

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Dictatorship of proletariat is
toilers' most powerful instrument
—PAGES 8–9

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 74/NO. 14 APRIL 12, 2010

Obama visits Kabul amid war escalation

BY DOUG NELSON

March 29—President Barack Obama made his first visit to Afghanistan yesterday, following a recent escalation of the eight-year U.S.-led war. In carrying through this course—with broad bipartisan support—Obama has laid his own claim to the war, dropping the once-frequent criticisms of his predecessor's military policy.

Since taking office, the administration has ordered 50,000 additional troops to Afghanistan. The rolling deployment has made possible the launching of a new campaign to take and hold major population centers throughout the country.

The intensifying combat has left at least 83 U.S. soldiers dead in Afghanistan so far this year—roughly double the number during the same period in 2009. More than 2,400 Afghan civilians were killed in the conflict last year, according to the United Nations.

The recent U.S. military offensive
Continued on page 3

Residential mortgage crisis is looming

BY SETH GALINSKY

A new residential mortgage crisis is looming. Its effects could have devastating consequences for millions of working people.

In spite of talk about an economic “recovery” and government programs to modify loan terms, a wave of foreclosures is expected in the years ahead that could dwarf the 2008 surge in mortgage defaults.

A March 12 *Washington Post* article warned that as many as 7 million house and apartment owners today are “seriously delinquent” but have not yet had their residences foreclosed or repossessed.

Banks are holding off on taking action for fear that putting a massive number of residences up for sale will depress the market even further and undercut their profits. On March 24 the U.S. Commerce Department announced that sales of new residences in February fell to their lowest amount on record.

“Banks have remained in foreclo-
Continued on page 5

Health ‘reform’ boon for insurance giants

Workers face deteriorating care, fines

BY BEN JOYCE

After what he described as “nearly 100 years of talk and frustration,” U.S. president Barack Obama signed into law March 23 the Affordable Health Care for America Act. The law, whose implementation will be years in coming, promises to be a boon for the insurance industry while perpetuating the deterio-

ration in the quality and availability of medical care for working people.

In order to get the bill passed, Obama and Democratic Party leaders in Congress employed a combination of cajoling, threats, and special deals to win the votes of individual Democrats. In the final stages, politicians who supported the

Continued on page 7

Thousands in California protest school cuts



Militant/Betsey Stone

SACRAMENTO, California—Some 7,000 people rallied here March 22 to protest cuts in state education funding. Most were community college students, hit by cuts in the number of classes and cancellation of summer schools and student services. Students from state universities also joined the march.

—BETSEY STONE

Two Cuban students speak to 350 at meetings in Georgia

BY JANICE LYNN
AND LISA POTASH

ATLANTA—Two Cuban students, Yenaivis Fuentes Ascencio and Aníbal Ramos Socarrás, began a month-long speaking tour of the United States here March 22. They spoke to about 350 people during their six-day stop in Georgia, addressing meetings and classes at Georgia State University, Spelman College, and Morehouse School of Medicine.

Over the next month they will be speaking on campuses in Minneapolis, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Mary-

land, New York, New Jersey, and Los Angeles. A broad range of academic departments, professors, and student groups is sponsoring and financing their tour.

Fuentes, 23, has completed five years of study at the School of Medical Sciences in Guantánamo and is finishing her sixth and final year of undergraduate studies in Havana. She serves as the National Public Health Education Coordinator of the Federation of University Students (FEU).

Ramos, 30, is a third-year graduate
Continued on page 6



Militant/Dave Wulp

Yenaivis Fuentes Ascencio, left, and Aníbal Ramos Socarrás, speaking, give presentations and answer questions at Spelman College in Atlanta March 23.

Sales of ‘Workers Power’ book spur donations to Militant fund

BY CINDY JAQUITH

More and more of those purchasing the book *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, by Jack Barnes, and subscribers to this paper are deciding to also contribute to the *Militant* fund. The international effort to raise \$110,000 for the *Militant* by May 12 has so far netted \$13,796.

Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power is at the center of a *Militant* fund-raising meeting planned for April 3 in San Francisco. The event will feature a panel including Carlos Narváez, a member of UNITE HERE Local 2, which is involved in fights for new contracts at many hotels here. He has gotten three copies of the book thus far, one for himself, one for his brother, and one for another union member. Also speaking is Zach Liddle, a student at

San Francisco State University who is currently participating in classes on the book, and James Harris, a member of the SWP National Committee.

In New York fund organizers called
Continued on page 4

Also Inside:

Boston school workers protest cuts, layoffs	2
British Air cabin crews walk out	2
White House promotes latest slanders against Cuba	3
UK: Protesters confront anti-Muslim rightists	5

Boston school workers protest cuts, layoffs

BY TED LEONARD

BOSTON—“No more cuts!” chanted nearly 1,000 teachers, custodians, and other school system employees at a rally here March 24. The Boston Teachers Union (BTU) and the Coalition for Equal Quality Education called the protest.

While the lively demonstration took place outside the school system building, the Boston School Committee was approving the 2011 education budget inside, eliminating 292 employees—including 11 teachers, 10 teachers’ aides, 83 custodians, 10 administrators, and 45 clerks.

The budget also bars principals from replacing some teachers who retire or who leave the district for other reasons and puts on hold more than \$5 million worth of repair projects. The school committee budget must now be approved by the Boston City Council to take effect.

About 30 school bus drivers, members of United Steelworkers Local 8751, were cheered as they marched as a contingent into the rally.

“They’re trying to get rid of staff. The schools are already understaffed,” said Manny Alyes, a custodian for 14 years who currently works at the David Ellis Elementary School in Roxbury. Currently there are 404 custodians and 135 public schools in the city. The cuts represent a 20 percent reduction in the number of custodians.

Signs made by the custodians union demanded, “Keep Boston schools clean, healthy and safe for our children.” Many people carried signs

printed by the BTU that read, “Budget Cuts Hurt Kids” and “Underfunded means Underperforming.” The state has declared 35 Massachusetts schools “underperforming.” Schools superintendent Carol Johnson announced she was replacing five principals in 12 schools, and teachers at six of the 12 schools would have to reapply for their jobs.

When the room where the school committee was meeting was reaching its seating capacity, cops closed the doors and would not let more people enter. The rally then moved to the back of the building outside the windows of the room where the school committee was meeting. Chants of “No more cuts” grew louder and some jumped up on the window ledges and taped the BTU’s placards to the windows so the school committee could read them.

Laura Garza contributed to this article.



Militant/Ted Leonard

March 24 rally against cuts in Massachusetts education budget drew more than 1,000 teachers, bus drivers, custodians, and other unionists.

Unionists rally behind grocery store strikers

BY TED LEONARD

BOSTON—More than 200 unionists and supporters held a rally here at a local Shaw’s supermarket March 18 to back 300 warehouse workers, members of United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW) Local 791, on strike at a Shaw’s Supermarkets distribution center in Methuen, Massachusetts, since March 7.

The workers struck after rejecting a company proposal that would have increased what they pay for health care

by more than the wage increase being offered by the company.

UFCW Local 791, the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, the Greater Boston Labor Council, and Jobs with Justice called the action.

In addition to daily pickets at the distribution center, Local 791 has informational pickets at 16 supermarkets in

Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

On March 23 Shaw’s notified the union that it intended to hire permanent replacements for the striking employees and had begun the process of posting the jobs and screening applicants. The next day Shaw’s announced it was going to lay off 4 percent of its employees system-wide in early April.

