

THE MILITANT

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 73/NO. 32 AUGUST 24, 2009

N. Korean ship seized under UN ‘authority’

BY BEN JOYCE

The Indian Coast Guard detained a North Korean ship August 5, claiming they suspected it was carrying nuclear material. The action to seize and “inspect” the ship was taken under the cover of a UN Security Council resolution aimed at pressuring the North Korean government to abandon development of their nuclear program.

Indian officials later said they found the vessel was carrying 16,000 tons of sugar bound for the Middle East. The ship was detained shortly after it left a port in the Andaman Islands, a territory of India.

The UN Security Council resolution passed in June widens a 2006 UN ban on North Korean arms imports and exports. It calls for inspecting and destroying “all banned cargo” to and from North Korea “on the high seas, at seaports and airports.” The resolution states that if a ship’s “flag country” refuses to be boarded at sea, it should order the vessel to a nearby port and have the inspection carried out by local authorities.

The Security Council, led by Wash-
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U.S. bills on ‘health care’ boon for big business

BY RÓGER CALERO

The U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate failed to bring bills for “health-care reform” to their full chambers before their August recess but moved closer to reaching a deal that favors the insurance and hospital industries and major drug companies, and includes further cuts in Medicare and Medicaid.

The “reform” proposals would be a profit boon for the owners of the health-care industry by making it mandatory for people to buy insurance, either from private companies or from a government-sponsored plan. A limited government subsidy in the form of tax credits would be available to eligible low-income individuals to purchase insurance.

Some of the original proposals hailed by the Barack Obama administration to increase access to health coverage are being thrown by the wayside as the legislation evolves.

Legislators have said, for example, that there will very likely be no provision for a government-run insurance option, which insurance companies

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Socialists campaign to unite working people

15,000 signatures turned in for ballot slot



Militant/ Paul Mailhot

Socialist Workers candidates in New York City file petitions to get on ballot. Dan Fein (second from left), mayoral candidate; and Tom Baumann (third from left), Manhattan borough president candidate. Others (from left) Sam Manuel, editor of *Militant*; Olga Rodriguez, campaign supporter; Martín Koppel, campaign chairperson; and Harry D'Agostino, campaign supporter.

BY OLGA RODRÍGUEZ
AND PAUL MAILHOT

NEW YORK, August 11—“Working people today—across the globe—confront the deepest crisis of the capitalist system in living memory,” stated Dan Fein, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New York mayor at a press conference here today. “Despite statements to the contrary by Democratic and Republican politicians, this devastation is just beginning.”

Flanked by campaign supporters, Fein and Tom Baumann, social-

ist candidate for Manhattan borough president, were speaking on the steps of City Hall after filing 15,000 signatures with the Board of Elections—double the required amount—to place their names and that of Maura DeLuca, SWP candidate for public advocate, on the November ballot. Fein said that in face of the developing social and economic catastrophe working people need “to take political power out of the hands of the ruling capitalist class” and reorganize soci-

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August 28–29 action called to defend Omaha abortion clinic

BY MAGGIE TROWE
DES MOINES, Iowa—Another showdown around a woman’s right to choose abortion is shaping up in the Midwest.

Dr. LeRoy Carhart announced August 3 he will begin performing late-term abortions in Wichita, Kansas, soon. This comes barely two months after an anti-abortion rightist shot and killed Dr. George Tiller, who had performed late-term abortions in Wichita. Carhart currently runs a clinic in Bellevue, Nebraska, outside of Omaha, and also worked part-time in Tiller’s clinic.

The closing of Tiller’s clinic was a blow to women’s access to safe abortion. Defenders of a woman’s right to choose abortion in the Wichita area and across the country are encouraged by Carhart’s decision.

Operation Rescue, an antiabortion outfit, has announced plans for a “Keep It Closed” campaign, beginning with a “pro-life rally” and “street activism” at Carhart’s clinic in



AP Photo/Orlin Wagner

Hundreds gather for vigil at Old Town Square in Wichita, Kansas, May 31 for Dr. George Tiller, who was killed earlier in day.

Omaha August 28–29. The announcement posted on Operation Rescue’s Web site said it will be joined by two other antiabortion groups, Rescue the Heartland and Nebraskans United for Life.

Wichita has been a battleground in the fight to defend abortion rights since the summer of 1991 when rightist forces carried out mobilizations aiming to shut down abortion clinics in Wichita, including Tiller’s.

In a statement Operation Rescue president Troy Newman said, “We are dedicated to working through every legal means to stop LeRoy Carhart

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Thousands are not counted in latest ‘drop’ in U.S. joblessness

BY BEN JOYCE

The U.S. official unemployment rate dropped by one-tenth of a percent in July—from 9.5 percent to 9.4 percent. Although nearly a quarter of a million jobs were slashed last month, the rate declined because the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) did not count some 700,000 in last month’s labor force figures as a result of seasonal adjustment.

Without the adjustment, the unemployment rate would have risen slightly.

The *New York Times* called the latest figures the “most heartening employment report since last summer.” However, official statistics mask the reality working people face.

The official unemployment rate calculated by the BLS does not include “marginally attached” workers—those the government claims have looked for work in the past year but not in the past month. Last month the number of this category of workers rose to 2.28 million people, which is its highest level since 1994, when the BLS began keeping records of this figure.

The decline of one-tenth of a per-

cent in the official unemployment rate is statistically insignificant given that the change in the rate is smaller than the margin of error associated with the survey. In addition, the BLS continues to analyze data after releasing initial estimates and has subsequently upped previous months’ unemployment figures three times already this year.

In an August 7 blog on the *New York Times* website, the author wrote:
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Russian troops remain a year after Georgia war

BY SETH GALINSKY

One year after Moscow’s invasion of Georgia, thousands of Russian troops remain in that country’s disputed regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Washington, while in favor of Russian withdrawal, has made clear that it won’t let the occupation get in the way of “resetting” relations with Moscow.

The U.S. government has given Georgia \$1 billion in mostly economic aid since the Aug. 12, 2008, cease-fire. But Washington has refused to help reequip the Georgian army, which all but collapsed during the war as it faced Russian armor, artillery, and air power.

U.S. vice president Joseph Biden traveled to Georgia’s capital, Tbilisi, July 22 where he lauded the government as a “vital partner.” At the same time Biden lectured President Mikhail Saakashvili that he must “deepen democracy” there. According to BBC news, a Biden aid called the U.S. policy one of “tough love.”

Moscow occupied the two Georgian regions in the course of a brief but brutal war that began Aug. 8, 2008, when Georgian troops moved into South Ossetia after skirmishes with Ossetian military forces supported by Moscow.

