

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Socialist Workers Party
Sept. 11, 2001, statement
—PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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Campaign begins for ‘Workers Power’ sales

BY PAUL MAILHOT

“All the people I know in this neighborhood are laid off,” Bryan Cheatem, an unemployed union carpenter in Maywood, Illinois, told socialist workers who recently introduced him to the book *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes.

“I know this is bigger than just what is going on here. I like how you explain why this is happening and what needs to be done.”

Supporters of the *Militant* launched an eight-week drive beginning September 11 to sell some 1,800 copies of the *Workers Power* book. At the same time, socialist workers are campaigning to win some 2,100 new and renewing subscribers to the *Militant*. Local

Continued on page 4

Workers pay more, get less health care

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Health-care costs for family insurance jumped by 14 percent to \$4,000 over the past year, according to a recent report issued by the Kaiser Family Foundation and the Health Research and Educational Trust.

The survey, which was conducted between January and May, showed that workers are paying more and getting less, despite promises by the Barack Obama administration that the Affordable Health Care for America Act passed by Congress in March would provide more coverage and reduce workers’ medical bills.

Administration officials had said that premiums would rise no more than 2 percent on average this year under the new law. Aetna and

Continued on page 9

Afghan war casualties expected to increase

Thirty special operations assaults a day



Reuters/Oleg Popov

U.S. soldiers in Arghandab River valley, Kandahar Province, Afghanistan, September 8.

BY CINDY JAQUITH

Gen. David Petraeus, commander of the U.S.-led war in Afghanistan, said high casualties will continue for months as imperialist forces step up operations against the Taliban.

The United Nations reports 1,271 civilian deaths this year, a 31 percent increase over last year. At least 500 U.S. and NATO troops have been killed. The total for all of last year was 512, including 317 U.S. soldiers. The number of U.S. troops killed so far this year is 323.

Petraeus told reporters in Kabul September 3 that NATO forces are

carrying out about 30 special operations attacks a day in Afghanistan, three times the number launched in Iraq at the height of the troop surge there.

The goal is to establish “security bubbles,” where imperialist troops “create a continuous safe zone in the most populous areas of the south where the Taliban are strongest,” the *Wall Street Journal* reported, “and push violence to rural areas on the fringes.”

The focus of the effort now is Kandahar Province. Some 12,000 Af-

Continued on page 6

N.Y.C. rally opposes hospital closing, builds for D.C. action



Militant/Seth Galinsky

Protest against closing of North General hospital in Harlem neighborhood of New York September 10. Two months prior St. Vincent’s, another hospital in city, was shut down. Workers at protest said they plan to attend rally for jobs in Washington October 2.

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK—“I worked at North General Hospital for almost 11 years,” said Josette Melendez, a medical assistant. “They threw us out with just four days’ notice.”

Melendez was one of 150 people at a September 10 protest against the hospital’s closing. The 200-bed hospital in Harlem shut its doors July 2, just two months after St. Vincent’s hospital in lower Manhattan closed down. North General’s emergency room handled 36,000 patient visits a year.

The hospital declared bankruptcy and its facilities were turned over to the Institute for Family Health, which set up a government-subsidized walk-in clinic. The deal was brokered by New York governor David Paterson, Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Congressman Charles Rangel, and Rev. Calvin Butts, chairman of North General’s board of directors.

The Institute for Family Health said it would accept job applications from former North General workers, mem-

Continued on page 5

March counters protest against Islamic center in Manhattan

BY DOUG NELSON

Some 3,000 people gathered near City Hall in New York City September 11 to counter protests against plans for an Islamic center and mosque two blocks from the former World Trade Center. The action was billed as an “emergency mobilization against racism and anti-Islamic bigotry.”

A few blocks away, near the proposed site of the Islamic center known as Park51, was a two-block-long packed street rally demanding “no mosque here.”

The *New York Post* put the demonstration defending freedom of worship at 3,000 and the anti-mosque protest at 2,500. The *Daily News* claimed the anti-mosque action had hundreds more.

“Islamophobia has got to go,” demonstrators chanted as they marched several blocks from City Hall to the Federal Building and back. Other common slogans denounced Tea Party Patriots and other mosque protesters as racist bigots. There were a small number of Blacks, Latinos, and Asians

at the rally against the mosque.

“I’m concerned about our rights as American citizens,” said Aja Mujinga Sherrard, a student from Sarah Lawrence College who helped organize a group of 32 students from her school to attend the rally.

“I’m sick of bigotry dressed up as patriotism,” said Regan Schwartz, 30, a middle school teacher from Brook-

Continued on page 7

Also Inside:

| | |
|---|---|
| UK: Protests answer anti-immigrant rally | 2 |
| Black farmers organize for protest in Washington | 3 |
| New pledges boost Supporters Monthly Appeal | 5 |
| SWP candidates visit site of toxic chemical release | 6 |

UK: Protests answer anti-immigrant rally

BY TONY HUNT

BRADFORD, England—Up to 1,000 supporters of the right-wing nationalist English Defence League (EDL) mobilized here August 28 in a “static” demonstration against immigrants and Muslims. The government, using anti-working-class laws, had banned all protest marches in the city for the day.

Counterdemonstrations were organized by Unite Against Fascism (UAF), under the banner “We Are Bradford,” and by Hope Not Hate (HNH), under the banner “Bradford Together.” HNH is a campaign run by the magazine *Searchlight*, which specializes in exposés of fascist and ultraright groups.

Separately, several hundred opponents of the EDL gathered some yards from where the right-wingers were standing penned in by riot police. Participants in the UAF event, including this reporter, were forced by the police to enter through metal detectors and were not allowed to leave until the event—which consisted of music and speeches—concluded.

An event called “Be Bradford—Peaceful Together” was organized by the local council away from the city center where the EDL demonstration and the UAF counterdemonstration were held.

The EDL action was significantly smaller than the “Big One” predicted by its organizers. Sections of the crowd clashed repeatedly with the police and threw smoke bombs. The next day, EDL blamed infiltration by “Nazi scumbags” for some of these clashes.

Bradford was targeted by the rightists because of the multinational character of the working class here, with a large

number of south Asians, particularly of Pakistani descent. Some EDL supporters held placards saying, “No more mosques” or “Britain does not welcome the religion of hatred.”

On its Web site the EDL says it is not racist or fascist but represents “every walk of life, every race, every creed, and every colour; from the working class to middle England.” The right-wing outfit claims, “We have members that represent our culturally rich, ‘patriotic’ and nation-loving populace.” A central leader is a Sikh and there are a tiny number of black supporters. A “Jewish division” was established earlier this year. EDL actions, nevertheless, remain marked by a fascist-like street-gang thug element.

HNH and others campaigned for the government to ban the planned EDL demonstration. HNH leader and *Searchlight* editor Nick Lowles in an article in the *Morning Star*, which reflects the views of the Communist Party of Britain, opposed holding a counterprotest.

Responding to Lowles in another article in the *Morning Star*, UAF joint secretary Sabby Dhalu, while supporting the ban, called for united action by the two groups. Dhalu said “a peaceful celebration of multiculturalism” was necessary in response to the EDL. “This is not

Socialists join action against banning mosque



Militant/Dan Fein

NEW YORK—Harry D’Agostino (right), Socialist Workers candidate for New York lieutenant governor, and Ruth Robinett (center), SWP candidate for U.S. Senate, joined demonstrators here September 11 who were protesting calls for the government to prevent the building of an Islamic center near the site of the World Trade Center. “We need to have a real choice,” said one participant Azreal Morales, “because those elected don’t answer to us.”

—HARRY D’AGOSTINO

a counterdemonstration,” he added.

British nationalism, pacifism, and an exaggeration of the progress made to date by the ultraright in the United Kingdom marked a number of the speeches at the “We Are Bradford” event. UAF leaders talked of defending “our” cities

against the EDL.

A November 6 “No to racism, Islamophobia and Fascism” demonstration in London is being organized by the UAF, the Muslim Council of Britain, and Love Music Hate Racism. It has the backing of the Trades Union Congress.