British Air cabin crews walk out

BY ROSE KNIGHT AND JIM SPAUL

LONDON—British Airways cabin crews, members of the Unite union, went on strike March 20 for three days to protest proposed job cuts, and reduced pay and benefits for new hires. The union organized a second strike of four days beginning March 27.

Eighty percent of the 12,000 cabin crews joined the first walkout. There were four picket lines at locations around Heathrow Airport with strikers holding Unite banners and many drivers honking in support as they drove past.

The opposition Tory Party condemned Prime Minister Gordon Brown of the Labour Party, charging he hadn’t sufficiently distanced himself from the strike. Unite is the largest contributor to the Labour Party, giving £11 million (\$17 million) in the last two years.

Paul Davies, Communist League parliamentary candidate for Bethnal Green and Bow, joined the picket line March 28. “All working people have a stake in this fight,” he said. “The BA strikers offer an example of how workers can fight when the bosses attempt to cut jobs and deal us blows.”



Militant/Jorge Lertora

Demonstrators March 21 in Washington

Legalize all immigrants now!

More than 100,000 demonstrated in Washington, D.C., March 21 to demand an end to immigration raids and deportations. In the pages of the ‘Militant,’ keep on top of this fight and its importance in unifying the working class.

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White House promotes latest slanders on Cuba

BY SETH GALINSKY

The White House released an official statement March 24 adding its voice to the latest slander campaign against the Cuban Revolution. President Barack Obama claimed that “Cuban authorities continue to respond to the aspirations of the Cuban people with a clenched fist.”

Obama was referring to Orlando Zapata Tamayo, who died February 23 after refusing food for 80 days, and to Ladies in White, a U.S.-backed group in Cuba that opposes the revolution.

According to the Cuban daily *Granma*, between 1993 and 2002 Zapata was arrested several times on charges that had nothing to do with politics, ranging from fraud to battery and breaking and entering. At one point he was arrested for assault with a machete. In 2004 he began serving a three-year jail sentence; this was increased to 24 years after he physically attacked prison employees.

In December 2009, Zapata began a hunger strike, widely publicized in the capitalist news media as a fight for “human rights” in Cuba. The Cuban press, however, reported that Zapata’s main demands were “the installation of a telephone, cooking facilities, and a television in his cell.”

No torture in Cuba

Cuban president Raúl Castro noted that the Cuban government tried to save Zapata’s life. “He was taken to our best hospitals,” Castro pointed out. “He died: we regret it very much.”

Since the 1959 revolution that overthrew the Fulgencio Batista dictatorship, “we have not murdered anyone here, we have tortured no one here, we have not carried out any extra-judicial execution,” Castro explained. The same cannot be said about the U.S.-controlled Guantánamo Naval Base, the Cuban leader added, where “there have been tortures.”

Cuban television’s nightly news on March 1 included interviews with doctors who tried to save Zapata’s life. The report noted that family members and Cuban government and hospital personnel tried to convince Zapata to end his hunger strike, but not a single “dissident” group that had taken up his case did so.

Ladies in White stepped up its activities after Zapata’s suicide, including a series of provocative demon-

strations in Havana that were met by counterprotests of supporters of the revolution. The group is made up of relatives of 75 opponents of the Cuban Revolution who were arrested in March 2003, 53 of them still in prison. The 75 were charged with receiving funds from Washington and collaborating with U.S. diplomatic personnel stationed in Havana against the Cuban Revolution.

Washington financed opposition

They had been encouraged by James Cason, who was appointed in 2003 by then-president George Bush as head of the U.S. Interests Section in Cuba. Cason publicly touted his “6,000-mile” plan to crisscross the island to aid groups opposed to the revolution.

Amnesty International, which continues to criticize Cuba for the arrests and public trials, admitted in a March 2008 report that the 75 had “received funds and/or materials from the United States government in order to engage in activities the authorities perceived as subversive and damaging to Cuba.”

While claiming that the Cuban government restricts “freedom of expression and association,” Amnesty International concedes that the Cuban government provides “all Cubans with key human rights such as access to housing, healthcare, and education.” Amnesty does not accuse Cuban authorities of torture, disappearances, or beatings.

“Solidarity” marches with Ladies in White took place in Miami, New York, and Los Angeles in late March. The largest took place in Miami, led by singer Gloria Estefan, a longtime



Above, members of Cuba’s Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) at massive march in Havana, May 14, 2004, protesting tightening of U.S. sanctions against Cuba. Poster of Iraqi prisoner being tortured by U.S. marine reads, “In Cuba this will never happen.” Inset, Afghan prisoners at U.S. prison camp in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, 2002. Cuban president Raúl Castro points out that while no one has been murdered or tortured by Cuban authorities since 1959 revolution, “there have been tortures” at Guantánamo camp.

opponent of the revolution. At a press conference, Estefan backed the hunger strike in Cuba begun by Guillermo Fariñas after Zapata’s death. Fariñas says he is refusing to eat to win the release of 26 prisoners.

In an autobiographical note posted on an anti-Cuba Web site, Fariñas says he fought in Angola in 1980 as part of the Cuban volunteer troops who helped defeat invasions by the South African apartheid regime.

In 1986, he says, he was a supporter of Perestroika and Glasnost in the Soviet Union. Fariñas also identifies himself as having opposed the execution of Arnaldo Ochoa in 1989. After it was discovered that he had been

involved in drug trafficking, black market deals, and robbery, Ochoa, a general in the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba, was put on trial, found guilty, and given the death penalty.

For the last 50 years, Washington has used every means at its disposal to undermine and attack the Cuban Revolution. This has included scores of assassination plots against Fidel Castro and other Cuban leaders, the economic embargo of Cuba, the backing of rightist groups that have launched violent attacks and bombings against Cuba, and the financing of small groups inside Cuba that falsely claim to be fighting for democratic rights.

Obama visits Kabul amid escalation of war

Continued from front page

represents a new phase in Washington’s evolving “counterinsurgency” strategy, which aims to weaken the Taliban and other anti-U.S. Islamist forces and establish a sufficient base of political support for a U.S.-backed regime in Afghanistan with a capable military force of its own.

Unlike the George W. Bush administration, the current White House has largely turned over management of the war to the U.S. military leadership. U.S. general Stanley McChrystal, top U.S./NATO commander in Afghanistan, has been leading a range of initiatives and policy shifts to better meet the specific, long-term challenges the imperialists face in advancing their goals.

Among the more recent changes, the Pentagon is instituting a new system of deployment—“campaign continuity”—in which specific units will be rotated in and out of the same regions in the country in order to gain political insight and establish relationships with local bourgeois forces.

McChrystal has also ordered the shutting down of amenities at major U.S. bases, including many stores, recreational facilities, and U.S. restaurants such as TGI Fridays. Ostensibly, the move is designed to free up needed space for the expanding army. The *Miami Herald* quoted one command sergeant major explaining, “This is a war zone, not an amusement park.” The

Herald cited other officials saying that the orders are also about conveying a message that Washington does not intend to Americanize the country.

Following a brief pep rally with troops in Kabul, Obama met with President Hamid Karzai, who had just returned from a diplomatic trip to Iran. “We . . . want to continue to make progress on the civilian process,” Obama said during public remarks alongside Karzai—an implicit statement that Washington is not pleased with the Karzai government.