Russian troops, which had been preparing for combat there for weeks, rapidly pushed the Georgians out and advanced deeper into Georgia. Russian forces also flooded into Abkhazia, taking control of a major hydroelectric plant that provides 60 percent of Georgia’s electricity five days after the cease-fire.

The Russian government cynically claimed it had intervened to defend the national rights of the peoples of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Both regions were still part of Georgia when it declared independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.

Russian tsars and the Soviet regimes following the counterrevolution led by Joseph Stalin trampled on the rights of the Ossetian, Abkhaz, and Georgian peoples, themselves an oppressed nationality. Successive governments in Georgia also oppressed the Abkhaz and Ossetians.

The only exception was during the early years of the Russian Revolution when the Bolshevik-led government under V.I. Lenin championed the right of self-determination of nations oppressed by the tsarist empire.

Since the cease-fire, Moscow has fortified its military presence in the two Georgian regions. It is building an airfield and a deep water port in Abkhazia. In South Ossetia it has built bases and has roughly 3,800 ground troops there equipped with tanks, artillery, and rocket launchers. It has a similar number of troops in Abkhazia.

South Ossetia, with just 70,000 residents and little industry or natural resources, is almost totally dependent on Moscow. In early August, South Ossetian president Eduard Kokoity appointed a Russian citizen as prime minister. Kokoity recently told Reuters that “we don’t rule out that there will come a time when we will become part of Russia.”

Moscow’s relations with Abkhazia—and its 200,000 people—are

Russian auto workers protest short hours



About 2,000 workers demonstrated August 6 outside the AvtoVAZ auto company in Tolyatti, Russia. They were protesting a massive cut in work hours and possible layoff of one-fourth of the workforce.

AvtoVAZ is majority-owned by Russian Technologies, a government corporation. In 2008 French auto giant Renault bought a 25 percent stake in the company, which employs more than 100,000 people to make Lada cars.

“We need more workers’ control over the factory and the workers’ right to veto management decisions,” Pyotr Zolotaryov, leader of the factory’s independent trade union, said at the rally, according to Agence France-Presse.

Workers carried signs saying “Give managers a worker’s salary!” “Nationalize!” and “Give AvtoVAZ real help.”

The factory temporarily shut down operations August 3. When production starts back up in September the shifts will be cut to 20 hours a week. The company denied that it was planning layoffs.

Sales of new cars in Russia fell 49 percent in the first half of 2009. The Russian government gave the company a \$797 million interest-free loan this year, roughly equal to what the company claims it lost in 2008.

—SETH GALINSKY

more complex and uneasy. The Russian government has been granted control of railways and airports there and exploration rights for oil in the Abkhaz Black Sea. With a picturesque Black Sea coast, mountain resorts, and citrus orchards, Abkhazia has more economic resources than South Ossetia.

“We will support Russia,” Abkhaz president Sergy Bagapsh told the London *Financial Times*, “but there is no question of unifying with Russia.”

Opposition political parties, which said Georgian president Saakashvili mishandled the war and had become a dictator, carried out three months of street demonstrations to oust him. But by August they called off their campaign and accepted an invitation to attend a meeting to discuss what the Georgian government says is a threat

from Moscow. Saakashvili made some concessions including holding direct mayoral elections for the first time and helping an opposition cable channel get off the ground.

U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War

in New International no. 11

Contrary to imperialism’s hopes, the working class has not been crushed in the wake of the collapse of regimes across Eastern Europe and the USSR that claimed to be communist. The working class remains an intractable obstacle to re-imposing and stabilizing capitalism there. —\$16

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THE MILITANT

Abortion: women’s right to choose

The fight to defend women’s right to abortion is not just a women’s issue. It is a key question for the emancipation of the entire working class.

Read about the ongoing fights to defend clinics and the right to choose.

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Militant/Janice Lynn

June 1 demonstration at New York’s Union Square to protest killing of Dr. George Tiller in Wichita, Kansas.

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Korean auto workers end 77-day occupation

BY DOUG NELSON

Hundreds of workers ended a 77-day occupation of the Ssangyong car factory in South Korea August 6 after a two-week battle with cops.

The strike occupation followed the company's announcement in April that it would dismiss 2,646 workers out of its 7,350-person workforce. Some 1,670 of these were forced into "voluntary retirement," while others were permanently laid off.

Workers took over the company's plant in Pyeongtaek, some 45 miles from Seoul, May 22 to demand the workers be retained by spreading the available work.

The strike ended in a settlement in which 48 percent of the strikers will either be transferred to sales positions, or be placed on unpaid leave for one year. The other half will be forced into "voluntary" resignation or transferred to other companies. Those furloughed or permanently laid off will receive an additional two months' retirement allowance.

Whether the company will still exist in one year, however, is uncertain. Ssangyong, South Korea's smallest car manufacturer, was hit hard in the last year by the worldwide contraction of the auto market and has been in bankruptcy protection since January.

Two weeks into the strike the government issued arrest warrants for 10 of the leaders of the Ssangyong branch of the Korean Metal Workers Union (KMWU) on charges of leading illegal protests. In mid-June the company launched a two-week effort to forcibly break the strike with thousands of scabs.

For weeks the government resisted calls by the company to send a police force to break the strike for fear of spark-

ing a broader working-class response. Six people were killed in January when the government deployed commandos to oust a plant occupation in Seoul.

In mid-July the company began blocking food, water, and medicine from reaching the strikers. On July 20, the company completely cut off water to the factory and a force of about 100 commandos and 2,000–3,000 riot cops moved in, employing Taser guns and liquid tear gas. The striking workers, numbering about 800 at that time, held their ground and fought back with Molotov cocktails and slingshots.

A couple days later gas supply to the factory used for cooking was cut off.

Thousands of workers responded to the July 20 company and government attack with mass actions in support of the strike and marched to the factory. The Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) organized a solidarity strike that also protested the growing use of temporary workers, who comprise 33 percent of the national workforce, have the lowest wages, fewer benefits, and no job security.

In another attack August 4 helicopters dropped commandos and more tear gas on the plant where about 500 workers remained, causing chemical burns. Company thugs dispersed the solidarity encampment outside the factory and arrested the KMWU vice president.

After two days of siege and rooftop battles in which more than 50 cops and 150 workers were injured, the strikers agreed to settle with the company, agreeing that Ssangyong would keep 48 percent of the strikers. They had previ-



SWAT cops (top of photo) attack workers on roof of building at occupied Ssangyong plant August 5. After two-day battle with riot police, union arrived at settlement with company.

ously rejected the company's offer to keep 40 percent of the strikers.

"I am sorry that we could not get a better deal, but I am proud that we fought hard," striker Moon Jae-myong told the *New York Times*. "The more the company squeezed our human rights, the more resolved those who remained became," Ham Bong-duck explained.

