

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Communists fight to close gap in conditions of world's toilers
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE VOL. 75/NO. 14 APRIL 11, 2011

Workers stand up to antiunion law in Egypt

BY PAUL MAILHOT

CAIRO, Egypt, March 29—Workers organizations and other groups that helped lead the revolt to topple the hated Hosni Mubarak regime are denouncing a draft law making it a crime to organize strikes or other protests that interrupt businesses or affect the economy. Violations are punishable by jail time and stiff fines. The measure, proposed by the Egyptian cabinet March 23, is yet to be approved by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces.

Report from Cairo

If Prime Minister Essam Sharaf's government "takes away our right to protest, sit in, and strike," Saud Omar, a trade unionist in the Suez Canal Authority, told the local press, "in the near future he will take from us our right to organize and all the other basic rights both civil and political."

Working people and youth this reporter talked to since arriving here yesterday say the proposed law is certain to draw further protests. They are looking to a big turnout for an April 1 demonstration
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UK union protest draws hundreds of thousands

Government austerity begins to bite



Workers, students, others protest government austerity measures in London, March 26.

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON—Hundreds of thousands demonstrated here March 26 against government cuts to jobs and welfare. The Trades Union Congress, which called the protest, said 400,000 participated. Police put the figure at more than 250,000.

"I've not seen a union march like this since I arrived from Ghana 27 years ago," said Kojo Acheampong,

one of 100 members of the Bakers Food and Allied Workers Union who marched behind their union banner.

Workers in the public sector were predominant. Among the larger contingents were Unison, health and pub-
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U.S. rulers extend war: Hands off Libya!

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

While President Barack Obama talks about a military drawdown, Washington is extending imperialist air assaults against Libya.

In the first 10 days since the attacks began March 19, nearly 200 Tomahawk cruise missiles have been fired, all but 7 from U.S. warships. U.S. forces have flown about 370 attack missions, dropping more than 450 precision-guided munitions, with another 147 dropped by other governments.

Along with Washington, the most aggressive powers conducting the assault have been Paris and London. The European governments of Spain, Denmark, Italy, Greece, the Netherlands, Romania, and Belgium are backing the attacks. Arab League members Qatar and the United Arab Emirates have sent warplanes.

The imperialist airstrikes come in the midst of a civil war raging in Libya following protests to end Moam-
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Readership drive will continue to expand reach of workers' paper

BY PAUL MAILHOT

From Keokuk, Iowa, to Cairo, Egypt, working-class resistance is opening new doors for circulation of the *Militant* newspaper, a socialist weekly that working people increasingly see as a useful tool in their struggles. Since the mobilizations began in Wisconsin to defend public

workers and their unions in early February, sales of the working-class press have picked up considerably.

The *Militant's* subscriber base has increased by 620 since early February. Many have also bought *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes. A
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Iowa union rally answers call to 'bring Madison to Keokuk'

BY HELEN MEYERS
 AND REBECCA WILLIAMSON

KEOKUK, Iowa—Responding to the call to "bring Madison to Keokuk," 600 people rallied here March 26 in support of locked-out members of Local 48G of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers (BCTGM) union. The 237

unionists have been locked out of the corn-processing plant owned by Roquette America since September 28.

Workers and their supporters joined the action from six different states—Illinois, Wisconsin, Missouri, Kentucky, Minnesota, and Iowa. Local 48G workers had publicized the march and rally by going to protests against antiunion legislation in Madison, Wisconsin, and in Des Moines and Ottumwa, Iowa, extending solidarity and inviting workers to Keokuk.

Jason White, 35, a gluten operator at Roquette, was at the Ottumwa solidarity rally. "You have to fight for
Continued on page 7

Supreme Court rejects appeal for Troy Davis on death row

BY LISA POTASH

ATLANTA—On March 28 the U.S. Supreme Court rejected Georgia death row inmate Troy Davis's appeal, potentially clearing the way for the state of Georgia to execute him. An international campaign has forced the state to stay the execution three times.

Davis was framed on charges of killing a police officer in Savannah, Georgia, in 1989. Since the 1991 trial seven of nine witnesses pressured by the police to testify against Davis retracted or changed their testimony.

Davis's supporters are preparing an international day of protest.

Special offers with *Militant* subscription

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

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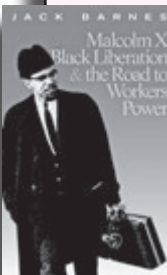
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Pathfinder Press

Also Inside:

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Two of Cuban Five file briefs for new hearings

BY DOUG NELSON

Lawyers for two of five Cuban revolutionaries framed up by the U.S. government and convicted in 2001 on various “conspiracy” charges recently submitted legal briefs requesting new hearings.

An affidavit filed March 21 presents new evidence refuting the trumped-up charge of “conspiracy to commit murder” slapped on one of the five, Gerardo Hernández.

Another brief filed earlier in March by lawyers for Antonio Guerrero points to the government’s payment of local journalists to taint the trial with prejudicial articles. (Both are available at www.freethefive.org or www.thecuban5.org.)