Appeals court upholds ‘state secrets’ in CIA case

BY CINDY JAQUITH

Five men who say they were kidnapped, flown to another country, and tortured through the CIA’s “extraordinary rendition” program have no right

to sue, said a federal court September 8. In a 6-5 decision, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit ruled that all of the plaintiffs’ claims, “even if taken as true,” concern government activities that are “absolutely protected by the state secrets privilege.”

The five had sued Jeppesen Dataplan, a Boeing subsidiary that provided logistical support to the CIA to fly the men to various countries for torture and interrogation. The Barack Obama administration, arguing “state secrets” were at stake, appealed a lower court decision allowing the suit to proceed.

The lead plaintiff is Binyam Mohamed, an Ethiopian who is a legal resident of the United Kingdom. He was arrested in Pakistan in 2002, interrogated by British secret police, then flown by

the CIA to Morocco, turned over to Moroccan cops, held for 18 months, and tortured. Next, he was flown to a CIA prison in Afghanistan for more torture. Finally he spent nearly five years at the U.S. prison camp at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. Mohamed has now been freed. Some of the other four plaintiffs, who have similar stories, remain imprisoned.

The ruling accepted the Justice Department’s argument that “state secrets” include evidence of private companies’ or foreign governments’ cooperation with the CIA, information about CIA interrogation programs, and information about clandestine agency operations.

At the same time the judges ordered the government to pay all the plaintiffs’ legal costs, and suggested it pay reparations to the five men it tortured.



Workers fight for jobs

Despite promises, the Barack Obama “stimulus” programs have failed to make a dent in unemployment. Many of those who are able to get jobs end up working for lower wages than before. The ‘Militant’ reports on workers fight for jobs.



Workers line up at Southfield, Michigan, jobs fair August 25.

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Managing Editor: Martín Koppel

Business Manager: Angel Lariscy

Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Seth Galinsky, Cindy Jaquith, Angel Lariscy, Omari Musa, Doug Nelson, Jacob Perasso, Brian Williams

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Black farmers organize for protest in Washington

BY JACOB PERASSO
AND LISA POTASH

AMERICUS, Georgia—“We don’t get the loans, grants, and subsidies that our white counterparts get. I’m mad at the institution that is mistreating us and lying to us,” said Robert Binion, an Alabama farmer and interim president for the Southeast region of the National Black Farmers Association (NBFA). He was speaking to the Georgia chapter of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association (BFAA) here September 4.

Binion said he and others are organizing Black farmers from Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and Arkansas to get involved in protest activities in Washington, D.C., September 21–23. A demonstration is planned in front of the U.S. Department of Agriculture September 23 to press for settlement of long-standing claims of USDA discrimination against Black farmers. The Georgia BFAA chapter, made up of farmers from Sylvester, Americus, Oglethorpe, Buena Vista, and Valdosta, held a special meeting the week following Binion’s presentation. In addition to working to bring people to the D.C. action they decided on a financial contribution toward the effort.

Binion traveled to Atlanta September 4 and joined Rachele Fruit, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Georgia agriculture commissioner, on a panel at the Militant Labor Forum. Fruit explained that “workers and farmers are natural allies and need to fight together for state power and a government that will carry out policies that benefit those who pro-

duce all the wealth on the land and by our labor.”

Most working farmers bear an unpayable debt, Fruit said, “and farmers who are Black face the worst situation because of the racist practices that are bred by the capitalist system.”

Binion explained that farmers who are Black have a long road ahead, facing a federal government that continues to discriminate against them. “The further the case goes, the worse it gets,” he said.

Although President Barack Obama stated earlier this year that all outstanding claims to the Black farmers would be quickly resolved, Binion explained that all of the meetings and communications between government officials and the Black farmers have not resulted in the promised compensation.

Several people at the forum came as a result of meeting socialist campaigners at the Decatur Book Festival earlier that day. One young woman, a graduate of Spelman College and Emory University, asked if it would help the farmers if she could get students to volunteer to help them pick their crop. Binion said that the main thing that was needed was to get people to the actions in Washington.

Actions call for freedom for Cuban Five



Militant/Eric Simpson

SAN FRANCISCO—Some 40 people picketed and passed out leaflets here September 13 to mark the 12th year in U.S. prisons for the Cuban Five, Cuban revolutionaries unjustly jailed on frame-up charges including “conspiracy to commit espionage” and in one case “conspiracy to commit murder.” Actions also took place in Miami, New York, Chicago, and many other cities.

Meanwhile, a group of actors and artists sent a letter to President Barack Obama asking him to issue an executive clemency order for the five. Among the signers are: Danny Glover, Edward Asner, Elliott Gould, Chrissie Hynde, Susan Sarandon, Martin Sheen, Graham Nash, and Jackson Brown.

—ERIC SIMPSON

The woman said she would spread the word to students on both campuses about the rally.

Several young workers attended the forum. Fredy Huinil, a grocery store

worker, said afterward that it was important to recognize the way in which both the workers and farmers are exploited under capitalism—workers as wage slaves and farmers as debt slaves.

Cops in Seattle area kill five in one week

BY MARY MARTIN

SEATTLE—About 100 people joined a September 7 vigil and march here to protest the fatal shooting of John Williams by a Seattle cop. Williams, 50, was a member of the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Ditidaht First Nations people of Vancou-

ver Island, Canada. He was well-known locally as a wood carver.

Williams was carving a board in downtown Seattle August 30 when the cop, Ian Birk, shot him. Police initially claimed Birk saw Williams with a knife, ordered him to drop it, and then fired

when Williams turned and moved toward him. Eyewitnesses say that Williams, who had a hearing loss, likely never heard the cop and never posed a threat.

Native American and Canadian First Nations leaders held a press conference September 3 to demand a full investigation into the killing. Cecile Hansen, chairwoman of the Duwamish Tribe, said her comments were directed to the Seattle mayor, city council, and police chief. “The Indian community needs answers. When is all this shooting going to stop?” she asked.

On August 31, a cop shot and killed David Young in Federal Way, Washington. Cops claimed Young was driving a stolen truck toward them in an “aggressive manner.”

That same day, Pierce County sheriff’s deputies used a Taser gun on King Ramses PJG Hoover, 27, who then stopped breathing and died. Cops said Hoover was causing a disturbance in a Spanaway apartment complex.

On September 3, two cops shot and killed an unidentified man they accused of waving a knife at a bus stop in Tacoma. Cops said they shot him when he raised the knife in a “threatening gesture.” One witness, Lisa Dean, told the *Tacoma News Tribune* she never saw the man raise his arms or move toward the cops. “Not even a little bit,” Dean said. “He just seemed kind of confused.”

On September 4 Adam Colliers died after being shot with a Taser gun in his home in Gold Bar by Snohomish County sheriff’s deputies. The cops said that Colliers was causing a disturbance in the street and that when they arrived he charged them and fought them to the ground. Sharon Williams, who lived in the house with Colliers, told the press that he weighed 120 pounds and she doubted the cops’ explanation.

Chicago forum exposes torture by police

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

CHICAGO—“There are 23 brothers still sitting in prison. We must speak for them, give them a hearing,” Darrell Cannon told an audience of 70 at a September 10 forum on police torture organized by the Campaign to End the Death Penalty. Cannon spent 20 years in prison after he was tortured by Chicago police and forced to confess to a murder he did not commit. Also on the panel were three others who had been brutalized and jailed by cops and continue to fight for justice.

The forum—titled “Police Torturer

Burge Convicted: Now What?”—is part of a series of events on torture by Chicago cops in September hosted by a number of groups and institutions, including the Campaign to End the Death Penalty, Jail Jon Burge Coalition, Northwestern University, and the Chicago chapter of the National Lawyers Guild.

Cannon, who was released from prison in 2007, was one of more than 100, mostly Black men, tortured into “confessions” by Jon Burge, a police lieutenant on Chicago’s South Side, and officers under his command known as the “Midnight Crew.” Burge was convicted in federal court here June 28 on charges of perjury and obstruction of justice for lying about the torture in a civil lawsuit. He is scheduled to be sentenced November 5.