In many areas of the country Washington faces a challenge in presenting the Afghan government as a credible and preferable alternative to the Taliban. While the Taliban is widely hated and feared for its brutality and repression, government politicians and police have earned their own reputation for rampant corruption and criminality.

Washington’s ties with Islamabad

Obama’s visit also comes several days after a two-day “strategic dialogue” in Washington in which U.S. secretary of state Hillary Clinton and U.S. military officials met with a Pakistani delegation, which included the country’s top general and foreign minister.

Recently, Islamabad has increased its cooperation with the U.S. government in disrupting and weakening Washington’s main Taliban enemies. In return, Washington is expected to

increase economic aid and accelerate its shipment of military aircraft, naval vessels, and other materiel. The stronger alliance puts Islamabad in a better position to play a leading role in negotiations with the Taliban, and thereby strengthen its influence in Afghanistan.

Pakistani officials also pressed for more far-reaching rewards to which Clinton gave no public response: greater access to U.S. markets, restraints on New Delhi’s growing influence in Afghanistan, and a civilian nuclear energy pact such as Washington has negotiated with the Indian government.

Alongside the intensification of the war in Afghanistan, Washington has stepped up operations in Pakistan, including strikes by aerial drones. So far this year, Washington has conducted 25 drone attacks, more than any other three-month period since the war began, and double the average rate in 2009.

Unlike the previous administration, which never officially acknowledged the strikes, the White House has sought to publicly justify the use of drones for assassination missions. Harold Koh, the State Department’s top lawyer, issued a statement March 25 declaring the “legality” of the strikes. “Great care is taken,” Koh said, to assess in each attack that civilians deaths and damage to property would not be “excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated.”

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

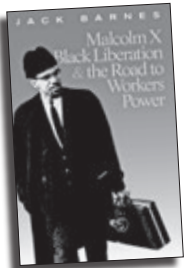
San Francisco

The Fraud of Immigration Reform: Why the Working Class Needs to Fight for Legalization Now. Speaker: Carole Lesnick, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., April 9, 7:30 p.m. 5482 Mission St., Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Elections in Iraq, the U.S.-Led Offensive in Afghanistan, and the Fight to Open Political Space for Working People. Speaker: Anthony Dutrow, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., April 9, 8 p.m. 307 W 36 St., 10th floor (near 8th Ave.). Tel.: (212) 736-2540.



Sell the book on ‘Workers Power’

Washington, D.C.

Two supporters of the *Militant* here did a plant gate sale at Amtrak’s Ivy City maintenance yard recently. We hadn’t been selling there for many years, but after Tom Headley, who works there, reported selling 16 copies of the *Workers Power* book to coworkers, most with subscriptions to the *Militant*, we decided to back him up and join the discussion.

We sold three “combinations” of the *Workers Power* book with introductory subscriptions to the *Militant*, along with four single copies of the paper. A big majority of rail workers at this facility are Black. All three who got the book and subscription were Black, including one woman and one recent veteran who did three tours in Iraq. “Those of us with boots on the ground didn’t know why we were there,” he said.

—Susan LaMont

Miami

This week we sold five *Workers Power* books and four subscriptions to the *Militant*. One book was sold at the International Longshoremens’s Associa-

tion hall in Fort Lauderdale to the president of the union local who welcomed the *Militant*.

Another was sold at the post office in the Black community to a young worker who said he was “looking for people like you” and ran off to the ATM to get money to purchase the book and a subscription.

A student from Florida International University also came by the Socialist Workers campaign headquarters looking for the *Workers Power* book, which he had read about in the *Militant*.

—Emily Paul

Seattle

Supporters of the *Militant* newspaper in Seattle are continuing to go all out to sell *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, by Jack Barnes, to coworkers, students, and friends. Carmen Maymi-O’Reilly, who works for the Seattle school system, sold a subscription and two books at work this week, bringing her total to five.

On Sunday there was an antiwar demonstration here attended by some



Militant/Eric Simpson

Militant supporter, left, sells *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* at March 22 demonstration in Sacramento, California, against cuts in education funding.

200 people. John Martinez and Maymi-O’Reilly were part of a team at the demonstration engaging in discussions about the capitalist crisis and why the working class needs to take political power to begin the fight to reorganize society in the interests of the majority. Martinez said, “I’m reading about everybody else selling the new book and the response it’s getting and

thought I’d better get out here.”

We get e-mail messages and phone calls at the Socialist Workers Party office almost daily requesting books and papers. A note from Dean Peoples, who works at Boeing, said, “I have sold three books and need two more ASAP.” The books are given out on consignment and the money turned in when they’re sold.

—Mary Martin

Most areas ahead in 2nd week of int’l propaganda campaign

BY PAUL MAILHOT

Supporters of the *Militant* are getting a good response to the campaign to sell thousands of copies of the book *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes, along with 2,000 subscriptions to the paper. After the second week of the eight-week drive, most areas are ahead of schedule.

Unlike previous drives, the effort this spring centers on using the *Workers Power* book to engage in a discussion

with workers and young people about why the dictatorship of capital—along with its economic crises, wars, myriad forms of discrimination, and repression—must be replaced by the working class taking power. Only through the exercise of state power will working people be able to begin the fight to reorganize society free of the scourges produced by the capitalist system, which operates to maximize profits at the expense of the great majority of humanity.

Through this discussion about what *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* presents, many workers and young people are also attracted to the weekly coverage of working-class fights and the socialist perspective presented in the *Militant*.

Every week distributors of the *Militant* are joining working-class actions to defend unions, protest cuts in social services, fight layoffs, support abortion rights, or combat racist discrimination. At these actions they are introducing fellow fighters to the *Workers Power* book and the *Militant*. Readers of the paper are encouraged to join this effort.

Book sales spur fund drive

Continued from front page
a list of people who have renewed their *Militant* subscriptions at least once before. They began by contacting readers who have been long-term subscribers. Four of them pledged \$275 to the fund, the first time they have contributed financially to the paper. “One reader had renewed his subscription before *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* was printed. So when we visited him to pick up his \$100 contribution to the fund, we also sold him the book,” wrote Dan Fein. The contributor said, “Any time the *Militant* is doing fund-raising, give me a call.”

Fein spoke at a March 26 *Militant* Labor Forum in New York on “Washington’s War against Working People at Home and Abroad: The Working Class Needs to Take Political Power.” Participants contributed \$3,750 to the *Militant* fund and pledged another \$4,000.

The *Militant* fund is an annual ef-

fort to win contributions from working people to finance the *Militant*. Funds raised help cover the cost of producing the paper, as well as travel costs for on-the-scene reporting of developments in the class struggle worldwide. Send contributions for the fund to 306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10018. Make checks out to the *Militant*.