The company said it would work to lighten the sentences of the strikers and drop civil suits against the union—if its plans for revival are approved in bankruptcy court. Ninety-six strikers were jailed immediately following the end of the strike.

"The forthcoming revival process of Ssangyong Motors may entail more confrontation," a statement from the KCTU said. "The KCTU will not stop its struggles against anti-labor policies of the Lee Myong Bak government, and will not stand by complacently should Ssangyong Motors continue its union-bashing practices as shown during the recent crisis."

In 2006 Ssangyong workers occupied

the plant for nearly two months against a much smaller wave of layoffs.

The company's South Korean bosses have successfully deflected much of the blame for the company's failure on its majority Chinese ownership. In December workers held some of its Chinese executives hostage for seven hours, accusing them of stealing the company's technology.

Since May, domestic car sales in South Korea have been buoyed by large government tax breaks for consumers to replace older cars with new ones. The plan seems to have boosted all but Ssangyong, whose sales have fallen through the floor amid the strike. The company exported only 20 cars in June.

The government tax break is contingent on the countries' five auto companies' ability to "restructure" their workforce to be more competitive and profitable. Now government officials are calling to end the tax incentives earlier than planned as automakers have failed to make progress against the unions and "restructure."

N. Korean ship seized under UN mandate

Continued from front page
ington, voted unanimously to approve the sanctions following North Korea's second nuclear test in late May. The council's five permanent members: Britain, China, France, Russia, and the United States, are the countries that control the world's largest arsenals of nuclear weapons.

The North Korean captain and 38 crew members of the *M V Mu San* are being interrogated by Indian officials. After two days of searching and questioning, India's Navy and Coast Guard handed the ship and crew over to police and intelligence services for further investigation.

"We have been checking the ship for any radioactive material, but I must say we have found nothing like that so far," said Andaman police offi-

cial Ashok Chand. "We will continue checking it until we are satisfied there is nothing wrong with the consignment."

BBC news service reports that the Indian government claims the ship was carrying equipment and material to Burma to help it build a nuclear reactor.

While Washington demands that North Korea halt its development of nuclear technology it maintains nuclear weapons throughout the region. In June U.S. defense secretary Robert Gates ordered the deployment to Hawaii of the SBX sea-based radar system and interceptors designed to destroy incoming missiles in the final stages of their flight path. Antiballistic missiles are already deployed on U.S.

warships throughout the Pacific and on bases in Alaska and California.

In June the U.S. warship *USS John S. McCain* shadowed a North Korean cargo ship in the South China Sea claiming it might be carrying "banned cargo."

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

CALIFORNIA

San Francisco

Oppose U.S. War in Afghanistan: All Troops Out of Central Asia Now! Speaker: Andrea Morell, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Aug. 21, 7:30 p.m. 5482 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

FLORIDA

Miami

Health-Care 'Reform' Bills: Coverage for All Working People or Boon for the Bosses? Speaker: Rolande Girard, SWP. Fri., Aug. 21, 7:30 p.m. 6777 NW 7th Ave., Suite 5. Tel.: (305) 757-8869.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

Escalation of the War in Afghanistan and Pakistan: U.S. Troops Out Now! Speaker: Janet Post, SWP candidate for Philadelphia city controller. Fri., Aug. 21, 7:30 p.m. 188 W. Wyoming Ave. Tel.: (215) 455-2682.

TEXAS

Houston

Working Class Needs to Take Political Power. Speakers: Amanda Ulman, SWP candidate for Houston mayor; Steve Warshell, SWP candidate for controller. Sat., Aug. 22, 7:30 p.m. 4800 W. 34th St., Suite C-51A. Tel.: (713) 688-4919.

SWEDEN

Stockholm

Withdraw Swedish Troops from Afghanistan Now! Speaker: Anita Östling, Communist League. Fri., Aug. 21, 7 p.m., refreshments from 6 p.m. Bildhuggarvägen 17, 121 44 Johanneshov. Tel.: 08 316933.

Abortion rights protests

Continued from front page
from following through on his threats to open a late-term abortion clinic to replace Tiller's clinic."

The Kansas National Organization for Women put out a call for a counter-mobilization against Operation Rescue. A posting on its Facebook page appealed for a large turnout: "Kansas NOW will be there! WE MUST STAND UP FOR OURSELVES, OUR RIGHTS AND DR. CARHART!"

Activists in Wichita will be caravanning to Omaha on the evening of

August 27, and organizing housing for as many people as possible. NOW leader Nicki Scheid told the *Militant* that the pro-women's rights forces will focus on defending Carhart's clinic.

Defenders of a woman's right to choose abortion are also planning to come from Des Moines, Iowa, the Twin Cities in Minnesota, and the Chicago area.

Those who plan to attend should contact Nicki Scheid of Kansas NOW at 785-212-0162 or by e-mail at nicki2377@yahoo.com.

Recommended Reading

The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

By Jack Barnes

Building the kind of party working people need to prepare for coming class battles through which they will revolutionize themselves, their unions, and all society. A handbook for those seeking the road toward effective action to overturn the exploitative system of capitalism and join in reconstructing the world on new, socialist foundations.—\$24

Capitalism's World Disorder

By Jack Barnes

The social devastation and financial panic, coarsening of politics, cop brutality, and imperialist aggression—all are products not of something gone wrong with capitalism but of its lawful workings.—\$25

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Deaths of Iran protesters deepen divisions in gov't

BY CINDY JAQUITH

The Iranian government has ordered the closing of Kahrizak prison amid growing reports of deadly beatings and torture there of those arrested for protesting the outcome of the country's presidential elections in June. It is the latest sign of deepening fissures in the regime in face of protests demanding more political freedoms.

The official election results showed incumbent president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad winning nearly 2 to 1. His closest opponent was former prime minister Mir Hossein Mousavi, who became popular among youth due to his statements in support of women's rights and against censorship and other restrictions on political rights.

One of those killed in Kahrizak was Mohsen Ruholamini, the 25-year-old son of a close political aide to Mohsen Rezaei, who for more than a decade was the commander of the *Pasdaran*, or Guards of the Islamic Revolution. Rezaei also ran against Ahmadinejad in the election. Prominent parliament members who were once Ahmadinejad's allies made a point of attending the youth's funeral.

The government has tried to win support for its actions by claiming the protests and its leaders aim to overthrow it. On August 9 the head of the Pasdaran's political bureau, Brig. Gen. Yadollah Javani, said Mousavi, Mehdi Karroubi, who was another presidential candidate, and Mohammad Khatami, who was Iran's president from 1997 to 2005, should be tried for backing "a Western-backed plot to topple the government through a 'velvet coup.'"