“In 1983 the police kicked in my door and took me to an isolated area where they expeditiously did things to me I could not imagine,” Cannon said. Referring to the exchange of accounts of police brutality at the forum, he said, “We need to keep this up.”

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

IOWA

Des Moines

China’s ‘Economic Miracle’ and the World Capitalist Crisis. Speaker: Rebecca Williamson, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress. Donation: \$5. Sat., Sept. 25, 7:30 p.m. 3707 Douglas Ave. Tel.: (515) 255-1707.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

The Debates over No-Fault Divorce and Same-Sex Marriage: Women’s Oppression and the Family under Capitalism. Speaker: Nancy Boyasko, SWP. Donation: \$5. Fri., Sept. 24, 8 p.m. 306 W. 37th St. (near 8th Ave. Use elevators closest to 37th St.) Tel.: (212) 736-2540.

—CALENDAR—

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Black Farmers Rally in Front of U.S. Dept. of Agriculture. Thurs., Sept. 23, 12 noon. 1400 Independence Ave., S.W. Ausp.: Southern Black Farmers Association/Interim President Robert Binion. Tel.: (205) 755-2634; (205) 299-1873.

Malcolm X: ‘We’re living in a time of revolution’

Below is an excerpt from Malcolm X, *Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, recently published by Pathfinder Press. The excerpt is from the chapter titled “Malcolm X: Revolutionary Leader of the Working Class.” Copyright © 2009 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY JACK BARNES

The reason we need to learn about Malcolm, the reason we need to read and discuss what he said, is not simply in order to do justice to a great revolutionist. We need to understand and absorb Malcolm’s political legacy because it’s a powerful political tool we must have to help make a socialist revolution in the United States. It aids us in gathering and unifying the forces among working people and youth who will forge a working-class party able to lead such a revolution. It is needed by anyone, here or anywhere else on earth, who wants to be part of an international revolutionary movement of the kind Malcolm was so determined to help build—a movement

to rid humanity of all forms of oppression and exploitation.

You’re living in “a time of revolution,” Malcolm told a young audience at the Oxford Union, the student debating society at that British university, in December 1964. That was Malcolm’s message. Revolution, he said, was the question of questions confronting “the young generation of whites, Blacks, browns, whatever else there is. . . . I for one will join in with anyone, I don’t care what color you are, as long as you want to change this miserable condition that exists on this earth.”

If we don’t read what Malcolm said—the conclusions he drew from experiences he worked through at an accelerating pace in the closing year of his life—then, as we engage in battles today and tomorrow, all of us will be weaker as thinking, political people. Not less energetic, not less inspired (we will suffer that, also)—but *less political*.

U.S. imperialism’s victory in World War II laid the basis for a quarter-century-long capitalist expansion that reached its apex in the late 1960s. Together with the effects of the U.S. rulers’ postwar



Militant/John Cobey

Strikers picket Newport News, Virginia, shipyard, February 1979. Successful battle there for Steelworkers union recognition registered strengthening of working class and labor movement in South and nationwide as a result of Black rights victories.

witch-hunt, this stabilization of world capitalism reinforced the bureaucratization of the labor officialdom that had been consolidated during the war and its aftermath. It accelerated the political retreat and weakening of the union movement in the United States.

As part of their overall class-collaborationist and pro-imperialist course, top officials of the AFL-CIO and its affiliates refused to mobilize the weight and power of the unions as part of the massive proletarian movement for Black rights. This movement exploded into nationwide consciousness with the Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott of 1955–56 and picked up momentum over the following decade. Not only did the officialdom’s default undermine efforts to organize the “right-to-work” South and reverse the steady weakening of the union movement nationwide. Above all, it made it more difficult for workers and youth to recognize social and political questions such as the fight for Black rights, for women’s equality, and against imperialist war as *class questions* in which the labor movement has a life-or-death stake and must join in unconditionally.

“Fighters in these battles were forced to detour around the union movement because of the roadblock thrown up by the labor bureaucracy,” the Socialist Workers Party explained in 1979. . . .

Since the mid-1970s, however, the stability of the global capitalist order has begun to be shaken by the accumulating social and political consequences of

declining profit rates and intensifying competition for markets among the employers in the United States, other imperialist countries, and the most industrially advanced nations in the colonial world. To gain an edge on their rivals, the bosses in one industry after another, and in one country after another, have launched an offensive against the take-home pay, social wage, and job conditions of working people. In face of these blows, the working class and unions have been pushed toward the center stage of politics, where they will remain until decisive battles not only have been joined but are resolved in favor of one or the other of the contending classes.

Quotas for SWP fund top \$97,000

BY PAUL MAILHOT

Local quotas for the Socialist Workers fall party-building fund are now at \$97,800, surpassing the projected \$95,000 national goal.

This campaign runs alongside the international drive to sell *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, by Jack Barnes, and subscriptions to the *Militant*. It will help finance the political work of the Socialist Workers Party as its members reach out to workers and farmers, and participate in the struggles they are involved in.

A number of local areas are already planning special party-building fund programs featuring talks by party leaders. Although it is too soon to publish any results, the fund has received one letter from Diana Newberry in Minneapolis saying, “We’ve already raised \$1,000 and are sending it in.” Contributions to the fund can be sent to SWP, 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, New York, NY 10018. Make out checks to SWP.

Party-building fund Sept. 11–Nov. 9

| City | Quota |
|------------------|----------|
| Atlanta | \$7,800 |
| Boston | \$3,600 |
| Chicago | \$10,000 |
| Des Moines, IA | \$2,700 |
| Houston | \$3,000 |
| Los Angeles | \$8,000 |
| Miami | \$3,000 |
| New York | \$20,000 |
| Philadelphia | \$3,600 |
| San Francisco | \$13,500 |
| Seattle | \$8,600 |
| Twin Cities, MN | \$7,000 |
| Washington, D.C. | \$7,000 |
| Total | \$97,800 |

‘Workers Power’ campaign

Continued from front page

areas have adopted initial quotas.

The depression and social crisis that have deepened and spread worldwide over the past couple of years have opened a discussion among working people like Cheatem about what the future has in store. Reading and studying *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* is one important way for fighters to gain an understanding of the dictatorship of capital workers live under today and the line of march of the working class toward taking political power as the way forward out of this crisis-ridden system.

The first reports on the campaign to sell *Workers Power* and *Militant* subscriptions will appear in next week’s issue. Initial letters received by the *Militant* about the drive indicate socialist campaigners are looking forward to the effort.

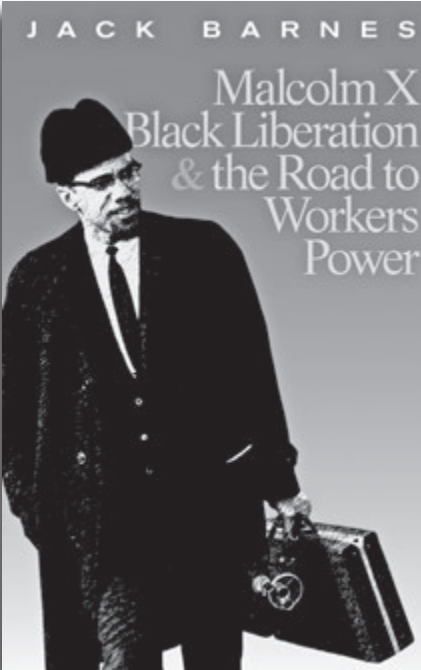
“We are enthusiastic about the upcoming drives,” wrote John Studer from Philadelphia. “We have just opened a new socialist campaign headquarters in a centrally located, Black working-class area of the city. As we have been working on the storefront, a number of our neighbors have already dropped in to see what the socialist campaign is all about.”

Many regular readers of the *Militant* have already bought *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*. Those readers can contribute to the drive by getting the book around to others.

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. . . .”

Available for only \$15 or for \$10 with *Militant* subscription from one of the distributors listed on page 8.