Campaign to sell ‘Workers Power’ with ‘Militant’ subscriptions March 13–May 12				
Country	Books sold	Subs sold	Subs quota	Subs %
UNITED STATES				
Houston	39	35	65	54%
New York	170	129	265	49%
Philadelphia	31	36	90	40%
San Francisco	52	60	150	40%
Washington, D.C.	45	39	110	35%
Miami	22	23	80	29%
Seattle	24	26	95	27%
Twin Cities, MN	32	39	155	25%
Boston	9	16	65	25%
Chicago	33	27	120	23%
Los Angeles	35	29	130	22%
Des Moines, IA	11	19	125	15%
Atlanta	42	21	140	15%
Total U.S.	545	499	1590	31%
UNITED KINGDOM				
London	29	25	90	28%
Edinburgh	6	5	30	17%
Total UK	35	30	120	25%
Canada	10	29	100	29%
New Zealand	11	14	65	22%
Australia	2	7	50	14%
Sweden	8	9	20	45%
Total	611	558	1945	28%
Should be		500	2000	25%



Militant/Mary Martin

Selling *Workers Power* book at March 21 antiwar demonstration in Seattle

‘Militant’ fund drive March 13–May 12			
Country	Quota	Paid	%
UNITED STATES			
New York	\$19,000	\$6,215	33%
Twin Cities, MN	\$7,000	\$1,800	26%
San Francisco	\$14,000	\$3,500	25%
Des Moines, IA	\$2,500	\$545	22%
Atlanta	\$7,800	\$1,055	14%
Chicago	\$9,600	\$310	3%
Boston	\$3,500	\$0	0%
Houston	\$2,500	\$0	0%
Los Angeles	\$8,700	\$0	0%
Miami	\$3,000	\$0	0%
Philadelphia	\$3,700	\$0	0%
Seattle	\$8,000	\$0	0%
Washington, D.C.	\$6,500	\$0	0%
Total U.S.	\$95,800	\$13,425	14%
Canada	\$6,650	\$0	0%
New Zealand	\$3,000	\$0	0%
Australia	\$1,500	\$108	7%
UNITED KINGDOM			
Edinburgh	\$300	\$0	0%
London	\$750	\$30	4%
Total UK	\$1,050	\$30	3%
Sweden	\$500	\$8	2%
Other		\$225	
Total	\$108,500	\$13,796	13%
Should be	\$110,000	\$27,500	25%

UK: Protesters confront anti-Muslim rightists

BY HUGO WILS
AND PAUL DAVIES

LONDON—About 2,000 people joined a counterdemonstration against the English Defence League (EDL), organized by United Against Fascism (UAF) in Bolton, England, March 20. Similar actions have taken place in cities throughout the United Kingdom.

The EDL emerged last year as an ultrarightist organization that targets Muslims. Among its demands, the EDL calls for a ban on the building of new mosques in Britain and on wearing burqas, a form of dress worn by some Muslim women. According to *The Times*, the rightists' march also drew as many as 2,000 people. Their placards included, "Sharia law will destroy Britain and all our British values" and "Brown lies and another soldier dies."

The UAF counterdemonstration included many students and other participants from throughout the United

Kingdom. "We have Polish, Czechs, English, and Jews living side by side," Mohamed Patel from Bolton told the *Militant*. "We have to stand together and not be pushed by the EDL."

In a show of force, mounted cops and riot police with dogs prevented many from joining the counterdemonstration and boxed protesters into the town square where the action was held, preventing them from leaving.

Caroline Bellamy and Paul Davies, Communist League candidates in Edinburgh South West and Bethnal Green and Bow in London participated in the counter protest. Davies condemned the violence of the cops and the arrests of protestors.

Seventy-four people were arrested at the action, overwhelmingly from the UAF, including the group's organizer Weyman Bennett.

Pete Clifford contributed to this article.

Libraries, booksellers order Pathfinder in Farsi

The public library in Vancouver, British Columbia, has placed an initial order for Farsi translations of books by Pathfinder Press to add to its Farsi-language collection. More than 25,000 Iranians now live in British Columbia.

The bookseller at PanBeh Books, an online bookseller with offices in Vancouver, has added 19 of Pathfinder's books in Farsi to his Web site <http://panbeh.com>, shown at right. PanBeh also displayed the Farsi-language Pathfinder books together with some of the English editions as part of a Farsi book display at a recent festival marking Nooruz—the first day of the Iranian calendar.

After meeting with a Pathfinder representative, the Farsi cataloger at the library of a major university in New England ordered all 29 of Pathfinder's books in Farsi.

—MARY ELLEN MARUS AND TIM CRAINE



New residential mortgage crisis is looming

Continued from front page
sure paralysis," Sandeep Bordia, head of U.S. residential credit strategy at Barclays Capital told the *Post*, adding that this could not continue "indefinitely."

Some 11.3 million people—about one-quarter of all mortgage holders in the United States—owe more on their mortgages than their residences are currently worth, due to the decline in housing prices over the last several years.

A previous plan by the Barack Obama administration to buy time for people having difficulty with mortgage payments is widely seen as a failure.

The "Home Affordable Modification Program," was launched a year ago with promises of helping 3 million to 4 million people lower their mortgage payments. Instead, only 170,000 people have qualified for permanent changes and 1.3 million are enrolled in trial programs. More than half of those who were granted lower mortgage payments re-defaulted on their loans within nine months.

On March 26 the White House announced a new plan. But, showing the lack of confidence in ruling class circles, the *New York Times* article reporting the plan's details opened with a question: "Will it work this time?"

The first component would "encourage" mortgage companies to reduce monthly payments from unemployed workers for up to six months while they look for a new job. After six months, job or no job, mortgage payments would go back up and the owner would still be responsible for what the *Times* called "the missing money" from the previous months.

Banks and other lenders would also be asked to "consider" writing off a portion of the loan, especially of "underwater" borrowers.

The *Times* noted that "none of these programs have the force of law." But, in order to "lubricate" what the capitalist daily claims are the "boldest" measures to date, banks that participate in the plan would be eligible for billions of dollars of government assistance and loan guarantees if the borrowers can't pay.

Unlike in the previous bubble of so-

called subprime loans, today most of the "borrowers in trouble," in the words of the *Washington Post*, are "people who have better credit and safer loans and have become delinquent because they've lost their jobs or are dealing with other economic setbacks."

In addition, hundreds of thousands of people will see their payments go up by the end of 2010 and into 2011 because they hold adjustable rate mortgages.

At least 90 percent of all housing mortgages in the United States are now either guaranteed or loaned outright by Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and the Federal Housing Administration.

The U.S. government seized control of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, giants in the mortgage business, in September 2008 as part of attempts to prevent the financial crisis from spiraling out of control. The Treasury Department has given the two companies \$175 billion in aid and bought \$1.25 trillion in mort-

gage-backed securities they held.

According to the *New York Times*, in "the last six weeks alone" the two companies have been transformed "into arms of the federal government."

For all practical purposes Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac have been nationalized, and are being used to shore up the capitalist housing market and guarantee the profits of large banks. Even as large numbers of workers face long-term unemployment, Washington is using its control of the two companies to attempt to resuscitate the housing bubble.

The *Times* reported that the government ordered the companies to oversee the new mortgage modification program, buy large numbers of delinquent loans from banks, refinance millions of "at-risk" mortgages, and "loosen policies" to make it easier to lend money for house purchases to "questionable borrowers."

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



April 12, 1985

CHARLESTON, West Virginia—Hundreds of members of the United Mine Workers (UMW) rallied here at the West Virginia state capitol March 28 in support of their union and its six-month-long battle against the A.T. Massey Coal Co.

It was the 39th successive day of UMW mobilizations in support of union members on strike against A.T. Massey. More than 2,500 UMW miners were forced out on strike last Oct. 1, 1984, when dozens of Massey subsidiaries refused to sign the union's national contract negotiated with the Bituminous Coal Operators Association.