Meanwhile, the government began a mass trial of some 100 people arrested during the protests. The charges against them include espionage, rioting, working with Israeli and American intelligence agencies, and conspiring to overthrow the government.

Iranian state TV broadcast "confessions" by former vice president Mohammad Abtahi and others who stated they promoted the post-election demonstrations as part of a foreign plot to overthrow the government.

The Association of Combatant Clerics denounced the trial as a "ridiculous show," saying it was "aimed at demoralizing political activists who are protesting election results and to divert public opinion from the crimes committed against detainees." The Association of Teachers and Researchers in Qom, the Islamic religious center, said the confessions were clearly made "under duress."

Protesters disregarded a warning from the government not to demonstrate July 30, the 40th day of mourning for Neda Agha-Soltan, who was shot dead during post-election protests. Iranian news service Press TV reported that "thousands of people gathered in Tehran and other cities to commemorate those killed in the country's post-election unrest." Riot cops used tear gas and batons to disperse mourners gathered at Agha-Soltan's grave. Cops prevented Mousavi from joining the mourners. Fifty were arrested.

Mousavi's supporters submitted to parliament a list of 69 protesters killed in Tehran and other cities since the demonstrations started. An earlier parliamentary investigation found 30 dead.

The police say the number is 19.

The political impact of the protests and the government's attempts to suppress them are not only having an impact in large cities, a correspondent for the *New York Times* reported. A trip to villages surrounding Qom "turned up signs that growing segments of these rural populations, particularly the young and the educated, have lost faith in the current government," the paper said August 4.

"I voted for Mousavi because I want change," a 24-year-old college graduate visiting his home village told the *Times*. "All the young people like myself moved away because we do not believe in this lifestyle anymore."

A 45-year-old farmer, on the other hand, told the *Times*, "Ahmadinejad did many good things for poor people. He gave us free fertilizers, loans to grow our crops, and gave money to those who were in very bad situations."

At the same time the farmer said he was disturbed by the police attacks on young people in the cities. He learned about them from his nephew, who lives in a larger town and has access to international media. "Yes, I heard about the demonstrations," the farmer said. "It really disappointed me to learn how



Protest of presidential election results in Iran. Some 100 people are now on trial on charges of espionage and conspiring to overthrow government.

the government had treated our own people."

The Tehran Province Forum of Islamic Labor Councils, meanwhile, criticized the government for not paying "Justice Shares" promised to low-income workers, according to the Iranian Labor News Agency (ILNA).

The shares represent stock in companies that the government is privatizing. During Ahmadinejad's first term, according to Press TV, hundreds of com-

panies were placed in private hands. On July 28, the government sold off 40 percent of its holdings in another 14 companies, mostly in the energy sector.

The government says some 23 million working people in rural areas have received shares following these privatizations. But ILNA reported that Akbar Eyvazi of the Islamic Labor Council said, "Workers are still waiting for Justice Shares, while they are among the low-income groups of society."

Cuban revolutionary day celebrated in Lebanon

BY BASHAR ABU-SAIFAN
AND GEORGES MEHRABIAN

BEIRUT, Lebanon—About 1,000 people attended a festival here August 1 to celebrate the 56th anniversary of the opening of the Cuban Revolution.

"July 26, 1953, is the day of the assault by Cuban youth, led by Fidel Castro, on the Moncada military garrison. This was the launch of our revolutionary struggle against the Batista dictatorship," Dario de Urrea, Cuban ambassador to Lebanon, told the participants. "Six years later the Cuban people were victorious. And since then, for over 50 years Cuba has resisted the siege by the U.S." The festival was held at the UNESCO Palace.

"To this day, this revolution continues

to be a beacon of hope for people worldwide. Today's event is an expression of the growing support for the Cuban Revolution," de Urrea said. "We salute the resistance of the Lebanese people against the Zionist enemy. This small people has given an example to others."

De Urrea said that this year's festival is dedicated to the Cuban Five, who have been held in the prisons of the United States for nearly 11 years.

Following the ambassador's remarks, Lebanese filmmaker Jean Chamoun presented a documentary on the 1978 World Youth and Student Festival held in Cuba. Chamoun was a delegate from Lebanon to that festival.

The Beirut festival included a live concert from the Cuban band Son Cu-

bano. Hundreds of people danced to the salsa rhythms of the group. Following the concert, Cuban cuisine and *mojitos* were available. There was an art exhibit as well as entertainment for children. Scores of people milled around while Cuban cigar makers showed their skills making cigars, which were then purchased by participants.

The day long festival was organized by an ad hoc committee and was sponsored by several companies, including the Lebanese national air carrier Middle East Airlines, Havana Club, the daily newspapers *Al-Akhbar* and *Al-Safir*, the Communist Party of Lebanon radio station Sawt al-Shaab, the Lebanese musical production house Eleftheriadis, and the video production house Red Line.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



August 31, 1984

NEW YORK—More than 15,000 predominantly Black, Latino, and female hospital workers crowded into New York's Madison Square Garden the night of August 21 and decided, amid a roar of cheers, to continue their 41-day strike against 30 private hospitals and 15 nursing homes in the city.

In response, hospital officials renewed threats to hire scabs to permanently replace the strikers—members of District 1199, Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Workers Union, AFL-CIO.

[Hospital officials] threatened to hire permanent replacements earlier. But it is only now that the hospitals have set a definite date when they will attempt to bring hired scabs across the militant 1199 picket lines. Should the hospitals follow through on their threat it can set the stage for a major confrontation with the city's labor union movement.



August 24, 1959

NEW YORK, August 17—Police Commissioner Kennedy has responded to an East Bronx demonstration against police brutality by assigning more cops to the area. Meanwhile, a charge of additional brutality has been made by one of the men involved in the Aug. 9 incident when a crowd of 300 converged to stop two cops from beating a prisoner on the street.

Two near-riots in the poverty-stricken, Negro-Puerto Rican community came when Detectives Martino and O'Connor arrested restaurant proprietor Tyson King for alleged possession of illegal alcohol. They also arrested a customer, Robert Edwards. The crowd moved in and roughed up the cops when they dragged Edwards to the street and began beating him with a gun. The cops claimed that the prisoners had resisted arrest and had incited the crowd to riot.



August 25, 1934

MINNEAPOLIS, August 22—Triumphant [Teamsters local] 574 is celebrating tonight.

The Minneapolis drivers have battled through five weeks of the toughest strike struggle in recent times and have emerged from it with a victory that will warm the hearts of the militants from Maine to California.

In the most significant duel in years between reaction, the bosses, the governor, the soldiers, the cops, the press, the radio, the church, on the one side and the dauntless militancy of 574 supported by the Minneapolis working class on the other, labor has won.