PathfinderPress.com

| Campaign to sell ‘Workers Power’ and ‘Militant’ subscriptions Sept. 11–Nov. 9 | | |
|---|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Country | ‘Workers Power’ quota | Subscription quota |
| UNITED STATES | | |
| Atlanta | 110 | 140 |
| Boston | 40 | 60 |
| Chicago | 120 | 120 |
| Des Moines, IA | 100 | 120 |
| Houston | 45 | 45 |
| Los Angeles | 100 | 100 |
| Miami | 50 | 65 |
| New York | 300 | 275 |
| Philadelphia | 62 | 70 |
| San Francisco | 130 | 150 |
| Seattle | 105 | 125 |
| Twin Cities, MN | 80 | 125 |
| Washington, D.C. | 130 | 115 |
| Total U.S. | 1372 | 1510 |
| UNITED KINGDOM | | |
| Edinburgh | 25 | 35 |
| London | 75 | 85 |
| Total UK | 100 | 120 |
| Canada | 50 | 70 |
| New Zealand | 25 | 60 |
| Australia | 25 | 50 |
| Sweden | | |
| International Total | 1572 | 1810 |

Spanish miners strike demanding back pay

Coal miners in Spain blocked roads September 9 and are occupying two coal mines as part of a two-week strike demanding the bosses pay them back wages. The unpaid workers represent 35 percent of the country's 7,400 coal miners. In the northwestern province of León, 52 striking miners have remained 1,640 feet underground for more than a week at one mine, and 14 have done the same at another. They have not been paid for two months.

Representatives of the Alonso and Vitoria mining groups are claiming they have no funds. Backing a protectionist move, the Comisiones Obreras labor federation issued a statement backing the bosses' calls for reducing imported coal and demanded that "the government once and for all get involved and seek a solution that would include boosting domestic coal stocks."

Illinois: Explosion rocks Honeywell uranium plant

A powerful explosion September 5 rocked the Honeywell uranium plant run by scab workers in Metropolis, Illinois. Some 220 members of United Steelworkers Local 7669 have been locked out by the company since June 28 after talks for a new contract broke down. The plant is the only uranium conversion plant in the country.

Honeywell is demanding that workers give up their retiree health-care coverage and pension plans. The company also wants to eliminate seniority, con-

tract out about 20 percent of the work at the plant, and make changes in overtime pay.

The hydrogen explosion occurred the day after replacement workers started up core production at the facility. This was only the second time since nuclear power plants have gone into operation in the United States that a community surrounding a nuclear power reactor had to be evacuated, reported the *Huffington Post*. The first time was the 1979 partial meltdown disaster at the Three Mile Island plant near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

The replacement workers are employed by the Shaw Group. In 2009 a subsidiary of this outfit had to pay \$6.2 million to the federal government for forcing its workers not to report safety violations when working at nuclear plant sites in Alabama and Tennessee, according to the *Post*.

—Compiled by Brian Williams

Washington: Socialist greets Teamster strikers



Militant/Jeanne FitzMaurice

BELLEVUE, Washington—Mary Martin (right), Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress 7th C.D. in Seattle, offers solidarity at picket line of Teamsters on strike here against Coca-Cola. The company wants to raise health insurance rates and terminate retiree benefits. After a one week strike, August 23–30, the union and the company are resuming negotiations.

—JEANNE FITZMAURICE

New pledges boost Supporters Monthly Appeal

DON MACKLE
AND SCOTT BREEN

ATLANTA—Across North America, 55 contributors raised their pledges to the Supporters Monthly Appeal and seven new contributors joined for a total of \$984 in August raises, resulting in a net increase of \$711—the largest monthly raise this year.

Total monthly contributions now stand at \$52,285 toward the goal of \$55,000 by the end of year.

Increases in monthly pledges are

a political response by supporters to stepped-up campaigning by the Socialist Workers Party to the effects of the economic crisis battering working people. Communists are using the election campaigns; *Malcolm X*, *Black Liberation*, and the *Road to Workers Power*; and the entire arsenal of Pathfinder books and the *Militant/El Militante* to explain the need to abolish the dictatorship of capital and fight to put political power into the hands of the working class. Funds collected are used to help finance the work of the SWP.

The August effort got a big boost by fund organizers in Atlanta. They took advantage of a special regional weekend of activity August 21–22 at the Pathfinder Press Distribution Center here to meet with individual contributors.

"Almost every contributor we met with decided to raise," said Linda Jenness, a leader of the Supporters Monthly Appeal in Atlanta. Twenty contributors made raises totaling \$341.

Walter Blades, a bakery worker and volunteer at the distribution center, explained that he raised his pledge because "we are contributing the money that helps make it possible to present communist political ideas around the world."

Volunteers for the weekend came from Miami; Greensboro, North Carolina; and Birmingham, Alabama. Two

members of the Supporters Monthly Appeal steering committee also participated in the activities.

"The distribution center is responsible for shipping Pathfinder books to bookstores, libraries, and individuals all around the world," said Vivian Sahner, one of leaders of the work there. "Saturday we organized an inventory of all our stock. On Sunday volunteers were able to help on our 'pick and pack,' preparing orders to be shipped."

As part of the weekend's accomplishments, one person in Birmingham decided to begin a monthly pledge and two people joined the Print Project, volunteers from around the world who work to produce Pathfinder books.

"I've been thinking about this a lot," said George Williams, an aerospace worker and United Auto Workers member when asked why he decided to become a contributor and join the Print Project now. "Working people didn't create the crisis we are living through, but we are paying the price for it. And working people need to help make the change to end the crisis."

The seven new contributors in August brings the total to 469, moving the Appeal closer to its goal of 500 contributors by end of year.

Join the effort! Contact *Militant* distributors on page 8 to make your pledge to the Supporters Monthly Appeal.

Rally opposes hospital closing

Continued from front page

bers of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East, but refused to guarantee it would hire them.

Rangel and Butts promised a "seamless transition," said Betty Jones, a former North General social worker. "On our last day management cleaned out the lockers of people that weren't at work that day and put their belongings in the garbage."

Jones pointed out that many of the laid-off workers are still without jobs and employees of the Institute for Family Health are getting paid 30 percent less. "You call that a 'seamless transition'?" she asked.

The protest also promoted the October 2 march in Washington, D.C., for "jobs, justice, and education," which is being organized by the NAACP AFL-CIO, and others. Similar demonstrations are being organized in Los Angeles and Oakland, California.

The 1199SEIU union says it has reserved 500 buses from around the country for the action in Washington. In New York the United Federation of Teachers; Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100; and District Council 37 and 1707 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees have put out their own flyers and are organizing scores of buses. Immigrant rights groups are also planning contingents.

Mobilizing unionists for October 2 was a major theme at an 1199SEIU delegates' meeting in New York. Union president George Gresham addressed disappointment that President Barack Obama has failed to deliver on his promises. "We have to push the progressive agenda," he said. He

blamed Republican politicians for blocking the president's legislation.

Some are putting forward protectionist demands. The October 2 leaflet put out by TWU Local 100 calls for government investment "in more buses, trains, and light rail built in the U.S.A." and measures to reduce "dependency on foreign oil."

Tens of thousands of workers are expected to join the demonstration, looking for ways to come together and defend working-class interests in the face of the grinding economic crisis.

"If they can close St. Vincent's and North General, what about other hospitals? Which one is next?" said Melendez, who plans to march October 2."

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



September 27, 1985

An estimated 7,500 Wheeling-Pittsburgh steelworkers and their supporters marched through the streets of Monessen, Pennsylvania. The September 7 march took place on the street bordering the Wheeling-Pittsburgh Monessen plant. It was the third demonstration in as many weeks to be called by the United Steelworkers of America (USWA).

USWA members were forced out on strike at Wheeling-Pittsburgh plants July 21, when the company tore up its contract with the USWA and reduced wages and benefits by 23 percent. The company acted after getting the green light from a bankruptcy court.