The union has faced massive arrests, company harassment and videotaping of its activities, injuries to its members by procompany coal-truck drivers, battalions of cops in riot gear.



April 11, 1960

Reporting on the bitterly fought integration struggle in Marshall, Texas, one wire service noted that the Negro demonstrations there were "the first since Reconstruction days." This historic fact applies to the Southwide movement which is maintaining its unprecedented mass challenge to the Jim Crow system despite ten weeks of wholesale jailings and victimizations.

As the inspiring battle continues, the Northern supporting movement is also winning new forces. The solidarity demonstrations have stirred more people to action than any social issue since the 1930s. "Pickets marched yesterday in front of a majority of the 3,000 F. W. Woolworth stores throughout the nation in protest against the chain's segregated lunch counters in the South," reported the April 3 *New York Times*.



April 13, 1935

No matter how highly developed the armed strength of a nation may be, the coming war, like the last one, will be fought by the masses who are compelled to employ the weapons of warfare.

But before the workers of all nations can be driven to the trenches, their minds must first be poisoned with chauvinist gases, the bayonet of lies and misrepresentation must first rip out the bowels of their class solidarity.

In the last war, the official Socialist parties turned recruiting sergeant in behalf of the imperialists. It required the immortal Karl Liebknecht to exclaim: "*The enemy is in our own country!*" In 1917, the Russian masses learned the meaning of these words. They turned on their real enemy, they took power, they brought the war to an end in *their* way.

For further reading

New International
MAGAZINE OF MARXIST POLITICS AND THEORY
Issue number 10 includes:

"Imperialism's March Toward Fascism and War"
—by Jack Barnes

"What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold"
—Resolution adopted by 1988 Socialist Workers Party convention

Available online or from a distributor listed on page 6

PathfinderPress.com

Tour of Cuban youth

Continued from front page
student in surgery at the Manzanillo School of Medical Sciences at the University of Granma. He served one year in Haiti with a volunteer medical brigade and is a leader of the FEU at his school.

Their presentations about the Cuban Revolution today, its history before and after the overthrow of the Batista dictatorship in 1959, Cuba's role in the world, and the attempts by the U.S. government to overturn the revolution have stimulated a wide-ranging discussion and exchange of views. This is the first U.S. tour of Cuban youth in nine years.

History of Cuban Revolution

Fuentes began her presentations at several of the public meetings by describing the fight led by revolutionary forces at the end of the 19th century to get rid of slavery in Cuba and gain independence from Spain. Fuentes explained how the Cuban Revolution of 1959 built on the historical legacy of those earlier battles. She described what life was like before and after 1959 in education, health care, and the status of women.

Fuentes explained that illiteracy was widespread, especially in the countryside, before the revolution and there were only three universities and one medical school in the whole country. Illiteracy has been eradicated and today there is a medical school in every province. Some 100,000 young Cubans mobilized from late 1960 through 1961 as part of the revolutionary government's effort to teach 1 million Cubans to read.

"Before 1959 most women worked in the home or as a domestic servant in someone else's home," she explained. "Today, women have the same rights as men and become doctors, teachers, and scientists," among other jobs traditionally held only by males.

"Cuba is a country with a great desire to help other countries around the world," Ramos told several audiences. "Cuban doctors, teachers, and engineers are working in internationalist missions in 40 countries throughout

the world, with no conditions, no strings attached. And students from over 150 countries are studying in Cuba, all for free."

Haitian-Cuban medical collaboration began in 1998 after a hurricane devastated Haiti, Fuentes explained. This past January, "when the earthquake hit Haiti, there were more than 400 Cuban medical personnel already there. There are now more than 1,000," she said.

Ramos described Operation Miracle, a program sponsored by the Cuban government to set up ophthalmology centers run by Cuban doctors in Latin America and Africa. Those facilities have made possible eye operations for some 50,000 people without charge. "This is possible thanks to the Cuban Revolution," he said.

"But since the first days of the Cuban Revolution, the U.S. government has attempted to destroy it," he continued. "At first, by direct attacks and invasions, like at the Bay of Pigs. Then by bombings, assassination attempts on Cuban leaders like Fidel Castro, and the passage of different laws that reinforce the economic blockade." Most trade with Cuba is prohibited by the U.S. government.

Ramos continued, "I was born with the blockade. And despite this difficult situation we have maintained our health care, free education, and social programs and we continue to move forward. We are not a rich country. The economic situation is not easy. We could advance much further without the economic blockade."

Support for Cuban Five

At every meeting, Ramos and Fuentes told their audiences about the case of the Cuban Five, who have been held unjustly in U.S. jails for more than 11 years for defending the Cuban Revolution. Ramos and Fuentes explained that in order to inform the Cuban government of plans against the revolution, the Cuban Five penetrated organizations in Miami that have a record of armed attacks and bombings in Cuba. "For this they were framed up on charges of espionage and jailed. Pressure by supporters of the Cuban Five from here and around the world



Militant/Maceo Dixon

Cuban youth talk with farmer Willie Head, right, at his farm outside Valdosta, Georgia, March 27. From left to right: Representatives from Cuban Federation of University Students (FEU) Aníbal Ramos Socarrás and Yenaivis Fuentes Ascencio; and Fredy Huinil, a grocery store worker from Atlanta who has helped build tour in Georgia.

helped to lower the sentences of three of the five and more pressure is needed so they can be released," said Ramos.

Fuentes and Ramos made presentations to a meeting of more than 100 at Spelman College, a historically Black women's school. The meeting was chaired by Alma Jean Billingslea Brown, English professor and director of African Diaspora and the World. At Georgia State University (GSU) they spoke to a similar number of people. That meeting was chaired by Héctor Fernández, Spanish professor and director of the Center for Latin American and Latino/a Studies.

At Spelman, the meeting began with greetings from Hadeya Sewer from the Caribbean American Student Association, Vladimir Cadet, president of the Student Government Association of the School of Public Health at Morehouse School of Medicine, and Jason Randall, vice president of Ujaama, a student organization at Clark Atlanta University.

At Georgia State, many students asked questions about life in Cuba. One student asked about anti-government protests in Cuba organized by the "Ladies in White," and said that Cuba had a repressive government.

"The 'Ladies in White' are the wives and relatives of prisoners who are in jail for counterrevolutionary acts, not their ideas," Ramos replied. "These

prisoners were tried under the Cuban constitution and have the same rights as every other prisoner: the right to study, to health care, to vote, and the right to a job when released. None have ever been tortured or mistreated."

"If everything is so good, why do people want to leave Cuba?" asked a young man at the Spelman College meeting.

Ramos explained the U.S. government policy of allowing any Cuban who sets foot on U.S. soil to remain here and not be deported like thousands of immigrants from Mexico and other Latin American countries. "This encourages Cubans to come to the U.S.," he said. Cubans, like others from all over the world come to the United States in hopes of escaping the economic conditions created by imperialism.

"The U.S. Interests Section offers Cuban students scholarships to study in the U.S.," Fuentes added, "promising them a free education. Why don't they offer all this to students here in the U.S. or to students from Mexico, or other Latin American countries? Why offer this only to Cubans?" she asked.