The Cuban Five, as they are known, had been tracking the activities of Cuban American paramilitary groups in Miami with a long history of armed assaults and acts of sabotage against Cuba—activities tacitly supported by Washington.

Hernández was sentenced to life on murder conspiracy charges for the Cuban government’s decision on Feb. 24, 1996, to shoot down two hostile aircraft that had repeatedly and provocatively invaded its territory, despite repeated warnings from Havana. The planes were piloted by the counterrevolutionary Cuban American group Brothers to the Rescue (BTTR).

Hernández is now requesting the opportunity to present testimony at a new, separate trial on the murder conspiracy charge. In his affidavit, he says his previous court-appointed counsel did not explain to him his right to separate out this charge, which would have allowed

him and others to testify on his behalf without their statements possibly being used against them on other charges.

In the 2001 trial, the defense presented evidence, including testimony from a retired U.S. Air Force colonel, that the BTTR planes were shot down inside Cuban territory. But the Miami jury bought the U.S. government’s claims that it occurred over international waters.

The defense, however, did not present testimony to prove that, regardless of where the incident occurred, Hernández did not know it was going to happen, and therefore could not have played a role in any alleged “plot.” In his new statement, Hernández lays out what he would have testified to had he been given the opportunity. He explains why he could not have had foreknowledge of the shootdown and demonstrates how the prosecution misrepresented and twisted evidence to boost its speculative claims.

In addition to Hernández and Guerrero, the Cuban Five include Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, and René González. Hernández, Guerrero, and Labañino were all convicted of “conspiracy to commit espionage” for which they received life sentences. For the two bogus conspiracy accusations and other charges Hernández received two life sentences plus 15 years.

In face of an international campaign for justice, a district court commuted the extraordinary life sentences for Guerrero and Labañino in 2009 to 21 years and 10 months and 30 years, respectively. But Hernández’s life sentence for the same charge was left standing on the pretext that, given his other life sen-



Militant/Eric Simpson

Sept. 13, 2010, picket line in San Francisco. Briefs filed by two of Cuban Five request new hearings based on violations of defendants’ rights during 2001 Miami trial.

tence, it would be “irrelevant to the time he will serve in prison,” making any breakthrough on the murder conspiracy frame-up particularly significant in the legal battle for his freedom.

The other memorandum, filed by Guerrero’s attorneys March 5, presents evidence that the U.S. government secretly paid at least 10 influential journalists in Miami “hundreds of thousands of dollars to advance an anti-Cuba propaganda campaign in the very community in which the defendants were to be tried.” The *Miami Herald* first reported the media operation in an article titled, “10 Miami Journalists Take U.S. Pay,” published in September 2006.

During the trial, the memorandum

states, the paid-for reporters professed the defendant’s guilt before and during the trial, conjured wild, fictitious stories about supposed Cuban conspiracies, misrepresented purported evidence against the defendants, and published prejudicial evidence that the court ruled was inadmissible.

The charge takes on added weight given the government’s successful effort to thwart defendants’ efforts to change the venue from Miami, a city well known as the center of anti-Cuba counterrevolutionary activity.

Thus far the government has refused to comply with Freedom of Information Act requests to disclose its records related to the propaganda campaign.

South Dakota law forces women to get antiabortion ‘counseling’

BY CINDY JAQUITH

A bill was signed into law in South Dakota March 22 that forces a woman to sit through “counseling” at a “pregnancy help center” before she can exercise her legal right to have an abortion. The state government officially registers these “pregnancy help centers,” which are nothing but offices set up by antiabortion forces to intimidate and guilt-bait women who have decided to terminate their pregnancies.

The bill also requires a 72-hour waiting period—the longest in the country—between the time the woman sees a doctor and chooses to have the abortion and day the procedure is actually performed. For women in South Dakota this actually means a week of waiting,

since abortion services in the state are provided only one day per week by doctors who fly from Minnesota into South Dakota’s only abortion facility, in Sioux Falls.

In Ohio, the state legislature is considering a bill that directly challenges the 1973 Supreme Court ruling that states may not restrict abortion until the fetus is viable, considered to be 24 weeks. The Ohio bill outlaws abortion once a heartbeat can be detected from the fetus, which can be as early as six weeks.

The number of abortion providers continues to decline, especially in rural areas. In 1976, there were only 10 states where 90 percent or more of the counties had no abortion provider. As of 2005 that was the case in 23 states.



Defend women’s right to abortion

Abortion rights are central not only to the fight for the full emancipation of women, but to forging a united and fighting labor movement. Read in the ‘Militant’ about the fight for women’s rights as part of working-class struggles worldwide.



Militant/Natalie Bombaro

Abortion rights demonstrators in Philadelphia February 26 also joined labor rally there the same day.

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France: Send 76 euros for one year to Diffusion du Militant, P.O. Box 175, 23 rue Lecourbe, 75015 Paris.

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant*’s views. These are expressed in editorials.

Readership drive

Continued from front page

half-price special for the book with a subscription was launched in early March.

So this year’s annual spring circulation campaign to boost the *Militant*’s readership is already under way. Over the next three weeks we will keep up the momentum, culminating the effort with a six-week international *Militant* subscription drive with local goals between April 23 and June 6.