September 26, 1960

An Idaho union charged Sept. 3 that Air Force personnel were being used as strikebreakers at an installation on the Atomic Energy Commission's national reactor testing station in that state. Pat McCord, president of the Idaho Falls local of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers, asked that immediate steps be taken to stop a "private corporation from using Air Force personnel as strikebreakers against the federally protected rights of American citizens."

Phillips Petroleum brought in the Air Force scabs when 575 union members walked out Aug. 31 upon expiration of their contract.



September 28, 1935

As the League of Nations Council decides to invoke sanctions against Italy should the negotiations between Great Britain, France and Mussolini fail to reach a solution on Ethiopia mutually satisfactory to the imperialist robbers, the traitorous Socialist and Stalinist internationals are mobilizing workers for support of the anti-Italian imperialists.

Great Britain and France have not yet given up attempts to come to an agreement with Mussolini. Their interest is not the independence of Ethiopia, for not only are they oppressing millions of colonial people throughout the world, including Africa, but they have already offered Italy control of Ethiopia.

SWP candidates visit site of toxic chemical release

BY JACQUIE HENDERSON

TEXAS CITY, Texas—Amanda Ulman, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of Texas, and Steve Warshell, the party's candidate for U.S. Congress in the 18th District, campaigned September 4 among workers affected by a 40-day gas release from BP's refinery here.

"You are the first candidate that has come to talk about this," Gordy Santikos, who lives less than a mile from the refinery, told Warshell as he shook his hand. Santikos moved to Texas City, an industrial city of 47,000 about 35 miles south of Houston, in 2008. Hurricane Ike had destroyed his house across the bay on Galveston Island.

BP has admitted to releasing more than 500,000 pounds of toxic chemicals into the air from April 6 to May 16, including the carcinogen benzene, after a fire broke out in the refinery's ultracracker unit. This same unit was the site of a fire in the summer of 2005, just a few months after a blast killed 15 workers at the refinery and injured more than 170.

Since 2005 three more workers and a supervisor have died on the job at the refinery. Two chemical releases sent more than 130 people to the hospital in 2007.

After the release of the toxic materials in April and May, BP officials say they filed the necessary paperwork with state agencies and that the emissions were not hazardous to residents or refinery workers. Neither the company nor any state agency informed Texas City residents about the venting. Those in and around the plant, many of whom had developed symptoms including chest congestion, coughing, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headaches, and skin rashes first found out about the release from an article in the June 5 *Galveston County Daily News*.

On August 3, more than 2,000 people filed a federal class action lawsuit against BP. The next day another 3,000 people lined up outside the city's Nessler Center to join the suit.

The company claims that air quality monitoring devices on the fence of its refinery didn't show a dangerous level of contaminants over the 40 days. "We should have monitors on each of our houses so that we can see for ourselves and take action when there is a problem," said Santikos.

"They sure should have them at all the schools so we know when or if the kids are getting blasted by the stuff," he said. "They call this a safe level but it's

not. They vent gases all the time."

Warshell said that no worker has to die in order to produce petroleum and that workers must exercise direct control over the pace and conditions of production. "The Socialist Workers Party calls for workers control of safety on each job site to enforce safe operations and prevent injuries, deaths, and disasters," he said.

Elton Howard, a retired chemical plant worker and longtime unionist who worked for Dow Chemical here for years, told Ulman, "They have used every trick in the book to weaken the unions and ignore safety. These companies act as if it is okay to make us sick, that nothing can be done. There's plenty that can be done and neither BP nor the government are doing it."

Iowa socialist candidate debates opponents

BY MAGGIE TROWE

DES MOINES, Iowa—David Rosenfeld, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of Iowa, appeared on the "Deace in the Afternoon" radio program on WHO Newsradio September 3. Talk show host Steve Deace had invited Rosenfeld, Libertarian Party gubernatorial candidate Eric Cooper, and Brian English from the Iowa Family Policy Center, a rightist "profamily" organization, to appear on the show.

Deace pointed out that Democratic incumbent Chet Culver and Republican challenger Terry Branstad have organized three public debates excluding Rosenfeld, Cooper, Iowa Party candidate Jonathan Narcisse, and "fathers' rights" advocate Gregory Hughes.

"All the candidates running for governor ought to be included in the debates," Rosenfeld said. "If I am excluded, there is not going to be a voice of the working class present on the stage. Nobody is going to talk about the scope and the depth of the economic crisis, the need to legalize immigrants, the need to build a movement to organize to defend ourselves against the economic crisis. We need to build a labor party, and above all the working class needs to take political power. These are issues that deserve a hearing in the debate."

Noting the persistent high unemployment in Iowa and the United States, Deace asked how to bring jobs to Iowa.

Libertarian candidate Cooper called for getting rid of the minimum wage and letting average wages fall to \$5 an hour to make "all the unemployment problems disappear."

The Socialist Workers campaign is for raising the minimum wage to union scale, Rosenfeld said. "It's capitalism itself that has brought us to this point," he explained, referring to the grinding economic crisis. "We need to fight for the capitalist government to launch a massive public works program to build roads, schools, levees, and hospitals, to staff them, and create millions of jobs. We need a shorter workweek with no cut in pay."

Deace asked the panelists about Branstad's proposals for agriculture. There are some 92,600 crop and livestock farmers in Iowa. Branstad, who was Iowa governor from 1983 to 1999,



Militant/Jacque Henderson
Socialist Workers candidates Steve Warshell (right) and Amanda Ulman (second from right) campaign in Houston September 11. A week earlier they visited Texas City, Texas, site of BP refinery (inset) where they talked with workers about fight for workplace safety.



calls for fewer regulations and for promoting "partnerships between universities" and farmers to come up with a "Five-Year Strategic Vision and Implementation Plan" for agriculture.

Cooper mocked the plan as a Soviet-style measure, and asserted that the market would solve all farmers' problems. Rosenfeld condemned both the Democrats and Republicans for doing nothing to aid working farmers, while bolstering the profits of big agribusiness.

The Socialist Workers candidate described talking with dairy farmers who are caught in the squeeze between high input costs and low prices for their prod-

uct. He called for "a program that takes away the risk for these working farmers to produce, stops all foreclosures, and guarantees income from the government to cover their costs of production."

Rosenfeld was interviewed a few days later by the Iowa City *Press Citizen*. SWP congressional candidate Rebecca Williamson and Margaret Trowe, the party's candidate for Iowa secretary of agriculture, campaigned at the Iowa State University "ClubFest" September 8, an event where student organizations have booths and discuss their plans for the semester with the thousands of students who attend.

Afghanistan war casualties

Continued from front page

ghan troops, 5,000 police, and 15,000 NATO troops have launched an offensive against an estimated 1,000 Taliban fighters in the Zhari district, where the Taliban was founded in 1994. Quickly driven out of Zhari when the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan began in 2001, the Taliban resurfaced there in 2006 and set up their own government, tax collection system, and courts.

Maj. Gen. Nick Carter, British commander of NATO troops in the south, predicted that the Taliban will be driven out of Kandahar by mid- to late November. Carter conceded that the success imperialist forces claimed last February after a short offensive in the district of Marjah in Helmand Province was "a little bit over-enthusiastic."

By May the Taliban had reestablished itself in Marjah and Gen. Stanley McChrystal labeled the district a "bleeding ulcer." It was not until September 5 that the first Afghan police station was opened there.

Thousands of Afghans protested the plan of a Florida pastor to burn copies of the Koran—even though the church cancelled the September 11 burning. Some 10,000 marched on a NATO base in northern Afghanistan September 10, where NATO soldiers shot and killed at least one demonstrator. On September 11 hundreds demonstrated outside NATO's Bagram Air Field.

Meanwhile, Afghan police beat back government workers September

8 who were trying to cash their monthly paychecks at the Kabul Bank, the country's largest private bank. After both the bank's chairman and its CEO resigned amid charges they had made off-the-book loans and investments, deposit holders withdrew more than \$250 million in cash in a matter of days, prompting fears the institution would collapse.