[The bosses organization] wanted to smash 574 and organized labor. But though it was backed by all the gold of Wall Street, it has cracked like an egg shell under the fist of the truckers union.

A program for working people to take political power

Below is an excerpt from The Communist Manifesto, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month in August. It was first published in 1848. Its authors, young German revolutionaries Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, laid down in its pages the foundations of the modern working-class movement. The chapter excerpted below, entitled "Bourgeois and Proletarians," traces the emergence of two modern classes, capitalists and workers, out of the advances of industrial production, their inevitable conflict, and the forging by workers of trade unions to keep up the rate of wages. Copyright © 1987 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

But with the development of industry the proletariat not only increases in number; it becomes concentrated in greater masses, its strength grows, and it feels that strength more. The various interests and conditions of life within the ranks of the proletariat are more and more equalized, in proportion as machinery obliterates all distinctions of labor and nearly everywhere reduces wages to the same low level. The growing competition among the bourgeois, and the resulting commercial crises, make the wages of the workers ever more fluctuating. The unceasing improvement of machinery,



Militant/Terri Moss

"The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever-expanding union of the workers," says *Communist Manifesto*. Above, Co-Op coal mine strikers and supporters march to mine in Huntington, Utah, July 6, 2004, to tell bosses they will end strike and accept offer that their fight had forced on the company.

ever more rapidly developing, makes their livelihood more and more precarious; the collisions between individual workmen and individual bourgeois take more and more the character of collisions between two classes. Thereupon the workers begin to form combinations (trades unions) against the bourgeois; they club together in order to keep up the rate of wages; they found permanent associations in order to make provision beforehand for these occasional revolts. Here and there the contest breaks out into riots.

Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever-expanding union of the workers. This union is helped on by the improved means of communication that are created by modern industry and that place the workers of different localities in contact with one another. It was just this contact that was needed to centralize the numerous local struggles, all of the same character, into one national struggle between classes. But every class struggle is a political struggle. And that union, to attain that which the burghers of the Middle Ages, with their miserable highways, required centuries, the modern proletarians, thanks to railways, achieve in a few years.

This organization of the proletarians into a class, and consequently into a political party, is continually being upset again by the competition between the workers themselves. But it ever rises up again, stronger, firmer, mightier. It compels legislative recognition of particular interests of the workers, by taking advantage of the divisions among the bourgeoisie itself. Thus the ten-hours bill in England was carried.

Altogether collisions between the classes of the old society further, in many ways, the course of development of the proletariat. The bourgeoisie finds itself involved in a constant battle. At first with the aristocracy; later on, with those portions of the bourgeoisie itself whose interests have become antagonistic to the progress of industry; at all times, with the bourgeoisie of foreign countries. In all these battles it sees itself compelled to appeal to the proletariat, to ask for its help, and thus to drag it into the political arena. The bourgeoisie itself, therefore, supplies the proletariat with its own elements of political and general education; in other words, it furnishes the proletariat with weapons for fighting the bourgeoisie.

Further, as we have already seen, entire sections of the ruling classes are, by the advance of industry, precipitated into

the proletariat or are at least threatened in their conditions of existence. These also supply the proletariat with fresh elements of enlightenment and progress.

Finally, in times when the class struggle nears the decisive hour, the process of dissolution going on within the ruling class, in fact within the whole range of old society, assumes such a violent, glaring character, that a small section of the ruling class cuts itself adrift, and joins the revolutionary class, the class that holds the future in its hands. Just as, therefore, at an earlier period a section of the nobility went over to the bourgeoisie, so now a portion of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat, and in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole.

Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of modern industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product.

The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. If by chance they are revolutionary, they are so only in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat, they thus defend not their present, but their future interests, they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat. . . .

All the preceding classes that got the upper hand sought to fortify their already acquired status by subjecting society at large to their conditions of appropriation. The proletarians cannot become masters of the productive forces of society except by abolishing their own previous mode of appropriation and thereby also every other previous mode of appropriation. They have nothing of their own to secure and to fortify; their mission is to destroy all previous securities for, and insurances of, individual property.

August

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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The Militant August 24, 2009

5

Cuba, Africa, and Chinese fight for justice in Australia

Forums present book about Cuban Revolution

BY LINDA HARRIS
AND RON POULSEN

SYDNEY, Australia—"The importance of this book is that it is about the living example of the Cuban Revolution—its course and its proletarian internationalism that is unique in today's world," Mary-Alice Waters told a seminar at Sydney University July 27. The meeting was discussing the Pathfinder book *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution*.

Waters, who edited the book, visited Australia after participating in the "Rising Dragons, Soaring Bananas" international conference on the Chinese diaspora held in New Zealand July 17–19. (See *Militant* article, Aug. 10, 2009). The Transnational and Transcultural Studies Research Network and the Latin American Studies Network organized the seminar attended by 26 people, including students, academics, Cuba solidarity activists, and the Cuban consuls to Australia.

Adrian Hearn, a researcher at Sydney University studying China's relations with Latin America, shared the platform with Waters and posed questions to her, giving the seminar a conversational format. Hearn drew on some of his own research in Cuba to amplify important points. "This book is about three ordinary citizens of Cuba of Chinese descent. What is it that makes people so interested in their story?" Hearn asked.

"The breadth of interest especially among those who are new to the Cuban Revolution," Waters responded, "has to do with what is happening in the world today." She pointed to the historic waves of immigration to imperialist countries over the last

20 years and the struggles for immigrants' rights that have occurred, such as the May Day marches by millions a couple of years ago in the United States demanding legalization for immigrants. "As these struggles take place especially in the midst of a deepening world economic contraction and sharpening class conflicts—people begin searching for their own history," Waters said. "They want to learn about the generations that preceded them and about the struggles they lived through."

Waters also spoke at a July 26 Militant Labour Forum on "Cuba and Africa" together with Tom Baumann from the Young Socialists. Baumann is also the Socialist Workers candidate for Manhattan borough president in local elections in November.

Baumann spoke about the importance of supporting the international campaign to free five Cuban revolutionaries who have been unjustly held in U.S. jails for nearly 11 years. Ramón Labañino, René González, Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, and Fernando González, known internationally as the Cuban Five, were arrested in 1998 and convicted in a frame-up trial in 2001 of a range of trumped-up charges, including "conspiracy to commit espionage."

Baumann noted that three of the Five had been part of Cuba's internationalist mission, which took place from 1975–91, to help the Angolan people defeat invasions by the apartheid South African regime. "Their case is one more example of the U.S. government policy, consistent over 10 U.S. administrations, of punishing the people of Cuba for making and defending a socialist revolution," Baumann said.

Waters began her remarks with what is happening in the world today, saying, "This is the only framework within which to understand the changes in Africa and the international importance of the Cuban Revolution."