Socialist workers are expanding the reach of the *Militant* among workers, farmers, and young people at protest rallies, in working-class communities, in plants where they work, and at sales at factory gates. Workers engaged in union struggles and fights against government austerity measures are using the paper to build solidarity and explain the potential for working people to resist.

Militant supporters in California sold 48 subscriptions, 240 papers, and 24 copies of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* at a recent demonstration in Los Angeles in solidarity with the struggle in Wisconsin and to protest attacks on the working class in California.

“Solidarity is all we have,” said Edward Lane, a school bus driver from Compton and member of the Teamsters who got the subscription-book combination. “It blew me out of the water that you are here with that book,” he said. “I’ve heard about it, and now I really want to look at the paper too.”

“Your paper contains the kind of information we want to put on a new labor website we’re organizing,” said Sal, a young Teamster who works for UPS in Ontario, California.

Participants at a massive union rally in London March 26 were drawn to the *Militant*’s lead article calling for an end to imperialist assaults on Libya, as well as to coverage of working-class struggles in the U.S. Midwest. More than 380 left with the paper in their hands. Thirty subscribed, 15 of whom also got a copy of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*. “I didn’t know

much about this demonstration until a few days ago,” said subscriber Prithvi Peddimsetti, a 19-year-old student at Coulsdon College in south London. “But I’m very glad I came.”

Sixty-six people picked up the *Militant* at a rally in Keokuk, Iowa, of some 600 in solidarity with grain millers fighting a lockout by Roquette America. Twenty signed up for subscriptions (see article below).

Some 100 copies of the paper and 10 subscriptions were sold at a March 24 rally for immigrant rights in Atlanta, along with nine books on revolutionary working-class politics.

Ten single copies and two subscriptions were sold at a Cesar Chavez Day parade of 100 in Houston. Donald Cotter, who bought the paper, said he and other members of the Seamen’s International Union were there to “back those fighting for their unions. Workers all have to stick together now.”

Actions in Ohio and elsewhere April 4—combining the anniversary of Martin Luther King’s assassination with protests against antilabor attacks—provide another opportunity to respond with the working-class press.

A team of socialist workers and supporters of the communist movement from the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Lebanon, and France are now in Cairo, Egypt, for the Tahrir Square Book Fair. This reporter is among those helping to organize the effort to learn about developments in politics and the class struggle since the overthrow of the Hosni Mubarak regime, meet workers and youth involved in that fight, and introduce them to the perspectives of the communist movement through sales of the *Militant* and Pathfinder books.

Distributors of the paper around the world will be taking quotas for the April 23–June 6 *Militant* subscription drive. The goal is to sell 2,000 subscriptions during the six-week campaign. When added to the hundreds already sold, plus a few hundred more sold before the drive begins, the total for the spring will amount to some 3,000.

Sales of ‘Militant’ begin at Cairo book fair



Militant

CAIRO, Egypt—American University students at Tahrir Square Book Fair here March 30 check out the *Militant*. These students were active in the fight to get rid of Egyptian dictator Hosni Mubarak. When they saw pictures of workers’ protests in the United States, one commented, “That’s not much different than what we are doing in Egypt.” A team of socialists from the United States, France, Lebanon, United Kingdom, and Canada is at the four-day fair, introducing people to the *Militant* and Pathfinder books. Paul Mailhot, who is organizing the team, is at center.

Several books that will help readers better understand the fight for a socialist revolution are being offered to those buying a *Militant* subscription this spring. In addition to *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions*, also by Barnes, will also be available for \$10. *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* is a handbook in revolutionary working-class politics for militants engaged in labor battles today looking to learn lessons from hard-fought union struggles at the opening of

the employers’ antilabor offensive in the mid-1970s.

In addition, *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?* by Mary-Alice Waters will be \$5, and *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: The Fraud of Education Reform under Capitalism* by Jack Barnes will be \$2.

Norton Sandler from Los Angeles, Jonathan Silberman from London, Janice Lynn from Atlanta, Jacquie Henderson from Houston, and Rebecca Williamson from Des Moines, Iowa, contributed to this article.

\$110,000 Militant Fund begins

BY PAUL MAILHOT

Along with the subscription campaign the *Militant* is appealing to its readers to help finance publication of the paper with a \$110,000 fund. The Militant Fund will be an eight-week campaign and run from April 2 through May 30.

The Militant Fund is being organized in the same spirit of reaching out as the subscription campaign. Workers and

youth who value what the *Militant* offers—solidarity with labor struggles, coverage of world politics from a revolutionary communist perspective, and a fighting stance against capitalist wars and austerity—will want to make a generous contribution to support the paper.

As part of deciding on a quota, local areas should consider how many new subscribers to the *Militant* can be won to contribute to the Militant Fund.

‘Militant’ reader likes knowing about other union struggles

BY REBECCA WILLIAMSON

KEOKUK, Iowa, March 26—Supporters of the *Militant* joined the march and rally here today in solidarity with grain millers locked out by Roquette America. The *Militant* has featured this fight by members of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers, and Grain Millers International Union (BCTGM) Local 48G since it began nearly six months ago.