The political isolation of President Hamid Karzai continues. His efforts to convince sections of the Taliban to lay down their arms and open peace talks have produced few results so far. They have, however, spread concern among oppressed nationalities that suffered severe repression when the Taliban were in power. The Taliban are drawn mostly from the Pashtun nationality, Afghanistan's largest.

"We feel betrayed by the president," said Mohammed Mohaqeq, a member of parliament from the Hazara nationality. "It seems that what President Karzai pursues now is the Talibanization of Afghanistan." The president is also losing ground, the *Washington Post* reported, with sections of the Ulema Council, a group of 3,000 Muslim clerics who receive funds from the government.

Abdul Raouf Nafi, who has 6,000 worshippers at his Kabul mosque, told the *Post* that the war's toll on Afghans is making Afghans "more anti-U.S."

"Afghanistan is being destroyed, and they claim they are building Afghanistan and helping it."

New International no. 13

Our Politics Starts with the World
by Jack Barnes

Also includes:
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**Capitalism, Labor,
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by Richard Levins,
Steve Clark

\$14

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Oppose rulers' assaults at home and abroad

Socialist Workers Party Sept. 11, 2001, statement answers U.S. gov't 'war on terror'

The following is a Socialist Workers Party statement released Sept. 11, 2001, by Martin Koppel, the party's candidate for mayor of New York City at the time, in response to U.S. government preparations for war immediately following the attack on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. The statement holds up well nine years later and remains very relevant today.

Waving the banner that "America is under attack," that it has sustained "a second Pearl Harbor" in the wake of today's assault on New York's World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the U.S. government will seek to advance its "right" to launch military assaults on other countries, as it has done over the past few years against the peoples of Yugoslavia, Iraq, Sudan, and Afghanistan. The U.S. rulers will become even more brazen in their backing for the Israeli regime's escalating war drive against the Palestinians.

Calls by capitalist politicians and apologists for stiffer measures to prevent future such "intelligence failures" are being played up nonstop by the big-business dailies, news agencies, and TV and radio networks. Anti-Arab and anti-Islamic bigotry is being cranked up to bolster this onslaught.

The Socialist Workers Party calls on workers, farmers, and all defenders of democratic rights to speak out against the U.S. rulers' demagogic efforts, in the name of preempting "terrorism," to rationalize restrictions on political rights. We must oppose the campaign by the U.S. government—Democrats and Republicans alike—to curb the constitutionally guaranteed space for political organization and activity and to legitimize the use of the U.S. armed forces at home and abroad.

During its final months in office, following several years of preparations, the Clinton administration established for the first time in U.S. history, a North American command—that is, the command structure for deployment of U.S. armed forces at home, aimed first and foremost at working people in this country. The White House appointed a commander-in-chief of this new homeland command, euphemistically called the Joint Forces Command. As part of its preparations, the U.S. government has over the past two years carried out simulated "antiterrorist" military op-

erations—together with city, state, and federal police forces—in New Jersey, northern California, and elsewhere.

The Bush administration is now deploying these forces in their first domestic military operations. On September 11 the U.S. government placed U.S. armed forces worldwide on hair-trigger war alert. It called out an army regiment of light infantry onto the streets of Washington, D.C.; mobilized the New York National Guard; and deployed heavily armed FBI "counter-terrorism squads" and other special federal police units in Los Angeles, along the borders with Mexico and Canada, and elsewhere across the country.

In coming days, as the administration acts on Bush's vow "to hunt down and punish those responsible," the labor movement and all democratic-minded organizations and individuals must be on the alert to protest government frame-up trials and oppose its trampling on the presumption of innocence; the right to due process; Fourth Amendment protections against arbitrary search, seizure, and wiretaps; and freedom of association without spying and harassment by government informers and agents provocateurs. The last four years of the Clinton administration, and the opening months of the Bush White House, have been marked by stepped-up bipartisan efforts to strengthen the federal death penalty, erode the rights of the accused and convicted, and increase the room for commando-style operations by the U.S. Border Patrol and other Immigration and Naturalization Service cops, the FBI, and other federal assault agencies.

Whoever may have carried out the September 11 operations, the destruction of the two World Trade Center towers, and the air attack on the Pentagon—with the resulting deaths and injuries of thousands of men, women, and children—these actions have nothing to do with the fight against capitalist exploitation and imperialist oppression. Revolutionists and other class-conscious workers, farmers, and youth the world over reject the use of such methods.

The U.S. government and its allies for more than a century have carried out systematic terror to defend their class privilege and interests at home and abroad—from the atomic incineration of hundreds of thousands at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to the 10-year-



Militant/Doug Nelson

Demonstration in New York City Sept. 11, 2010, opposing moves to block construction of Park51 Islamic center and mosque two blocks from former site of World Trade Center.

long slaughter in Indochina, to the war against the Iraqi people in 1990–91, to the burning to death of 80 people at Waco [Texas] on its home soil, to other examples too numerous to list. In recent weeks, the White House and Congress have stood behind Tel Aviv as it escalated its campaign of both random killings and outright murders in its historically failing effort to quell the struggle by the dispossessed Palestinian people for the return of their homeland.

Half a century ago the revolutionary workers movement and other opponents of colonial outrages, racism, and anti-Semitism in all its forms warned that by waging a war of terror to drive the Palestinians from their farms, towns, and cities, the founders of the Israeli state and their imperialist backers in North America and Europe were pitting the Jewish people against those fighting for national liberation in the Middle East and worldwide; they were creating a death trap for the Jews, which Israel remains to this day. By its systematic superexploitation of the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America; by its never-ending insults to their national and cultural dignity; by its ceaseless murderous

violence in countless forms—U.S. imperialism is turning North America into a death trap for working people and all who live here.

The U.S. rulers know that as they press their assault on the living and working conditions of workers and farmers in the United States, they will meet growing resistance, as working people organize to defend their livelihoods and their rights. That's why Washington is systematically strengthening its hand against the battles it knows are coming.

The Socialist Workers Party calls on workers and farmers in the United States and worldwide to speak out in defense of the struggle of the Palestinian people, the people of Western Sahara, the Puerto Rican people, the rights of the people of Cuba, and others the world over fighting for their national rights and against all the ways in which the world capitalist order presses humanity toward fascism and war. We must oppose U.S. military intervention anywhere in the world. We must oppose efforts by Washington to escalate an assault on the political rights of working people and the organizations of our class and its oppressed and exploited allies.

March defends Islamic center

Continued from front page

lyn, who came with another school teacher from Queens. "I'm Muslim," Momodou Marong, an unemployed former DHL driver originally from Gambia, said. "I came to show my support. I'm against racism and bigotry."

Some 50 people spoke, including former Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney, former U.S. attorney general Ramsey Clark, and peace activist Cindy Sheehan, as well as representatives from a range of political, community, cultural, and religious organizations.

Many on the stage denounced anti-Muslim discrimination and the U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Handmade and printed signs included: "First Amendment for everyone"; "No to hate, yes to freedom of religion"; and "Islam has been in New York for 400 years."

The anti-mosque protest was orga-

nized by Stop Islamization of America and chaired by its leader, rightist anti-Muslim writer Pamela Geller. Speakers included John Bolton, former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, who characterized Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf, the central figure behind Park51, as anti-American and criticized the State Department for sponsoring Abdul Rauf's recent diplomatic trip to the Gulf.

The featured speaker was Geert Wilders, a Dutch member of parliament and leader of the Freedom Party (PVV), known for his campaign against Islam and Muslim immigrants. "We must draw the line," he said, "so that New York, rooted in Dutch tolerance, will never become New Mecca."

The following day Abdul Rauf told a meeting of the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations that "everything is on the table" at this point in relation to Park51.