Joining this discussion, many at the Georgia State and Spelman meetings spoke about the deepening economic crisis in the United States and the increasing attacks on working con-

Continued on page 7

2010 Cuban Student Academic Exchange

Upcoming events in tour by Yenaivis Fuentes Ascencio and Aníbal Ramos Socarrás

Chicago/Wisconsin

- Mar. 31** DePaul University
- April 1** Northeastern Illinois University
- April 3** Exchange with Wisconsin farmers

Washington, D.C./Maryland

- April 5** American University
- April 6** Howard University, School of Law
- April 7** Howard University
- April 8** University of Maryland, College Park

New York/New Jersey

- April 13** Rutgers University, New Brunswick
- April 14** Hofstra University (am); Hunter College (pm)

Los Angeles

- April 15** Cal State Los Angeles
- April 16** University of California Riverside

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Oppose slanders against Cuba

The February 23 suicide death of Orlando Zapata Tamayo, a prisoner in Cuba, is cynically being used by Washington to attack the Cuban Revolution.

The White House and capitalist media worldwide paint Zapata as a political dissident and martyr. The fact is over 10 years he was repeatedly picked up for assault, theft, and other such crimes. He went on a hunger strike to demand privileges such as a cell phone and a television for himself. A small number of opponents of the revolution in Cuba, who work hand-in-glove with Washington, convinced him to use his strike to attack the revolutionary government. Havana spared no effort in trying to prevent his death.

As Cuban president Raúl Castro said February 24, Cuba's revolutionary government has never carried out murders, tortures, or extra-judicial executions. The only torture on Cuban territory, he noted, has taken place at the U.S. prison camp in Guantánamo.

Washington's attitude toward the human rights of prisoners is amply demonstrated by its treatment of five Cuban revolutionaries unjustly incarcerated in

U.S. prisons for the last 11 years. They were arrested for monitoring right-wing Cuban groups in Florida who have launched attacks on Cuba with Washington's backing. For 17 months leading up to their trial, the men were kept in solitary confinement. Convicted on frame-up "conspiracy" charges, they received draconian sentences, with three of them initially sentenced to life. Washington has consistently denied two of these fighters, Gerardo Hernández and René González, the right to visits by their wives.

The Cuban Five are among the 2.3 million working people behind bars in the United States, which has the highest incarceration rate in the world. One out of every 31 adults is either in jail or on probation or parole. African American males are 6.5 times more likely to be imprisoned than white males.

In response to the renewed slanders against Cuba, defenders of the revolution reiterate our demands for an end to the U.S. embargo and travel ban against the island, restoration of normal diplomatic relations, and freedom for the Cuban Five.

Two Cuban youth speak in Georgia

Continued from page 6

ditions and living standards here, as well as increasing tuition costs and student debt.

"What ideas do you have for people here who want to make the same kind of changes as you've made in Cuba?" asked one young man. "Revolutions are born from concrete historical circumstances," replied Ramos. "The Cuban ideals are not a formula for the world. But it is very important to have the example of the Cuban Revolution. We are seeing those in the U.S. who are fighting for their rights and beginning to understand the nature of capitalism."

While in Atlanta, Fuentes and Ramos were invited to a house meeting with a dozen young workers and several students from Central and Latin America. Some had taken part in a march in Washington, D.C., for legalization of all immigrants the week before. In an informal give-and-take that went on for more than two hours the Cuban youth learned about the working conditions, wages, and other challenges facing immigrants living and working in this country. Much of this picture was new to the Cuban youth and they had many questions for the workers.

The Cuban students also visited the Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History and the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site to learn about the rich history of the Black struggle in the United States.

They joined a seminar with students in the Master of Public Health Program at the Morehouse School of Medicine. They were invited by Assistant Dean Dr. Patricia Rodney, and officially welcomed by Cadet of the student government. Students at this encounter wanted to know how the universal health care system was built in Cuba and how long it took. They

also asked why a similar system can't be put in place in Haiti. Ramos answered that a system like working people have in Cuba is only possible with a socialist revolution that makes health care a right and not a privilege or a commodity to be bought by those with the money to pay.

Visit to Black farm area

On March 27 the Cuban students traveled to Valdosta, a small city in rural south Georgia, where a reception and lunch was held at the Serenity Christian Church. The event was cosponsored by the Valdosta chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the South Health District, Georgia Department of Public Health.

Two members of the staff of Georgia Public Health greeted the students and explained their work. Brooks County farmer Willie Head told them how his visit to Cuba in 2000 had changed his perspective on the world.

Head is a plaintiff in the class action lawsuit by Black farmers against the U.S. Department of Agriculture for decades of discrimination that resulted in a disproportionate number of Black farmers being forced off the land. He has twice visited farmers and farm organizations in Cuba.

Head explained at the event that those who work the land in Cuba cannot have their land taken away from them; and that in Cuban society, farmers in alliance with the workers have a strong hand in the government. The revolutionary government established that, he said. This picture is in sharp contrast to the number of Black youth in U.S. prisons; the huge unemployment rate for Blacks; and the discrimination and loss of land that Black farmers in the U.S. face.

U.S. health care

Continued from front page

law pushed the bill through Congress without even trying to gain Republican support. No Republican legislators voted for the bill in either house of Congress. Several "no" votes were cast by congressional Democrats.

Attorneys general from 14 states have already filed legal challenges against the bill in federal court. Two separate suits challenge Congress's ability to impose a mandate that would force everyone to buy health insurance, or face a fine collectable by the Internal Revenue Service.

The 2,500-page bill contains most of the same provisions as the bill passed by the U.S. Senate earlier this year. Individuals who don't comply by 2014 will face an annual fine of \$695. Subsidies to buy insurance will be available on a sliding scale for families and individuals whose income is up to four times the Federal Poverty Level, which is \$22,050 for a family of four.

The law will set up insurance policy markets operated by states where individuals would be able to purchase coverage. The state-run exchanges would administer the subsidies to those who qualify. Workers without proper documents will be barred from purchasing insurance on the exchanges, erecting yet another barrier to prevent millions of immigrant workers from getting access to health care. Undocumented workers do not have access to Medicaid either.

Opponents of a woman's right to choose abortion scored a victory in the legislation. The law prevents individuals from paying for abortion coverage as part of a health insurance policy subsidized by the government. Separate payments must be made for those who opt to have abortion coverage, if they can find a health plan that covers the medical procedure.

Bill to drive down social wage

Washington's implementation of the health-care law will push forward the U.S. ruling class's larger goal of driving down the social wage. The government is determined to substantially cut back on many of the social programs won by working people over previous decades through hard-fought class battles, and make the working class shoulder the burden of the deepening capitalist economic crisis.

Along with passage of the health-care law, a raft of articles have appeared berating the cost of entitlements and claiming that Social Security is going broke. A March 25 *New York Times* article by Mary Williams Walsh claims the system will pay out more in benefits than it receives from payroll taxes, blaming the fact that the economic crisis forced many people to lose their jobs and apply for Social Security income sooner than they would have otherwise.

"When the level of the trust fund gets to zero, you have to cut benefits," said former Federal Reserve Board chairman Alan Greenspan on March 24.

The health-care plan projects major cuts to Medicare, a program that provides some medical coverage to retired workers and others. The law includes \$500 billion in Medicare cuts over the next decade. A body will be set up to regulate the Medicare budget and will be responsible for making these cuts. The new body will have the power to override Congress if it rejects proposed cuts to the program.

Cuts to Medicaid, a program that provides minimal health coverage for workers and their families who cannot afford insurance, are also in the works. Some \$240 million has been cut from annual Medicaid payments to New York City public hospitals in the last three years.