Forty-six participants picked up copies of the paper; 20 signed up for subscriptions. And four decided to take advantage of the special offer to get the book *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes for half price with a subscription.

“I like the *Militant* because I like to know about other union struggles, not just in one area or nation but the world,” said Wade Kehler, 51, a locked-out wet

corn mill operator and subscriber.

Among the workers who came in solidarity were seven members of United Steelworkers Local 7-669 fighting a lockout at Honeywell’s uranium processing plant in Metropolis, Illinois. Three of them, including local president Darrell Lillie, were already subscribers. After carefully reading the coverage on their fight in the *Militant*, Lillie commented that the paper is the only news source that truthfully reports on workers’ struggles. Three more steelworkers signed up for subscriptions on the spot.

“I sat down with John, a locked out 48G member, and his wife Cheryl to talk,” said *Militant* supporter Maggie Trowe. “When I pulled out the paper, they said, ‘Oh, we read that. It comes to our house.’ I asked if they needed to renew their subscription. ‘We did,’ they replied. ‘For a year.’”

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Capitalism Is Responsible for the Social Disaster in Japan. Speaker: James Harris, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., April 8, 7:30 p.m. Suggested donation: \$5. 4025 S. Western Ave. Tel.: (323) 295-2600.

San Francisco

Popular Uprising in North Africa and the Mideast: No to U.S. Assault on Libya! Fri., April 8, 7:30 p.m. 5482 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Celebration of the 1961 Cuban Victory at Bay of Pigs. Speaker: Doug Nelson, Martin Koppel, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., April 9. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 307 W 36th St., 10th floor. Tel.: (212) 736-2540.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

Continuing Solidarity and the Way Forward for the Labor Movement. Sat., April 9. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 5418 Rainer Ave. S Tel.: (206) 323-1755.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

Capitalist Disaster Devastates Japan. Speaker: Joanne Kuniansky. Sat., April 9, 6 p.m. Donation: \$4 waged, \$2 unwaged. 281-287 Beamish St. (upstairs), Campsie. Tel.: (02) 9718-9698.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

50 Years of Socialist Revolution: Challenges Facing Cuba in Today’s World. Sat., April 9, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5 waged, \$2 unwaged. 4/125 Grafton Rd. Tel.: (09) 369-1223.

—CALENDAR—

CALIFORNIA

San Francisco

Will the Real Terrorist Please Stand Up? A film by Saul Landau about the Cuban Five. Also live music by the Cuban Cowboys. Sat., April 16, 7 p.m., Brava Theater. 2781 24th St. Tickets \$15. Sponsored by International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban 5. Tel.: (510) 219-0092.

MINNESOTA

St. Paul

The Day Diplomacy Died. A documentary by Bernie Dwyer and Roberto Ruiz Rebo. Sun., April 17, 2 p.m. John B. Davis Lecture Hall Student Center. Macalaster College. Snelling and Grand Avenues.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Will the Real Terrorist Please Stand Up? A film by Saul Landau about the Cuban Five. Wed., April 6, 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. West End Cinema, 2301 M St. NW. Sponsored by DC Metro Coalition to Free the Cuban Five and Institute for Policy Studies. Tel.: (202) 787-5229.

U.S. rulers extend war

Continued from front page

mar Gadhafi's four-decade-long tyrannical rule. The aim of Washington and imperialist powers in Europe is to stabilize capitalist rule and protect their interests and investments in Libya and the region.

The U.S. military will "continue to do the lion's share" of specialized missions like flying aerial refueling tankers and surveillance planes, Vice Adm. William Gortney, director of the U.S. Joint Staff, told the media March 25. Plans are in the works to use Air Force's AC-130 gunships armed with cannons, as well as helicopters and drones.

In appearances on several Sunday talk shows March 27, Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said that Washington's military intervention could go on for months or longer. Gates and Clinton "say it may last awhile," as a *New York Times* headline put it.

The Obama administration is considering whether to supply arms to the opposition forces, a move strongly backed by French president Nicolas Sarkozy.

The airstrikes on Gadhafi's ground forces and equipment enabled opposition forces in the civil war to briefly retake several key cities in eastern Libya, including Brega and Ras Lanuf, where two major oil refineries are located. But Gadhafi's forces drove the rebels back.

Gains by the opposition may be fleeting, noted Gen. Carter Ham, head of the U.S. Africa Command. The Libyan regime's firepower on the ground "still

vastly overmatches opposition forces militarily," he told the *Times*.

Much of the artillery deployed by Gadhafi was supplied to his regime by some of the very imperialist governments now bombarding it. Since 2004, when the European Union lifted its arms embargo, EU states sold \$1.5 billion worth of arms to Gadhafi. Last year Paris and Rome were in the midst of negotiating further modernizing of Libya's weaponry. Prior to this year's protests, the Obama White House itself had approved \$77 million for armored troop carriers for Tripoli.

"There's no solution unless you put boots on the ground," retired army general Jay Garner told the *Wall Street Journal*. "That's the dilemma the president and everyone else are realizing."