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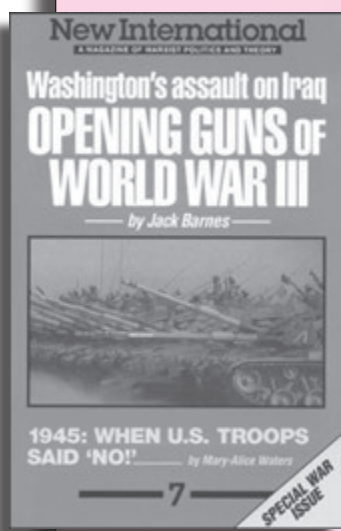
In issue number 7:

Opening Guns of World War III

by Jack Barnes

The murderous assault on Iraq in 1990–91 heralded increasingly sharp conflicts among imperialist powers, growing instability of international capitalism, and more wars. —\$14

PathfinderPress.com



Fight for education as a universal, lifetime activity

Below is an excerpt from The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: The Fraud of Education Reform under Capitalism, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for September. This pamphlet approaches education from a working-class point of view—as a social question. As a fight for the transformation of learning into a universal and lifetime activity. It presents education as part of preparing workers and farmers for the battle “to throw off the self-image the rulers teach us, and to recognize that we are capable of taking power and organizing society as we collectively educate ourselves,” writes Jack Barnes. Copyright © 2000 Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JACK BARNES

Capitalist society promotes the myth that education is a youth question. But any society that sees education as a question just for young people can never have education that is meaningful for human beings, including youth. Social solidarity will never exist in such a society.

The working class cannot begin with how to change things so that *youth* get a better education. We have to begin with how to transform the values of society, not just the economics; it cannot be re-



On the assembly line in a Ford auto plant. “The capitalist rulers have no need, and thus no desire, for workers to be educated in this society,” said Barnes. “They need for us to be obedient . . . to work hard to make a living, not to be critical.”

duced simply to an economic problem. To be meaningful, education has to create the possibilities for society as a whole to advance, instead of reinforcing the exploitation of the majority by the few. Until then, the only “liberal education” available to any fighter who wants one is political education within the workers movement.

What is taught in most schools today is largely worthless. There are a handful of skills that provide some preparation for life—learning to read, learning to write, learning to compute, practicing to increase our attention spans, learning the discipline necessary to study and use our minds. Reading and studying are extremely hard. It takes discipline to sit still for three hours, two hours, even one hour—not moving, not jumping up—and to work through ideas. Working through ideas is hard; we all have to learn how to do it. But it is part of taking ourselves seriously. It is part of taking humanity seriously. We have to learn how to read and study by coming to better understand how other people live and work, whether they are older or younger than we are.

But most everything else we are taught in school, especially in the so-called social sciences and related “disciplines,” are things we need to unlearn. Civics courses, social studies courses—these are all obfuscation. There is

technical training of certain kinds, and applied sciences, that can be OK, with some luck. But these are forms of apprenticeships, not liberal education in the meaningful, universal sense.

Many young people wonder why they should go to school for twelve years in this society. Most never learn anything of value past the sixth or seventh grade. I went to working-class public schools in southern Ohio in the 1940s and 1950s. I never had to write a single essay or do anything like that my entire time in school; I was never given a reason to concentrate on doing so. But I had some teachers who were fine people and who taught me to read, taught me grammar and spelling, showed me by example how to at least sit quietly and work for a while, and encouraged me to do so. They displayed some social solidarity. That is all I can say I ever got from going to school. But that part turned out to be valuable. It was a lucky accident. But because of this accident, I learned to read, acquired the habit of reading, and acquired it for *life*. At the same time, I hated reading what they crammed down my throat in high school. I hated Shakespeare then; I hated *Macbeth* the way it was taught.

Most young people never get taught they have anything to look forward to after their compulsory schooling is over. They never get taught in such a way as to

make them believe the educational system is based on the assumption that their lives are worth a damn. (Many of us can remember teachers and principals who reeked of this attitude, I’m sure.) Instead, young people learn they have nothing to look forward to. They do not need to be told this in so many words; all they have to do is just watch other workers older than themselves. They just watch people like themselves who are above seventeen or eighteen years of age. Between ages six and seventeen young workers go to school six or seven hours a day; they are supposed to read books, work for good grades, study things, turn in homework. Then, all of a sudden they turn eighteen and they never do it again. First they are supposed to “just say no” to anything that is fun. Then they are supposed to just say *yes* to anything an employer demands.¹

Don’t underestimate young people’s moral yearnings, their openness, human solidarity, and sensitivity. Perhaps they cannot put what they see into words. Perhaps they cannot theorize it. But they *know* a lot about what’s going on. What does this kind of education have to do with the human race?

To really discuss education is not to discuss how to reform the seventh grade in Canarsie. The seventh grade in Canarsie *is not going to be reformed*. Or in Louisville. Or anywhere else. I guarantee it, because the rulers have no need, and thus no desire, for workers to be educated in this society. It is not true that the capitalist class needs for workers to be educated; it is a lie. They need for us to be obedient, not to be educated. They need for us to have to work hard to make a living, not to be critical. They need for us to consume all we make each week buying their products. Above all, they need for us to lose any desire over time to broaden our scope and become citizens of the world.

1. This feature of working-class public education has its complement in the schools of the upper classes, which inculcate the idea—and did so long before Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein wrote *The Bell Curve*—that it will be better for the workers if, in school, they’ve internalized values accepting their station in life and “just say yes” to their “betters.”

September

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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MASSACHUSETTS: Boston: 13 Bennington St., 2nd Floor, East Boston. Zip: 02128. Tel: (617) 569-9169. E-mail: swpboston@verizon.net

MINNESOTA: Minneapolis: 1311 1/2 E. Lake St. Zip: 55407. Tel: (612) 729-1205. E-mail: tcswp@qwestoffice.net

NEW YORK: Manhattan: 306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor. Zip: 10018. Tel: (212) 629-6649. E-mail: newyorkswp@mac.com

PENNSYLVANIA: Philadelphia: 3701 Pulaski Ave. Zip: 19140. Tel: (215) 225-1270. E-mail: philaswp@verizon.net

TEXAS: Houston: 4800 W. 34th St., Suite C-51A. Zip: 77092. Tel: (713) 688-4919. E-mail: swp.houston1@sbcglobal.net

WASHINGTON, D.C.: 143 Kennedy St. NW Suite 15. Zip: 20011. Tel: (202) 536-5080. E-mail: swp.washingtondc@verizon.net

WASHINGTON: Seattle: 5418 Rainier Ave. South. Zip: 98118-2439. Tel: (206) 323-1755. E-mail: seattleswp@speakeasy.net

AUSTRALIA

Sydney: 1st Flr, 3/281-287 Beamish St., Campsie, NSW 2194. Mailing address: P.O. Box 164, Campsie, NSW 2194. Tel: (02) 9718 9698. E-mail: cl_australia@optusnet.com.au

CANADA

QUEBEC: Montreal: 7107 St. Denis #204 H2S 2S5. Tel: (514) 272-5840. E-mail: clc_can@bellnet.ca

FRANCE

Paris: P.O. 175, 23 rue Lecourbe. Postal code: 75015. Tel: (01) 40-10-28-37. E-mail: milpath.paris@laposte.net

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland: 4/125 Grafton Rd., Grafton. Postal address: P.O. Box 3025, Auckland 1140. Tel: (09) 369-1223. E-mail: clauk@xtra.co.nz

SWEDEN

Stockholm: Bildhuggarvägen 17, 12144 Johanneshov. Tel: (08) 31 69 33. E-mail: kfstockholm@tele2.se

UNITED KINGDOM

ENGLAND: London: First Floor, 120 Bethnal Green Road (Entrance in Brick Lane). Postal code: E2 6DG. Tel: 020-7613-2466. E-mail: clondon@fastmail.net

SCOTLAND: Edinburgh: Second Floor, 105 Hanover St. Postal code: EH2 1DJ. Tel: 0131-226-2756. E-mail: cledinburgh@talktalk.net

8 The Militant September 27, 2010

Join fight to free the Cuban Five!

The 12th anniversary of unjust imprisonment in U.S. jails has just passed for the Cuban Five: Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, and René González. Picket lines and other protests took place in cities around the world demanding their release.