According to the *Wall Street Journal*, New York governor David Paterson has proposed to cut more than \$1 billion in the next fiscal year. As a result, some 3,900 hospital workers will lose their jobs from New York City public hospitals over the next two years.

The passing of Obama's health-care legislation was met with great enthusiasm by the markets. In a *Washington Post* article titled "What Wall Street thinks about the health-care vote," David Ignatius reports how the stock market responded to the passing of the new law. "The winners included many hospital and nursing home chains," he writes. "Also up were some major drug-makers and drug distributors. . . . The health-care sector can anticipate a whole lot more government money headed its way, and the new legislation won't do much to cut costs, or health-industry revenues and profits."



Militant/Dave Wulp

Representatives from Cuban Federation of University Students (FEU) Yenaivis Fuentes Ascencio, at right in denim jacket, and Aníbal Ramos Socarrás, facing camera, talk with students at Georgia State University in Atlanta March 25 before presentation and discussion on Cuban Revolution and world politics.

Victory of Cuban Revolution dealt r

Dictatorship of the proletariat is ‘most powerful instrument’ toilers can

The following is the 12th 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 study and discuss the book. This excerpt is from the chapter "Black Liberation and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," and is based on reports presented to international leadership conferences organized by the Socialist Workers Party in January and March 2006.

BY JACK BARNES

Last week, when a Cuban American supporter of the revolution in Cuba who lives in South Florida first saw *Our History Is Still Being Written*, she asked why we had singled out three Chinese-Cuban generals to interview. "And why call them Chinese-Cubans?" Cubans of Chinese descent, she added, consider themselves Cuban, not Chinese-Cuban. For blacks it's the same. "They think of themselves as Cubans, not African-Cubans."

She went on to say, however, that when she started reading the book, she liked it a lot and became convinced how politically useful it is both in the United States and Cuba. Her response to the book itself seemed to contradict her first reaction to the title, as well as the political prejudices that underlay that reaction. Good!

That reader was expressing a view widely held in Cuba. It reflects a particular, and unusual, political insularity in the broad revolutionary cadre there, a slowness in recognizing the social and political legacy among blacks—and the impact on capitalist society as a whole—of the historical consequences worldwide of the African slave trade, chattel slavery, lynch-mob violence, and anti-black racism and discrimination.

At the same time, there is also an enduring legacy of black-led *resistance* to this oppression and exploitation—in the United States, in Cuba, and in other parts of the Americas where, under the slave owners' lash, fields were tilled and



Members of 134th Militia Battalion in Cuba celebrate victory over U.S.-organized invasion at Bay of Pigs/Playa Girón, April 1961. Cuban Revolution opened up possibility of using state power to advance interests of working people.

products were manufactured by labor in a black skin. There is a history of slave revolts, efforts to press abolitionist movements onto a more militant course, and alliances with other toilers in the fight for land and in labor battles. Blacks have fought as soldiers in the U.S. Civil War (some 10 percent of the ranks of the Union army by the time of the victory in 1865); provided leadership during Radical Reconstruction in the states of the defeated Confederacy; engaged in organizing efforts of sharecroppers, tenant farmers, and industrial workers in the 1920s and 1930s; and led mass political struggles for Black rights during and after World War II, which reached new levels of radicalism within the ranks of the U.S. armed forces during the Vietnam War.

Here in the United States, the vanguard place of workers who are African American in the broad class struggle is a product of this record of political leadership in plebeian and proletarian struggles, combined with the greater working-class composition of the Black nationality in comparison to other sections of the population.

A legacy of resistance has shaped the

class struggle in Cuba over the past century and a half, as well. The three wars for independence from Spain between 1868 and 1898 were integrally combined with the struggle to abolish slavery, peonage, and other forms of indentured servitude. Combatants who were black, as well as thousands of Chinese toilers, participated in Cuba's independence army and acquitted themselves at every level, both rank-and-file soldiers and officers up to Lieutenant Colonel José Bu and General Antonio Maceo. From the 1953 Moncada rebellion and 1956–58 revolutionary war until today, the movement led by Fidel Castro has acted decisively against racist actions and bigotry, in word and deed. And black Cubans have been surpassed by none in their support and sacrifice in advancing the socialist revolution.

None of that, however, erases the fact that there *are* millions of very dark-skinned Cubans of African descent, and that they continue to confront the social and political consequences of past discrimination. Close to half a century after the victory of the Cuban Revolution, this legacy is still registered in housing and employment patterns, composition of the prison population, and other social markers.

While the concrete history of Chinese-Cubans is different from that of black Cubans, some of the same political considerations apply. Among Cubans with Chinese forebears, there continues to be a social awareness of their roots that is very much alive. And there continues to be pride in those roots and in their rich cultural heritage. In fact, the proposal for the interviews that eventually became the book *Our History Is Still Being Written* came not from us but from Gustavo Chui.

Our understanding of where the Cuban Revolution came from, and where it's going, is enriched by Chui's description of his youth. It's enriched by his explanation of the complexities of the "Chinese consciousness" that he, as the son of a father who was Chinese and a mother who was black, was surrounded with as he grew up—including the anti-black racism that existed among many of Chinese origin in Cuba. Our understanding of the contradictory dynamics

of the Cuban Revolution is enriched by Chui's story of how he was won to the revolutionary struggle in the 1950s. The same is true for the accounts by Armando Choy and Moisés Sío Wong. Each of them from a Chinese-Cuban family of shopkeepers, but at the same time each from a slightly different social stratum.

Throughout the book, working people can see how each of these young Cubans, in the course of revolutionary combat, discovered what he and others like him are really capable of—how they discovered their own worth. Working people can see the communist conclusions Chui, Choy, and Sío Wong were led to by their experiences in the clandestine struggle and revolutionary war, as well as in the building of a new Cuba.

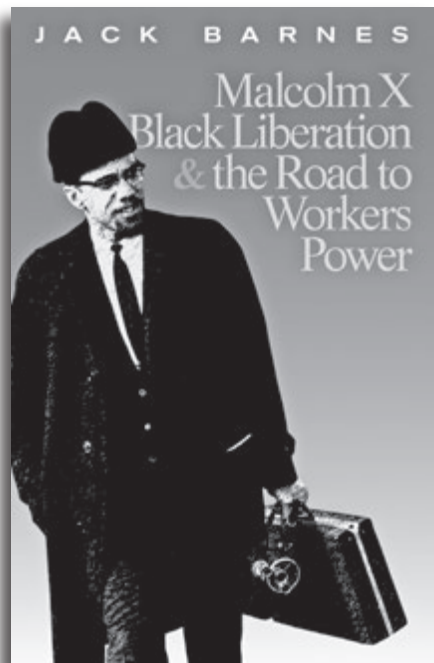
What does the victory of the Cuban Revolution open up for all those who are victims of long-standing discrimination institutionalized under capitalism? For oppressed nations and nationalities? For women, the oppressed and majority sex? What does any socialist revolution open up for the oppressed and exploited? Above all, it 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.

These forms of oppression, which are maintained and perpetuated as part of the daily reproduction of capitalist social relations worldwide, are carried over and reshaped from modes of production that dominated earlier periods in the history of class society. While they warp and come into conflict with the "most efficient" workings of the laws of capitalism, the bourgeoisie finds ways to incorporate them, and then politically *use* them, to deepen divisions among working people and reap the profits of superexploitation. Far from being quickly eradicated by the revolutionary seizure of state power by the working class, the consequences of all these degrading social relations inherited from class-divided society are more persistent and long-lasting than had generally

Special offer

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

by Jack Barnes



"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—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. . . ."