Obama in his nationwide address on Libya March 28 spoke against this option. "If we tried to overthrow Gadhafi by force, our coalition would splinter. We would likely have to put U.S. troops on the ground," the president said. "We went down that road in Iraq. . . . That is not something we can afford to repeat in Libya."

NATO assumes command

Military command for enforcing the no-fly zone over Libya is being taken over by NATO March 30. The U.S. Africa Command had been in charge.

Lt. Gen. Charles Bouchard from Canada will command the NATO operations, serving under the direction of top U.S. military officials. Washington



AP Photo/Francois Mori

French fighter jet takes off for bombing mission to Libya from air base in Corsica, March 24.

is the dominant power within the NATO military alliance. NATO's Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, currently U.S. admiral James Stavridis, is a post always held by a U.S. officer.

Handing command over to NATO has been fraught with controversy among rival imperialist regimes, each seeking to advance the class interests of its own capitalist rulers. Washington, London, and Italy argued for NATO to take over.

Paris, which rejoined NATO in 2009 after 43 years of maintaining its own separate military structure, sought to establish a joint Anglo-French military command instead. Under pressure from Washington and London, however, French president Sarkozy dropped the proposal.

For the imperialist government in Paris, the intervention in Libya "is a way to reassert to Europe, but particularly to Germany, that France still leads the Continent on foreign and military affairs," wrote Stratfor, a private intelligence service. It's aimed "as a counter to Germany's overwhelming economic and political power in the European Union."

Berlin, for its part, has taken its distance from the military attacks on Libya. It withdrew four of its warships from NATO command in the Mediterranean Sea. Instead, the government is shipping 300 additional troops to Afghanistan.

As the imperialist rulers continue their assault and vie for position against each other, working people the world over must demand, "Hands off Libya!"

Workers protest antiunion law in Egypt

Continued from front page

against government measures to curtail rights and cut down space for political activity. The reactions to the anti-strike law, including from some capitalist forces worried the move may boomerang, have evoked "clarifications" from the government.

Egypt's justice minister, Mohamed Abdel-Azizi-el-Ghuindi, held a press conference March 27 saying the new law "does not at all aim at depriving people of their right to assemble, organize strikes, express their opinion, or take part in the making of the country's future." He implored workers and others to get behind the measure on a "temporary" basis, in order to help get life "back to normal."

The justice minister said most strikes now are not by workers fighting for better conditions, but rather

by forces of the "counterrevolution," meaning backers of the Mubarak regime.

While the wave of strikes during and after the toppling of Mubarak has subsided, union actions continue. On March 29, 1,500 quarry workers marched through the streets of Suez demanding prosecution of corrupt managers. The company's board of directors subsequently met with workers' leaders and promised to meet their demands.

Following weeks of protests in

their workplace, hundreds of journalists rallied March 20 and March 27 in front of the Radio and TV Union headquarters in Maspero, demanding the resignation of media figures associated with the Mubarak regime. Workers are demanding the sacking of Sami El Sherif, the head of the union, in particular.

In a move to ease tensions, the Supreme Military Council, which is the ruling power here, announced March 28 that the nightly curfew is being eased. It will now begin at 2:00 a.m.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



April 11, 1986

The overthrow of the dictatorship of Jean-Claude Duvalier in Haiti on February 7 opened the door for the Haitian people to begin to participate in political life for the first time in decades.

Under the 29-year reign of terror, first of Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier and then of his son, Jean-Claude "Baby Doc"—both of whom dubbed themselves president-for-life—the country was run by a tiny exclusive clique of rich landowners and businessmen. The Duvalier dynasty brooked no opposition—most opponents were exiled, imprisoned, tortured, murdered, or some combination of these.

This set-up was largely financed by Washington and other imperialist powers, which poured \$200 million a year into Haiti.



April 10, 1961

The movement for a shorter work week with no reduction in take home pay as an answer to automation and chronic unemployment is gaining momentum within the labor movement. The New York City Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO, urged last month through its Shorter Work Week Committee that each of its affiliated unions set up a similar committee and organize meetings of its jobless members.

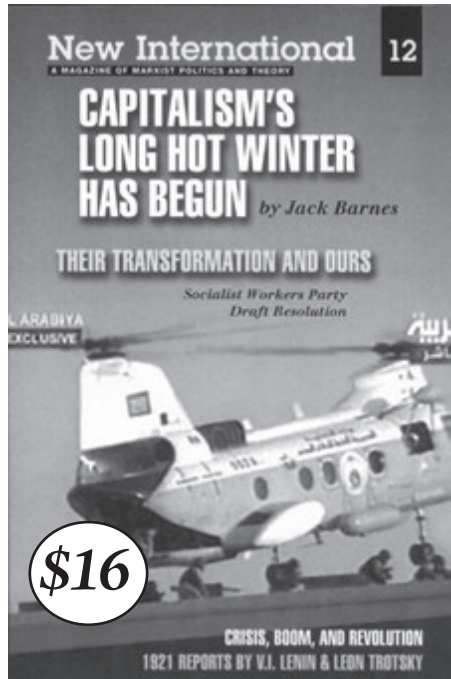
The National Maritime Union has set the shorter work week as its major bargaining goal for new deep-sea contracts to replace those which expire June 15. The NMU demand calls for the basic work week to be reduced from 40 to 30 hours. Seamen would stand the same watches they do now, with hours worked between 30 and 40 hours made up in paid time-off ashore so they could spend more time with their families.