She commented on a big difference since her first visit to New Zealand and Australia in 1979. Back then, she said, the two imperialist countries felt like "European outposts sitting on stolen land. Now I feel like I'm in Asia."

It is important, she said, to counter the general portrayal in the imperialist countries of Africa as a continent



Militant photos by Bob Aiken

Militant Labour Forum on "Cuba and Africa" in Sydney, Australia, July 26. Top: Audience. Inset: Tom Baumann, Young Socialist, speaking. At right is Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press.



of nothing but "misery, poverty, and human violence."

Drawing on her experiences and observations from two reporting trips to Equatorial Guinea, Waters described how the discovery of oil and the construction of roads and other infrastructure needed to efficiently extract it are impacting the evolution of class relations in the country in important ways. Above all, she noted, alongside the development of a capitalist class you can see a working class beginning to emerge, drawn from around the world.

"You get an education in basic historical materialism," she said. "The pages of the *Communist Manifesto* come alive. This is what Marx and Engels described, how the spread of capitalism to every corner gives rise

to the modern working class." At the same time, she explained, the example of Cuba's internationalist aid points to a different future.

The hour-long discussion that followed helped bring the world into the meeting, with participants who had immigrated to Australia from China and Korea, Guatemala and El Salvador, Sudan and Somalia all joining in.

One person wanted to know what the speakers thought about "21st century socialism," a term used by Hugo Chávez, president of Venezuela, among others. Baumann and Waters explained that many who use the phrase counterpose the course of the class struggle in Venezuela to the Cuban Revolution. "They think they've

Continued on page 7

Veteran Chinese worker recalls fight against racism in Australia

BY LINDA HARRIS
AND RON POULSEN

SYDNEY, Australia—When he was 13 years old Arthur Gar-Lock Chang and his father came to Australia as indentured laborers. That was in 1934. After World War II began, Chang made his way to Sydney and joined the Chinese Youth League, a center for social, cultural, and political activity that just celebrated its 70th anniversary.

At a July 28 meeting here on "Chinese in Cuba" Chang told of his experiences growing up in Australia and fighting anti-Chinese discrimination. (See accompanying article on this page for report on tour about Chinese-Cuban generals and Chinese diaspora.) He described a little known chapter in the history of the labor movement here and of Chinese seamen in Australia.

"Fred Wong was a founding member of the Chinese Youth League," Chang said. "I worked with him during the war years." Chang explained that following the Japanese invasion of China the Youth League organized "aid for Chinese guerrillas [led by the Chinese Communist Party] behind Japanese lines. They needed medical supplies and we didn't rely on Chiang Kai-shek [the bourgeois nationalist leader]."

Chang described how Wong organized a large rally in the Sydney Town Hall under a big banner with a slogan of support for the Chinese guerrillas, not the nationalist army. The organizers of the rally took advantage of the fact that the Australian rulers were in their own war against Japanese impe-

rialism in the Pacific.

"I was an organizer of Chinese seamen during the war," Chang said. "I used to tell the wharfies [stevedores] 'You have to have armed struggle, else how can you make a revolution?' Without arms you cannot put the opposition down."

Through the Chinese Seamen's Union Chang helped seamen get housing and win work contracts. "There was a shortage of labor during the war years," he explained, "but after the war they wanted to deport all Asians." Even those who married Australians and had families here were deported, he said.

Under the "White Australia" policy [racist immigration controls from 1901 to 1973] the government "tried to deport me three times," Chang said, but he successfully fought the attempts "because I came before the war."

He described how after the war he had been active together with Wong in supporting the struggle for Indonesian independence from Dutch imperialism. The seamen's union joined the boycott against Dutch shipping. He also opposed Australia's involvement in the war against the Korean people. "And I'm still struggling—at 88," Chang said.

A few years ago he took his grandchildren back to visit their ancestral home in China. "Everything was very prosperous," he noted. "I think Cuba is going the right way—but is China going capitalist? The difference in Cuba is due to leadership," he concluded.



Militant/Bob Aiken

Waters and Ron Poulsen, to Waters's right, speak to Militant Labor Forum participants. Poulsen chaired meeting.

More on the Cuban Revolution...



Our History Is Still Being Written The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution

Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, and Moisés Sio Wong talk about the historic place of Chinese immigration to Cuba, as well as more than five decades of revolutionary action and internationalism, from Cuba to Angola, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. Through their stories the social and political forces that gave birth to the Cuban nation and still shape our epoch unfold. Also available in Spanish and Chinese. —\$20

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In historic speeches before the United Nations, Guevara and Castro address the peoples of the world, explaining why the U.S. government fears the example of the socialist revolution in Cuba and why Washington's effort to destroy it will fail. —\$17

View the entire 18-part series on the Cuban Revolution online or at a local distributor listed on page 5!



www.pathfinderpress.com

‘Working class needs to take political power!’

N.Y. socialist candidates offer working-class alternative to twin parties

Below is the text of the Socialist Workers Party flyer outlining the party’s campaign platform in the New York City elections this year.

The SWP is running three candidates in New York City. For mayor: Dan Fein, 64, a veteran trade unionist who works at a garment plant in Brooklyn. For public advocate: Maura DeLuca, 30, a unionist and sewing-machine operator. For Manhattan borough president: Tom Baumann, 23, formerly a meatpacking worker, now a student at Hunter College and active in the Young Socialists.

All three have submitted double the number of signatures required to appear on the city’s ballot.

World capitalism has entered into a depression that is part of the deepest social and economic crisis in living memory. The U.S. ruling-class families are expanding their wars in Afghanistan and Pakistan, substantially increasing the numbers of U.S. troops and the power and size of the military command structure in that region. At the same time, 130,000 U.S. troops remain in Iraq. At home, under the cover of the “war on terror,” the U.S. government is expanding police wiretapping against organizations and individuals as well as other assaults on workers’ rights.

Today millions are being thrown out of work as the capitalist rulers seek to make us—working people—pay for the crisis of their system. The ruling class is launching a frontal assault on basic living conditions of working people, from jobs and wages to pensions, health care, housing, and essential public services. This offensive has just barely begun.

The Socialist Workers candidates in New York are running against the capitalist class and their candidates in the Democratic and Republican parties, including Mayor Michael Bloomberg and his leading Democratic opponent, City Comptroller William Thompson.

The working class needs to answer this war on our class by organizing

DAN FEIN for New York mayor



Fein at meeting protesting Israeli invasion of Gaza February 10.

a revolutionary struggle to take state power out of the hands of the rulers. We must reorganize the economy and all social relations, from top to bottom, in the interests of workers and farmers.

The Socialist Workers candidates call for:

The immediate, unconditional withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

Defense of women’s right to choose abortion. The May 31 killing of Dr. George Tiller, who provided abortions in Wichita, Kansas, highlights the stakes in this battle.