Theirs is a story of resistance to the assaults on workers' rights and dignity carried out daily by the dictatorship of capital we live under. The brutality of these assaults comes through in two stories in this week's *Militant*. One describes how cops shot and killed five workers in one week in the Seattle and Tacoma, Washington, area. Another reports on the Chicago police unit known as the "Midnight Crew," which tortured more than 100 people, mostly Black men, into giving false confessions.

The Cuban Five were arrested in Miami in 1998 after repeated FBI break-ins at their homes, theft of personal belongings, and wiretapping of their phone conversations. Their "crime" was monitoring the activities of right-wing Cuban-American groups that have carried out violent attacks on Cuba with Washington's blessing.

While the U.S. government branded them as "spies," the prosecution never introduced a single piece of evidence that they had obtained any classified information. The five were jailed without bail, then held in solitary confinement for *17 months* before their trial.

Olga Salanueva, the wife of René González, was arrested and deported in an effort to force him to "confess." Both Salanueva and Adriana Pérez, wife of Gerardo Hernández, have been denied visas ever since to visit their husbands.

At the 2001 trial of the Cuban Five the government introduced "evidence" the defense was not even allowed to see. The judge rejected a defense motion to move the trial out of Miami, where there is a history of government collusion with right-wing Cuban-Americans who seek to intimidate anyone who doesn't share their opinions. At trial a prosecutor told jurors they would be abandoning their community if they failed to convict "the Cuban sp[ies] sent to . . . destroy the United States."

Antonio Guerrero and Ramón Labañino received life sentences and Hernández, convicted on additional frame-up charges of "conspiracy to commit murder," got two life sentences plus 15 years. The international campaign against these outrageous sentences finally won reduction of the terms for Guerrero, Labañino, and Fernando González, but not for Hernández.

The Cuban Five continue to stand up to the government's efforts to break them. They continue to speak out from jail against injustice and exploitation, setting an example for revolutionary fighters. Working people have a stake in getting out the facts about their case and joining the fight for their freedom.

Workers pay more, get less health care

Continued from front page

BlueCross BlueShield plans, however, project premium raises this year of up to 9 percent for individuals and small businesses. Workers covered by other carriers "could face total premium increases of more than 20 percent," reported the *Wall Street Journal*.

Rising premium payments together with virtually stagnant pay raises over the past decade have steadily whittled away workers' standard of living. The amount that workers contribute to health insurance premiums has jumped 158 percent since 1999, compared to a 42 percent rise in wages and 31 percent general inflation.

Of the 2,000 employers the report surveyed, 30 percent said they have reduced employee health benefits while 23 percent raised the amount workers must pay.

Many workers are being forced to shift to PPO plans (preferred provider organizations), which offer somewhat lower premium rates but with higher deductibles before insurance coverage kicks in. According to the report, 58 percent of workers covered by company insurance are enrolled in PPOs. More than 25 percent have an annual deductible of at least \$1,000 for single coverage and much higher for families.

Copayments for doctor visits, which are required by most insurance plans, rose 10 percent. In addition workers must pay higher out-of-pocket expenses for

hospital admission or outpatient surgery.

With rising costs "young employed adults forgo buying coverage as a way to save money," noted CNNMoney. For retirees, only 28 percent of companies with 200 or more employees offer health benefits. For smaller companies 3 percent do.

Steep Medicaid cuts

Citing Congress's failure to provide additional funds for Medicaid, states are taking steps to slash this program, which covers health expenses for those with low incomes. States are "laying plans to cut hundreds of thousands of Medicaid enrollees," reported the *Journal*, "and pare services such as dental care, organ transplants, insulin pumps and over-the-counter medications in the coming months."

If federal money does not come through, the Arizona state government projects eliminating about 320,000 childless adults from the program. "Michigan and North Carolina have also slated provisional cuts," noted the *Journal*. "California plans to limit Medicaid payment for certain over-the-counter drugs and doctor visits" regardless of whether federal Medicaid funds are provided.

Medicare is also on the chopping block. The federal health care law projects \$500 billion in cuts over the next decade.

LETTERS

New York City Islamic center

Thank you for supporting the center's constitutional right to exist. But your articles perpetuate the confusion that has characterized this debate, by referring several times to Park51/Cordoba House as a "mosque." This is the language used by opponents to generate hysteria, and it is inaccurate.

As you note once or twice, the proposed building will be a cultural center; it will include a mosque, but the center will include many other facilities as well, and be open to people of all (or no) faiths. This is an important distinction, but your subsequent references to the "mosque" are unhelpful, to say the least.

Also, could you please explain this sentence, from your edito-

rial: "Despite claims of the center's sponsors that they are building near the World Trade Center to promote interfaith reconciliation, the resulting controversy was inevitable and easily foreseen." You seem to blame Park51 founders, at least in part, for the racist outcry they've encountered. Your suggestion that Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf is somehow a tool of U.S. foreign policy further

qualifies your purported support for the center's rights.

I have occasionally read your paper online in recent years, but have noticed a conspicuous inability to discuss anti-Muslim bigotry, which has intensified substantially in recent years. Socialists and other anti-racist activists have a duty to discuss and forcefully combat Islamophobia.

Jack McReynolds
Brooklyn, New York

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

Defend workers rights! Hands off mosque in N.Y.C.

BY DOUG NELSON

After the *Militant* received a few critical letters about its coverage of the controversy over plans to build an Islamic center and mosque two blocks from the former World Trade Center, it seemed useful to come back to a few points.

A spate of anti-Muslim incidents and rhetoric have accompanied this controversy. Communists condemn all such acts of religious bigotry, which sow divisions in the working class and narrow space for working people to engage in politics.

Working people should oppose *any* government interference with the center in lower Manhattan, known as Park51. This includes denouncing statements by capitalist politicians and other ruling-class figures designed to pressure its builders to relocate the site, as well as calls on the government to help "mediate" an agreement that might be acceptable to both sides.

As the September 6 *Militant* editorial stated, such intervention sets "a dangerous precedent for government circumvention of fundamental rights that serve to protect working people from the capitalists' state power." These protections include the Bill of Rights and other amendments to the Constitution that codify protections such as freedom of speech, worship, and assembly, which working people wrested—and have had to defend—through decades of struggle *against* the propertied rulers.

Communists champion freedom to worship for all faiths—with neither impediments nor support from the government.

Our stance against government interference also includes opposition to any moves by the capitalist state to curtail the rights of reactionary enemies of the working class. For example, in the United Kingdom some of the forces organizing counter-mobilizations against the rightist English Defence League called on the government to ban EDL demonstrations. In this case, the government did respond, banning all protest marches in the city by either side for a day.

Workers should reject any such "help" from our class enemy's state power, which will later be turned against the working class. Rather, we look to the only forces and methods capable of defeating rightist forces: the mobilization of workers and their allies to confront them politically and in the streets—and meet them blow for blow when necessary.

A few readers asked about the paragraph in the editorial: "Despite claims of the center's sponsors that they are building near the World Trade Center to promote interfaith reconciliation, the resulting controversy was inevitable and easily foreseen. While some Democratic and Republican politicians refuse to acknowledge this fact, others seize upon it to whip up patriotic appeals for state intervention."

We agree this part of the editorial is confusing and open to misinterpretation.

We do not blame Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf nor speculate on his motivations, which are irrelevant. Neither does the editorial intend to make a point about what capitalist politicians should be saying. The various points of view professed by mouthpieces for the ruling class flow from their class interests, not those of working people.

At the same time, a backlash against Park51 plans to build two blocks from "ground zero" was inevitable. Not everyone who thinks it's not a good idea is an anti-Muslim bigot. While this has no bearing on our position, it can only strengthen our argument to acknowledge it.

One reader questioned the implications of the *Militant* pointing out that Adbul Rauf is paid by the U.S. State Department to "build bridges" between religious and political institutions of the U.S. ruling class and its counterparts in the Gulf. While it also does not affect our position, it is worth noting because these efforts have nothing to do with breaking down religious and other divisions in the working class. Proletarian habits of mutual trust, tolerance, and class solidarity develop among working people in the course of common struggle against the bosses and their governments.