April 11, 1936

Germany and Japan have struck a virtual bargain for joint action against the Soviet Union. This alliance, in preparation for several years and often reported consummated, was the outstanding development this week in an international diplomatic situation crammed with plans and counter-plans, notes and threats, offers and promises, under cover of which the powers of Europe are jockeying into position for war.

The frequent exchange of military and economic commissions between Japan and Germany during the last three years has not been for purposes of courtesy. Now that Germany has upset the European apperant by marching into the Rhineland and the crisis brought nearer, it is logical that Japan should seek means of correlating its own plans against the Soviet Union more closely with similar arrangements in Europe.



Pathfinderpress.com

Why communists fight to close gap in workers' conditions in imperialist, semicolonial worlds

Nuclear power *will* expand worldwide. Question is: Which class will rule?

BY STEVE CLARK

"Today there is an unfolding catastrophe in Japan brought on by capitalist greed," says reader Steve Halpern in a letter on page 9.

Yes, there is catastrophe. A 9.0-magnitude earthquake, the fourth biggest ever recorded, shook northeast Japan March 11, followed by a massive tsunami. By the Japanese government's own understated numbers, some 27,500 people are dead or missing. Entire coastal villages and towns were wiped out or severely

REPLY TO A READER

damaged, leaving few survivors to report the dead or missing. The real toll could be tens of thousands more.

The tsunami's "progress was unstoppable and its vengeance was swift," wrote David Pilling in London's *Financial Times* March 26. "The water picked up houses and boats and cars and people," he said, reporting from the port city of Ofunato. "It then sucked back before lunging at the town again, the debris in its churning water now transformed into lethal weapons that smashed through walls and metal and teeth and bones."

The devastating social consequences were multiplied not just by capitalist greed, as Halpern says, but by the very way the capitalist system works. The way capitalism always has worked, always will work, and only *can* work—by serving the needs of the propertied ruling families to maximize profits, at the expense of working people and society as a whole.

'Want to live on higher ground'

"I've seen many big tsunamis in my time," fisherman Tomoya Kumagai told the *Financial Times*. "I've had enough of it. From now, I want to live on higher ground."

But why do hundreds of thousands of people—largely working people and small shop owners—still inhabit low-lying coastal areas? In an island nation unduly exposed to earthquakes and tsunamis, why do so many still live at seas' edge?

Why? For the same reason some

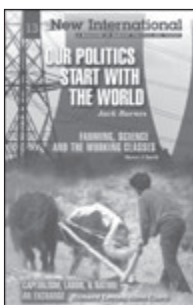
**NEW INTERNATIONAL
MAGAZINE OF MARXIST THEORY AND POLITICS**

Our Politics Start with the World

By Jack Barnes

"Electrification is an elementary precondition if modern industry and cultural life are to develop, and class-conscious workers fight for it to be extended to all the world's six billion people. This fight is a prime example of how proletarian politics, our politics, start with the world."

In No. 13 — \$14



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Tsunami destruction, Tagajo, Japan. Capitalist system that pushes working people to live in vulnerable lowlands also condemns hundreds of millions worldwide to live without electricity.

225,000 people died on flood plains in Indonesia, Thailand, and elsewhere after the earthquake and tsunami of 2004. For the same reason tens of thousands of working people in New Orleans, most of them Black, saw their neighborhoods destroyed in 2005 by the collapse of shoddily built levees in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

In each case, the capitalist rulers simply have nothing to gain financially and thus no interest in providing housing and transportation on better-protected higher ground, where these propertied families and well-to-do middle classes and professionals locate *their* homes.

But this social catastrophe ravaging northeast Japan merits nary a mention by Halpern. Instead, he narrows in on one relatively small facet: the blasts and radiation leaks at four of six reactors, and pools for spent-fuel rods, at the Fukushima nuclear plant. The plant's back-up electrical generators were knocked out by the tsunami.

Fukushima nuclear plant

For workers in the plant and residents nearby, this certainly is a disaster. According to the International Atomic Energy Agency, roughly 185,000 people have been evacuated from homes within 19 miles of the plant. Some 25 workers have suffered injuries from the explosion or radiation exposure; two are reported missing. A crane operator was killed in one of the plants as a result of the earthquake. (A report in the London *Telegraph* that four other workers had been killed, reported in the *Militant* last week, is unconfirmed and appears to be untrue.) And dangers from the failed cooling systems and radiation leaks continue.

Radioactive contamination has been found in coastal waters near the plant, as well as in milk and on spinach and other produce close by. Radiation has been reported in drinking water in the area, with consumption warnings in a few places, and with very low levels as far away as Tokyo.

As of late March, however, there was no evidence of a public health calamity. There may yet be radiation-related deaths or illnesses among workers at

the plant, as well as future cancer cases among people living close by. Such dangers, however, are not comparable to those at Chernobyl in the former Soviet Union in 1986, where casualties resulted from the Stalinist regime's extraordinary negligence, reflecting contempt for working people.