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At January 1966 rally, Charles Sims, a leader of D Ku Klux Klan that days when Blacks won't defend Black rights was marching toward victory as Cuban showed "in practice that there were powerful social out a revolutionary social transformation like the w

major blow to racist discrimination

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been anticipated by earlier generations of socialist and of revolutionary proletarian militants.

What the conquest of workers power does is make available to a mass vanguard of the proletariat the most effective political weapon in history—one we can use to battle all forms of oppression and lay the basis to establish human solidarity on new, communist foundations. *That's* the challenge and the promise of the dictatorship of the proletariat: *Win* it, then *wield* it—to *finish* the job. And acting to help advance revolutionary struggle worldwide is *the way* to finish the job.

If the young founding leaders of the modern communist movement, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, recognized that classes, the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois family, religion, and the state could not be abolished but would *wither away* as socialism is developed, how could it be otherwise for the historic forms of oppression—reflecting the deepest prejudices—carried over from class society?

What's most important, the withering away is not a *passive* process. These legacies of class-divided society don't just “wither”; their foundations have to be *withered*. There's nothing automatic about it. Like everything else in human history, the disappearance and replacement of these institutions is the product of practical social activity, of the struggles of the revolutionary toiling masses in countryside and city—their mobilization, leadership, and transformation. It is a product of the extension of the socialist revolution worldwide. The pace and thoroughness of this struggle determines not only whether the proletarian dictatorship advances, but whether or not inevitable pauses and retreats lead to its weakening and corrosion, to its becoming vulnerable over time to corruptions from within, and ultimately to defeat and destruction.

There are no guarantees beforehand. When the dictatorship of the propertied classes is overturned, however, and power is conquered by the toilers, the relationship of forces is qualitatively

transformed to the advantage of all those fighting to eradicate capitalist exploitation and oppression root and branch.

If vanguard workers in the United States who are Black cannot be won to recognizing that the proletarian dictatorship is the most powerful instrument to open up the final and lasting battle for Black freedom, then how can communists expect them to fight heart and soul to make a socialist revolution in this country?

And why *should* they?

Yes, they will fight as part of the working class to free the toiling majority of humanity from capitalist exploitation. But they and their allies don't expect to find ongoing racial discrimination at the end of the road! Otherwise they'd be living and fighting in denial of who they are. And socialism—a society without discrimination, a society of freely associated producers—would be a hopeless goal.

The same is true for women and all oppressed layers, who are at the same time allies of the working class.

‘Cuba and the Coming American Revolution’

The following is an excerpt from the chapter “Robert F. Williams, the Cuban Revolution, and Self-Defense against Racist Violence,” in the book Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power.

One of the first acts of the Cuban Revolution in early 1959 was to ban racial discrimination in employment and public facilities, putting an end to Jim Crow practices that had been imposed in Cuba with the U.S. occupation of the island in 1898. Other measures stamping the revolution's working-class trajectory included a radical land reform that ended the system of vast landed estates and gave deeds to over 100,000 landless peasants, as well as a literacy drive that taught close to a million people to read and write, wiping out illiteracy in a single year. In the second half of 1960 the major imperialist and Cuban owned capitalist enterprises were expropriated by massive mobilizations of working people across the island, registering the end of the dictatorship of capital and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Cuba, the opening of the socialist revolution in the Americas.

Jack Barnes was in Cuba during those days of revolutionary upheaval. He was there on a college grant to study the ongoing land reform. While doing so he participated in a number of other activities, including the First Latin American Youth Congress in Havana in July 1960. Like thousands of youth around the world, over the previous months he had been drawn to the new Cuban government's revolutionary course. And during the summer months in Cuba, he became determined to bring back firsthand knowledge about the revolution to share with others in the United States.

When Barnes returned to school in Minnesota that fall, he helped form a campus chapter of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, which among other



“Win the battle against discrimination!” declares March 26, 1959, issue of *Revolución*, newspaper of July 26th Movement. Four days before, speaking to a million Cubans, Prime Minister Fidel Castro announced—and the new revolutionary government began enforcing—laws barring job bias against Blacks and ending segregation at schools, beaches, parks, and elsewhere.

activities organized the meeting for Robert F. Williams referred to in the tribute above.

The excerpt below, describing this period, is from *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* by Jack Barnes, published in 2001.



BY JACK BARNES

As Cuban workers and farmers pressed forward their socialist revolution and U.S. aggression mounted in reaction to their gains, the lessons transformed the way we looked at the battle for Black rights in the United States as well. The mass proletarian struggle to bring down the Jim Crow system of statutory segregation throughout the South, with its various forms of discrimination extending throughout the country, was marching toward bloody victories at the same time that the Cuban Revolution was advancing. We could see in practice that there were powerful social forces within the United States capable of carrying out a revolutionary social transformation like the working people of Cuba were bringing into being.

The core of the activists defending the Cuban Revolution were young people who had cut their political eyeteeth as part of the civil rights battles, supporting the Woolworth lunch counter sit-ins and joining or supporting marches and other protests in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and elsewhere in the South.

The many faces of reaction, some in Ku Klux Klan hoods, others with sheriff's uniforms and FBI jackets protecting them; the lynchings and murders on isolated country roads; the dogs and water cannons unleashed on protesters—all were burned in our consciousness as part of the lessons we were learning about the violence and brutality of the U.S. ruling class and the lengths to which it will go to defend its property and prerogatives.

And we were learning lessons, too,

from the self-defense organized by Black veterans in Monroe, North Carolina, and elsewhere in the South. Immediately following the U.S. defeat at the Bay of Pigs, during a debate in one of the six committees of the United Nations General Assembly, Cuban foreign minister Raúl Roa read a message that former Monroe NAACP president Robert F. Williams had asked him to convey to the U.S. government.

“Now that the United States has proclaimed military support for people willing to rebel against oppression,” Williams wrote, “oppressed Negroes in the South urgently request tanks, artillery, bombs, money, use of American air fields and white mercenaries to crush racist tyrants who have betrayed the American Revolution and Civil War.”

We rapidly came to see that the legal and extralegal violence directed against those fighting for their rights and dignity as human beings here in the United States was one and the same as the mounting overt and covert aggression against the people of Cuba. We took part in the struggle for Black rights as part of the *world* class struggle. It became totally intertwined for us with the stakes in defending the Cuban Revolution.

This was exemplified above all by the convergence of the Cuban Revolution and Malcolm X, whose voice of uncompromising revolutionary struggle—by any means necessary—was then increasingly making itself heard. Malcolm welcomed Fidel Castro to the Hotel Theresa in Harlem during the Cuban delegation's trip to the United Nations in 1960. Malcolm invited Che Guevara to address a meeting of the Organization of Afro-American Unity during Che's trip to New York in 1964.

For us, these and other expressions of the growing mutual respect and solidarity that marked relations between Malcolm X and the Cuban leadership were further confirmation of our own developing world view.



Deacons for Defense in Bogalusa, Louisiana, warns themselves are over. Mass proletarian struggle for Revolution was advancing. Simultaneous struggles l forces within the United States capable of carrying working people of Cuba were bringing into being.”