a five-year-old boy named Orestes Gutiérrez in Cayo Espino. His legs were blown off by one of the bombs, and other members of his family were wounded. Everyone in the Sierra knew the story of this little boy, who told his grandmother, holding her hand: "Grandmother, I won't be able to love you anymore because I'm going to die." His grandfather died too. His

two sisters were wounded, but they are alive today thanks to the Rebel Army doctors who gave them immediate attention. And the bombing was done in an area where there were no rebel troops.

Throughout the region of Oro de Guisa, peasant houses were set afire. The peasants who fled the flames were seized, and then raped or killed. All these crimes filled us with courage and determination. Even though we were doing many essential things, we felt frustrated that we could not fight arms in hand. "They've got to let us fight," we said.

We had already proved that women could do just about everything. We withstood the bombings, delivered weapons, and were in the places where fighting was taking place. But we were still not allowed to fight.

"If women have to take part in all the duties of the revolution," we said, "why can't we fight for the revolution in the same way as our men fight?"

After the army's offensive had been defeated, we asked our commander in chief to allow us to fight arms in hand. He agreed. Fidel said yes, women had won the right to fight with a rifle face to face with the enemy.

On September 4, 1958, a meeting took place, a sort of roundtable. Fidel assembled his general staff at the time, those

who were left in the Sierra Maestra. The invasion troops—Columns 2 and 8 under the command of Camilo Cienfuegos and Ernesto Che Guevara—had already left. And a Second and a Third Front had already been established in Oriente.

There was a discussion at this roundtable meeting that lasted more than seven hours. Fidel had a very big argument there. There were still not enough weapons for everyone, and the men were saying, "How can we give rifles to women when there are so many men who are unarmed?"

Fidel answered: "Because they're better soldiers than you are. They're more disciplined."

"In any event," he said, "I'm going to put together the squad, and I'm going to teach them how to shoot."

So on September 4, the Mariana Grajales Women's Platoon was formed. As I explained, Isabel Rielo became the commanding officer. I was named second in command. The squad came to have thirteen combatants in it. The commander in chief chose the name as a tribute to Mariana Grajales, a heroine of our war of independence and the mother of Antonio Maceo, the legendary general who fought heroically in Cuba's wars of independence for over thirty years.

Fidel was the one who taught us to shoot. We had to hit a quarter—or a 20-centavo coin—20 to 30 meters away, depending on how he wanted to test our aim. And he drilled us. We had to split that coin.

In fact, Isabel Rielo was named the commanding officer as a result of target practice. Because she was a better shot than I was. Fidel had said that whoever was the best shot would be named head of the platoon.

It was decided that the M-1 was to be our weapon, because it was lighter. Fidel ordered that everyone in our squad be supplied with that rifle. Nevertheless he didn't drill us with the M-1; he made us practice with the Garand and other, heavier guns. He'd say that the M-1 was easier to use, but that we needed to be able to fire any kind of rifle. Once we had learned to shoot, the last thing we practiced with was the M-1.

Then Fidel informed us: "You're now going to be my personal security detail."

February BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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Fight for a workers recovery

When President Barack Obama's top economic adviser says the U.S. economy is in "a statistical recovery and a human recession," he means the bosses are doing better. The "humans" on the other hand—tens of millions of workers and farmers worldwide—continue to be battered by wars, joblessness, and a declining standard of living.

When the capitalists talk about recovery, first and foremost they are talking about themselves. Their concern for working people is only in gauging how much more of massive unemployment and social cuts we will take—in this country and around the world—before rebelling against their system of exploitation. So long as the resistance to their assault on our rights and standard of living is minimal, the boss class will keep pushing to make working people bear the burdens of the economic crisis.

Obama claims jobs are the government's number one priority, but none of his stated proposals (none are actual programs) will put millions of people back to work. In order to accomplish that the government would have to challenge the profits of those who are enjoying the "statistical recovery."

Washington's plans to pump more into the war bud-

get, increase funding for its military intervention in Afghanistan, and expand its deployment of Special Forces are steps to defend the interests of the tiny minority who "have a very good future," as a top German banker described his class during the economic summit in Davos, Switzerland. The U.S. rulers and their counterparts abroad are preparing to defend that future from the sharper conflicts that are coming with workers and farmers around the world.

Economic and social conditions brought on by the world depression are forcing millions of workers to consider the fight to overthrow the dictatorship of capital. Through resistance and absorbing the history of working-class struggles, a politically-conscious and organized vanguard can be forged to lead the working class to power, which will make possible the "human recovery" the capitalist system is not capable of producing.

Toward that end the *Militant* is encouraging our readers to buy, study, and help sell *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, which draws the lessons of the history of struggle toward the revolutionary conquest of power by the working class.

Washington prepares for broader wars

Continued from front page

ancing the force," the U.S. military projects both using U.S. troops in "major conflicts" like Afghanistan and Iraq and in "a broad range" of other operations.

According to *DefenseNews*, the review "calls for a force shaped for a wide swath of activities in many hot spots," not one only designed to fight two wars simultaneously.

While not a new course, the White House budget and Defense Review deepens the shift, begun close to a decade ago, in the deployment, military strategy, and order of battle of U.S. imperialism's armed forces. As the economic crisis continues to take a heavy toll on the toiling majority, the capitalists, their government, and their twin parties, the Democrats and Republicans, feel a more pressing need to prepare for sharpening conflicts with workers and farmers around the world and inside the United States itself.

At the top of the Pentagon's list of "six key missions" is using the military to "Defend the United States and support civil authorities at home"—part of what it calls a break "from the past." Number two is "Succeed in counterinsurgency, stability, and counterterrorism operations."