Nationalization of the land and housing stock. This is the only way to guarantee working people inexpensive, attractive, and quality housing

MAURA DELUCA for public advocate



DeLuca, center, campaigns at Stella D’oro baked goods factory gate after strike July 8.

without fear of eviction by a landlord or foreclosure by a bank. It will prevent working farmers from being foreclosed on and losing their land.

The release of the Cuban Five: Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González, and René González. These five Cuban revolutionaries were framed up on conspiracy charges and have been locked up in U.S. jails for more than ten years.

We put forward immediate demands to protect working people in face of the devastation the ruling class is organizing and to unify the working class in struggle:

Guaranteed unemployment compensation at union scale for all workers until they find a job.

TOM BAUMANN for Manhattan borough president



Baumann speaks at rally against New York City budget cuts at Hunter College April 13.

Increase the federal minimum wage to union scale.

A federally funded crash public works program to put millions to work at union scale to build schools, roads, and public transportation.

No cuts in medical benefits for any worker laid off from their job—guaranteed lifetime medical care and retiree pensions for all.

Immediate, unconditional legalization of all undocumented workers.

End all income taxes on workers.

For more information on the campaign, or to make a donation, contact or visit the campaign office at 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, New York, NY 10018. Tel.: (212) 736-2540. E-mail: newyorkswp@mac.com.

Socialist candidates file for ballot status in N.Y.

Continued from front page

erty based on the majority’s needs, not the profits of a few.

The socialist mayoral candidate pointed to Cuban working people who made a socialist revolution 50 years ago that put an end to capitalist exploitation. “The Cuban Revolution today remains an example for workers and farmers in this country and worldwide, which is why the U.S. rulers hate and fear Cuba,” Fein said.

Fein said that the Socialist Workers candidates fight alongside fellow working people against employer and government assaults on jobs, wages, social benefits, and rights. The socialist campaign is advancing immediate demands that include: guaranteed unemployment compensation at union scale for all workers until they find a job; a federally funded public works program to create jobs; immediate, unconditional legalization of all undocumented workers; and lifetime medical care and retirement pensions for all. (See campaign platform on this page).

In his statement to the press, Baumann condemned the spreading imperialist wars abroad. “Washington has 177,000 troops in Iraq and Afghanistan,” he said. “The Socialist Workers Party calls for the withdrawal of all U.S. and allied troops from Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and elsewhere. We also demand the immediate closing of all U.S. prison camps, including Guantánamo.”

He called for the unconditional de-

fense of a woman’s right to choose abortion. Baumann said the socialist candidates “advocate quotas in hiring, promotions, and university admissions for Blacks, Latinos, Asians, and women.”

Following the filing of their petitions, Fein and Baumann taped video statements for television in New York City that will also be available on the Internet. The three-minute spots will be aired several times, 10 days before the election, on NYC-TV, a city-owned cable channel and Web site. They also

submitted biographies and platform statements about the New York socialist campaign for the Campaign Finance Board voters guide. This printed piece of literature will feature responses from all of the candidates on the ballot, and will be mailed to hundreds of thousands of working people and others who vote in the municipal elections.

The socialist candidates expect the New York Board of Elections to inform them by Monday, August 17, that they will be on the November ballot.

Forums on Cuban Revolution

Continued from page 6

found a better road—how to make a revolution while the capitalist class continues in place with its economic and military power unbroken,” said Waters. The world capitalist crisis that has begun, with the devastating consequences it will have, will show once again that there is “no third road for the working people of Venezuela, Latin America, and the world,” she added.”

In response to a question about relations between Equatorial Guinea and China, Waters noted the extensive trade relations that exist and China’s development loans to Equatorial Guinea. Chinese construction companies almost exclusively use workers brought in from China, however, as opposed to hiring Equatorial Guineans, and the development of anti-Chinese prejudic-

es is already evident, she said.

Waters explained that a few Chinese doctors help staff the hospital in Bata, the mainland capital, but don’t provide medical services throughout the country as the Cuban volunteers do. Most who are called “Chinese doctors” in Equatorial Guinea are in reality Chinese businessmen who have opened pharmacies that they call clinics.

Waters added that one of the problems the Cuban doctors faced was the fear many Equatorial Guineans have of going to a hospital. They go to their traditional healers first. When they get to a hospital it is sometimes too late to save lives. This underlined the importance of the 122 Equatorial Guinean doctors who have already graduated from the Cuban-staffed medical school in Bata, Waters said.

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Imperialist hands off Korea!

The captain and 38 crew members of the North Korean cargo ship *MV Mu San* should be released immediately and the ship allowed to return to its course. The Indian Coast Guard seized the ship August 5 under newly imposed UN sanctions against North Korea. After two days of interrogating the crew and “inspecting” the ship, which was carrying sugar, Indian authorities have turned them over to police and intelligence officials for more of the same.

Washington and its imperialist allies justify such acts of piracy in the name of preventing “nuclear proliferation.” With imperial arrogance the U.S. government claims the right to dictate to North Korea, Iran, and other semicolonial nations under what conditions they may have access to even the knowledge needed to enable them to meet their energy needs, which are indispensable to the development of industry and culture.

While the U.S. government postures as the protector of the world against the horror of nuclear war, it along with the governments of the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China—the five permanent members of the UN Security Council—command by far the world’s largest nuclear arsenals. Sixty-four years ago the U.S. imperialists became the first and only ones to use this terrible weapon against hundreds of thousands of civilians in the atomic bombing of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Far from making the world safer, the imperialist-led nuclear nonproliferation programs are thinly veiled cover for Washington’s vigilant campaign of threats against North Korea and others who won’t bow to its dictates. It is the U.S. government that introduced and maintains nuclear weapons in Korea’s region along with thousands of troops on Korean soil, and most recently deployed a modern antiballistic missile network in the Pacific aimed at North Korea.

The workers and farmers of Korea beat back Washington’s brutal 1950–53 assault, known as the Korean War, registering the first military defeat of U.S. imperialism. For decades Washington has sponsored the government in South Korea and maintained the forced partition of the peninsula as a punishment.

Washington maintains its garrison force of 28,000 troops in southern Korea not only against the north but also against the inevitable resistance that will grow among working people in the south of the peninsula. The capitalist rulers in South Korea and their patrons in Washington got a glimpse of that resistance in the months-long plant occupation by workers at the Ssangyong auto factory opposing layoffs.

Working people the world over and all opponents of imperialist war should say no to Washington’s threats against North Korea. All U.S. troops out of Korea now!