Unlike all but a handful of antiquated reactors in the world today, those at Chernobyl were designed with no secure containment vessel, resulting in an enormous release of radioactive material from the 1986 explosion. The big majority of deaths and cancer cases resulted from Moscow's inexcusable delay in evacuating people from what is now a 20-mile "uninhabitable zone" around the plant, and the regime's failure to inform residents not to eat vegetables or give milk to children in that area.

Yet, pointing to the Fukushima incident as the reason, Halpern urges rejecting the working-class course to expand electrification and global energy output—to advance industrial and social development—presented in "Our Politics Start with the World" by Jack Barnes. The article, printed in issue no. 13 of *New International* magazine, is based on a 2001 report adopted by the Socialist Workers Party, of which Barnes is national secretary. (The section Halpern cites was excerpted in the *Militant* last week: "What Social Class Can Meet Energy Needs of Billions?" in issue no. 13.)

Nothing to do with Japan

Halpern objects to Barnes's statement that "the communist movement does not have a position on nuclear power, for or against." Halpern suggests "an alternative position which is that today, given that imperialist property relations dominate the world, that nuclear power is inherently unsafe."

Halpern's proposal, in reality, has nothing to do with Japan. He could have made it any time since nuclear power plants went into operation in the mid-1950s. And Barnes's report was given in 2001, well after the 1979 breakdown at Three Mile Island in Pennsylvania or the 1986 Chernobyl explosion.

Barnes says that although coal "will

undoubtedly remain a power source for years," it is not "the solution to meeting humanity's long-term energy needs." Pollutants from burning coal account for many tens of thousands of premature deaths and serious illnesses each year worldwide. Thousands of coal miners are killed due to profit-driven unsafe mining practices and speedup.

For the foreseeable future, so-called renewable sources cannot provide the enormous quantity of energy needed, Barnes points out.

Sky is not falling

Halpern says "the unfolding catastrophe in Japan makes it clear that nuclear power is the most potentially dangerous form of electrical power." The trick word here is "potentially," since Halpern never explains why.

Even including the Chernobyl disaster, nuclear energy has taken a much smaller toll in human lives—and in destruction of the natural environment we depend on and that our social labor transforms—than mining and burning of coal, oil extraction and refining, or hydroelectric power and its (sometimes bursting) dams.

Nothing happening in Japan alters that fact. The sky is not falling.

Halpern proposes that the communist movement oppose the development and use of nuclear power so long as "imperialist property relations dominate the world." That is, until the victory of the world socialist revolution.

Shouldn't we also demand a halt to all off-shore oil drilling in light of last year's Deepwater Horizon rig explosion and massive oil spill, and more frequent but less publicized blowouts the world over? What about an end to use of coal? Or the shutdown of oil refineries, where there were blasts in 2010 alone in Washington, Texas, Mexico, the United Kingdom, and no doubt elsewhere?

Closing gap among toilers

What prospects do class-conscious workers in the United States and other imperialist centers offer our brothers and sisters in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America, on whom the blows of today's global capitalist crisis fall most heavily? Hundreds of millions still live without electricity—including 40 percent of the population on average in rural areas.

What do we say to working people in sub-Saharan Africa, where 85 percent in the countryside still have no access to electricity, and 40 percent even in cities? To the 50 percent of peasants and farm laborers living without power in rural South Asia, and the more than a quarter of those on the land in the Mideast and Latin America?

"Wait for the socialist revolution in the United States? Then you and your children can read at night? Then fresh water can be pumped into your homes? Then the burdens of food preparation, laundry, and other daily chores can be lightened for women?"

No, communist workers fight *to close the gap* in economic and social conditions of life and labor between working people in the industrially advanced imperialist countries of North America,

Continued on page 9

Thousands in Georgia call for immigrant rights

BY JANICE LYNN

ATLANTA—More than 6,000 people rallied at the capitol here March 24 to protest anti-immigrant bills before the state legislature. Many of those participating had organized with their coworkers to take the day off work.

House Bill 87 and Senate Bill 40 would require businesses to use the federal E-Verify system to confirm employees' work status and would allow state and local police to check the immigration status of anyone they stop for a suspected crime, including a traffic violation. Both bills have passed their respective chambers and are awaiting final resolution.

The Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights initiated the protest action.

Several dozen workers from the grocery chain H Mart negotiated with their boss to take the day off. They traveled together from Duluth, Georgia, to join the protest.

Three young workers from Honduras who work for a small gardening company said they told their boss they wanted to come to the protest and he gave them the day off. This was their first action. Aristides Argeta said, "Now if we are arrested, we pay a fine. With the new law, we would not be freed." He said he doesn't drive due to the risk of being stopped.

Albert Montano, a construction worker from El Salvador, and his two brothers came with a group of construction workers. "The law is not fair," Montano said. "We are less under the law."

The protesters held colorful handmade signs with messages such as "No Human Being is Illegal." The crowd chanted in Spanish "*¡Sí se puede!*" (Yes we can!) and "Undocumented, Un-

afraid" throughout the program. Organizers placed a large banner in front of the capitol steps that read, "Immigrants Are Welcome Here."