'Future risks'

To carry out what Secretary of Defense Robert Gates calls "providing a hedge against current and future risks and contingencies," the 2011 budget adds 2,800 commandos to special operations forces, which by 2015 will total 660 Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine teams.

The plan also includes adding two Army combat aviation brigades, each with about 2,600 troops, including 350 pilots; purchasing more helicopters; and increasing the production of armed drones so that the number of pilotless planes in the air at the same time

can increase to 65 from the current limit of 37.

The Defense Review continues to single out Iran and North Korea as possible targets for U.S. operations.

The day after the military budget and Defense Review were released, Adm. Michael Mullen, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, announced that close to 4,500, out of the 30,000 additional troops committed by Obama, are now in Afghanistan. About 14,000 more will be there by late spring, Mullen said, and the rest by early fall. This will bring U.S. troop totals there to more than 100,000.

The additional troops have allowed U.S. forces to expand their combat operations and control in Kandahar and Helmand provinces, two of the main strongholds of insurgent forces in Afghanistan.

More U.S. 'kill-capture' missions

At a conference in London attended by representatives of 65 governments January 28, Washington reiterated its support for attempts to win over some Taliban fighters and lower level leaders. Although the U.S. government did not pledge any new money for the effort, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton praised Tokyo for giving \$50 million to a reintegration fund.

At the same time, Washington has been stepping up its efforts to decapitate Taliban forces and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Yemen.

According to the *Washington Post*, U.S. military teams and agents worked with Yemeni troops to kill scores of people, including six of 15 top leaders of an al-Qaeda affiliate in Yemen over the past six weeks. The paper claims the several dozen U.S. troops do not take part in the raids, but help plan the missions.

In Afghanistan "small teams of Army commandos, Navy Seals and Central Intelligence Agency operatives have intensified the pace of what the military often calls 'kill-capture missions,'" the *Wall Street Journal* reported February 2. In the last six months in Zabul Province alone, the paper said, U.S. Special Forces carried out more than 100 attacks targeting Taliban commanders and leaders.

Washington has also continued to push other imperialist governments to step up their backing of the U.S. war.

German chancellor Angela Merkel announced January 26 that an additional 500 troops would be sent to Afghanistan and 350 would be held as a "flexible reserve force." With 4,300 troops in Afghanistan, mostly in the north, Germany has the third largest contingent in the U.S.-led NATO force.

This, however, fell far short of Washington's hope for at least 1,000 more. Merkel said that more than 1,100 German soldiers would be pulled from combat and instead focus on training Afghan security forces.

Gov't jobs plan

Continued from front page

ary 29, a fact widely acknowledged in capitalist ruling circles. "The latest projections from the Congressional Budget Office say that the average unemployment rate next year will be only slightly lower than the current, disastrous, 10 percent."

Under the Obama administration's jobs plan, \$30 billion from the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) bailout funds will be given to community banks to encourage them to make loans to small businesses. In addition, employers will get a \$5,000 tax credit for each worker hired in 2010, with a limit of no more than 100 workers per company. Congress must pass this proposal.

The president is projecting the creation of 2 million jobs through doubling U.S. exports over the next five years to \$2 trillion in 2015. No plans were offered on how this would be accomplished in a worldwide depression economy. White House officials have just said an export promotion cabinet would be set up.

Obama has also called for improving the nation's infrastructure through the creation of "green" jobs, and \$8 billion in grants toward building high speed train lines nationwide.

A report issued last year by the American Society of Civil Engineers on the crumbling U.S. infrastructure noted that it would take \$2.2 trillion over five years to get the roads, bridges, levees, schools, water supply, and other infrastructure into decent shape.

Among those hailing Obama's jobs program is AFL-CIO president Richard Trumka. "We were pleased to see that the President embraced two of the job creation proposals we have made—investing in infrastructure and helping small businesses get credit through TARP funds," he said in a January 28 statement released to the media. The head of the federation made no attempt to present any independent labor program for jobs that the union movement could fight for. Instead he continued to tie labor's prospects for coming out of the depression to the Democratic Party regime.

"How loud do the alarms have to get?" asked liberal *New York Times* columnist Bob Herbert January 23. "There is an economic emergency in the country. . . . and the politicians, including the president and his Democratic allies on Capitol Hill, seem not just helpless to deal with the crisis, but completely out of touch with the hardships that have fallen on so many."

Herbert noted that from 2000 to 2008 "the number of poor people in the U.S. grew by 5.2 million, reaching nearly 40 million." A total of 91.6 million "fell below 200 percent of the federal poverty line, which is a meager \$21,834 for a family of four."

Three-year spending freeze

In its budget proposals for fiscal year 2011 the Obama administration is also calling for a three-year spending freeze on many domestic programs. While the Pentagon, Homeland Security, Medicare, and Social Security are exempt from the freeze for now, federal funds to state and city governments will be cut, accelerating the pace of layoffs and reductions in social programs that state and local governments have already begun to implement.

The day after Obama's speech, New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg, for example, said that under his budget proposal 11,000 of the city's 79,000 teachers could have their jobs eliminated. Also on the chopping block are 20 fire companies, 15 senior centers, some city swimming pools, a 24-hour center for the homeless, and a halt to financing for 500 soup kitchens and food pantries. Library funds would be slashed and nurses in some elementary schools would be eliminated.

As the rate of unemployment remains high, earnings are being depressed. The Labor Department reported January 29 that wages and benefits for 2009 rose by just 1.5 percent, the lowest amount in 27 years. In 2008 they rose by 2.6 percent.

"What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold"



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