Thousands not counted in jobless figures

Continued from front page

Times Web site, Floyd Norris, chief financial correspondent for the paper, analyzes some aspects of the latest official employment report. He points out that the recent data unexpectedly shows that the auto manufacturing industry officially added some 28,200 jobs last month. It turns out that these numbers are seasonally adjusted, meaning that the BLS adjusts the raw figures to account for anticipated ebbs or flows in the job market.

In the auto industry official statistics anticipate layoffs in the summer as a result of yearly plant shutdowns for retooling, making the official unemployment rate lower. Not considering seasonal adjustment, reports Norris, the auto industry last month in fact *lost* 8,600 jobs.

One of the most striking signs that the unemployment situation is far from on the rebound is that long-term unemployment is reaching unprecedented levels. As of last month, the number of people officially un-

employed for 15 weeks or more was 7.88 million—up 74 percent since December and the highest figure ever recorded.

For the first time since Washington began recording these figures, in 1948, more than a third of the unemployed have been out of work for at least 27 weeks. It now takes an average of more than 25 weeks for an unemployed worker to find another job, up from less than 20 weeks as of the end of last year.

Unemployment benefits are running out for many of these jobless workers. According to projections by the National Employment Law Project, some half million unemployed will have exhausted their benefits by the end of September and that figure will rise to 1.5 million by the end of the year.

Despite these facts, some in Washington are already optimistic about an end to the capitalist depression. In an August 7 press conference, President Barack Obama said his administration has “rescued our economy from catastrophe.”

Health-care plan boon for business

Continued from front page

and some medical associations opposed. Instead legislators are proposing a “non-profit” cooperative to sell insurance “to compete” with private industry.

The Senate Finance Committee tightened eligibility for subsidies to help pay insurance premiums and reduced assistance for people who qualify.

All the House and Senate bills on health-care reform require individuals to purchase insurance or face a fine. According to one proposal in the Senate a person could avoid the fine if the cost of the cheapest available health plan was more than 15 percent of the person’s income. “If a family making \$70,000 has to pay 15 percent of its income for insurance [\$10,500], that could be a real hardship,” said Judith Solomon with the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

Along with negotiations between Democratic and Republican leaders in Congress, the Obama administration has also been making behind-the-scene deals with health-care industry lobbyists to win support for the plan. On August 7, White House officials backed away from what a drug industry representative had said earlier that week was a “rock-solid deal” to protect drug companies from covering further costs of the health-care plan.

Representatives of the drug industry announced that they had reached an agreement with the White House in June to contribute a maximum of \$80 bil-

lion over 10 years toward the \$1 trillion the plan is estimated to cost. In return the White House would block any clauses in the bills that would allow the government to negotiate lower drug prices or require additional price rebates.

The White House denied the existence of such a deal and pharmaceutical companies were alarmed to see that a House version of the bill still included the clauses.

After threatening to reverse their support to the plan, drug industry representatives were backing it once again after the White House removed the price rebates in the House bill, reported the *New York Times*.

Much of the cost of implementing a “health reform” package will be covered by squeezing hundreds of billions of dollars out of Medicare. Obama said that the plan is “not going to reduce Medicare benefits. What it’s going to do is to change how those benefits are delivered so that they’re more efficient.”

In fact, many are finding out that an increasing number of physicians refuse to accept new patients covered by Medicare because they claim Medicare payments are too low.

A proposed 20 percent cut by Medicare in payments for radiation therapy is before Congress. An American Society for Radiation Oncology survey said it would result in many cancer centers, especially in rural areas, closing or consolidating operations.

Justice Sotomayor not gain for workers

BY CINDY JAQUITH

Sonia Sotomayor has become the first Hispanic, and the third woman, to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court. “An inspiring ascent, a historic vote,” read the editorial headline in the August 7 *Washington Post* following her confirmation the previous day by a 68-31 vote in the Senate.

In the last decade the U.S. rulers have substantially increased the numbers of Blacks, Latinos, and women in the government, its legal system, the officer caste of the armed forces, and the police, with the aim making those bodies more effective tools in preparation to face growing resistance by working people to the effects of economic and social crisis.

In the final Senate debate on her nomination, every Democrat voted in favor of confirming her, as did nearly a quarter of Republicans, including such prominent Republican senators as Mel Martinez, Lindsay Graham, and Lamar Alexander.

Rightist forces who sought to prevent her confirmation, focusing on comments or rulings she had made in the past on affirmative action, remained isolated.

“There is no reason for the business community to be concerned” about Sotomayor, Lauren Goldman, of the law firm Mayer Brown, which has represented big-business interests from Wachovia to Dow Chemical, told the *Wall Street Journal*. The *Journal* noted approvingly Sotomayor’s “occasional siding with corporate defendants.” It gave as an example her rejection of some class-action lawsuits, often resorted to by workers trying to collectively wring some justice out of the capitalist legal system.

Sotomayor ruled against the Center for Reproductive Rights, which had challenged the Bush administration’s “Global Gag Rule” that prohibited overseas organizations from receiving U.S. government funds if they provided abortion services or openly supported abortion rights. In another case she refused to suppress crack cocaine seized as “evidence” during a police raid that used a warrant which had expired more than a year earlier.

At her confirmation hearings, Sotomayor downplayed comments she once made that she was “an affirmative action baby” who only got into Princeton University and Yale Law School through affirmative action programs. She said she now regrets that she may have offended some people with a comment made in 2001, frequently cited by rightists, that “a wise Latina woman with the richness of her experience would more often than not reach a better conclusion than a white male who hasn’t lived that life.”

Liberal Democrats at the hearings emphasized Sotomayor’s “mainstream” record as a judge. Sen. Charles Schumer went so far as to tell Republican senators: “She has agreed with your Republican colleagues 95 percent of the time; she has ruled for the government in 83 percent of immigration cases [and] 92 percent of criminal cases; she has denied race claims in 83 percent of all cases; she has split evenly in a variety of employment cases.”

A look at the record of the Supreme Court shows that its racial and gender makeup has had no effect on how that body rules on issues of race or class justice, any more than has the ratio of “conservative” judges to “liberal” judges. That body’s decisions are made strictly on what it perceives is in the interests of the billionaire families it serves at any given time.

It was in 1973, under the administration of Richard Nixon, that the Supreme Court overturned laws outlawing abortion. This followed the civil rights battles by Blacks in the 1950s and early 1960s that had a profound impact on other oppressed layers of the population, from Puerto Ricans and Chicanos to women.

As more women entered the work force and achieved a measure of economic independence, their self-confidence grew and barriers to their full emancipation—such as laws criminalizing abortion—became increasingly intolerable. The needs of the expanding capitalist system for more workers also required that women have more flexibility to decide when, or if, to have children. Although the high court has since taken steps to restrict abortion rights, the relationship of class forces is what holds it back from overturning its 1973 decision today.