Many high school and middle school students also took the day off. Nallely Solis, 12, a student at Sequoia Middle School in Doraville, said many students from her school had come to the rally. Originally from Mexico, she said, "I want freedom from being discriminated against."

"We are awakening and willing to fight," said Aurora Flores, a restaurant worker originally from Mexico. "I say enough is enough." She brought along her U.S.-born coworker Adam Renner, who said, "I'm proud to support this fight. The more people that show up makes a difference."

Anthony Allen, 41, a road construction worker who is Black, was on his way to traffic court but stopped by the rally when he heard what it was about. "I work with Latinos every day in Alpharetta," he said. "We're like family. We all just want to make a living."

Speakers at the rally included Democratic Party politicians, representatives from religious and civil rights organizations, and speakers from Latino, African American, Asian American, Korean American, and Asian Pacific American groups. It also included some employers who depend on the cheaper labor of immigrant workers.

U.S. congressman John Lewis told the crowd he had been arrested dozens of times during the civil rights movement and said it was important to keep fighting and not give up. The Indigo Girls, a folk-rock group, performed.

Jacob Perasso contributed to this article.



Militant / Alex Huinil

More than two dozen workers at H Mart grocery store in Duluth, Georgia, fought for and won time off work to join immigrant rights rally March 24.

Grocery store workers win right to join Atlanta march

BY FREDY HUINIL

ATLANTA—More than 30 workers from the H Mart supermarket in Duluth, Georgia, participated in the March 24 rally for immigrant rights here. H Mart workers from stores in Suwanee and Riverdale also attended the rally, which was called to oppose two anti-immigrant bills being considered in the state legislature.

Workers became aware of the action through the Spanish-language press and radio and talk in the community. On March 17 workers in the grocery department at the Duluth store started to talk about how to get off work. One worker said, "If we all go together, the manager can't do anything because majority rules." Someone else asked, "What will we do if he threatens to fire some people?"

Another worker replied, "If he says

that, I will tell him that this is something we have to do for ourselves. The boss has never done anything for us. We are going to the rally to defend ourselves from these laws, which will make our lives more difficult."

The workers in the department continued the discussion in the following days and agreed to stick together. They decided that if the boss fired anyone, everyone would walk out.

One worker talked to the boss and told him of the plan not to work on the day of the rally. He asked the boss to tell all the department managers that the workers wouldn't be there. Two grocery workers talked with workers in the produce department.

The day before the rally, the boss called all the employees together and announced that no one would be fired for going, but he said that the Korean workers couldn't go because he needed them to keep the store open.

In spite of this divisive tactic, workers considered it a victory that so many participated and no one was fired.

Fredy Huinil works in the grocery department at H Mart in Duluth.

UK unions protest government austerity

Continued from front page

lic sector workers; PCS civil servants; Unite; and GMB, which organize manual local government workers; and the National Union of Teachers (NUT). Local community groups and professional bodies were also present.

Protesters spoke to the *Militant* about how they were being affected by the cuts. David Payne, a mental care worker, and Eva Bruneel, a Kingston hospital midwife, said that recruitment freezes had led to job losses and "hot-desking"—a number of workers using the same desk. "We have less time with people," Payne said.

Some spoke of fights. Lilian Julius, a member of the University and College Union (UCU) at Hackney Community College, said that strike action there had been solid. The UCU is fighting cuts to pensions. Ian Varnes, 34, a teaching assistant and NUT member in Tower Hamlets, London, said his union will be on strike against job cuts March 30. Also on strike that day are the National Union of Teachers members in Camden and Unison in Tower Hamlets.

A student at Francis Combe Academy in Watford spoke of a six-hour protest at the school March 23. Some 150 students boycotted lessons and staged a demon-

stration against cuts to teaching jobs.

Private sector workers also brought their disputes to the demonstration. A coachload of Unite members at Burton's Foods in Wallasey on Merseyside highlighted their fight against 342 workers losing their jobs through the threatened closure of the plant.

Protesters carried placards or wore clothing with union slogans. Others made their own signs.

Nicholas Timmins writes in the March 23 *Financial Times* that "the £81bn [US\$130 billion] of spending cuts that the chancellor has instituted have barely begun to bite. . . . [A]lmost nothing has happened yet." An editorial in the paper praised the government's approach for restoring confidence in the bond markets, forecasting that "deeper cuts will bite with increasing severity over the coming years."

Price Waterhouse Coopers now estimates that 1 million jobs will be axed as a result of the government austerity. Even before this kicks in, unemployment is rising. According to official figures, 2.53 million or 8 percent of the workforce are unemployed, with workers who are black or Asian at twice the national average. Some 30 percent of young blacks and Asians are jobless, up from 20 percent in 2007.

Labour Party leader Edward Miliband and union officials at the protest rally condemned the government's austerity program as being "too far, too fast," a slogan that was printed on vests distributed by Unite. They advanced a program of class collaboration and economic nationalism.

Unite secretary-general Len McCluskey told the BBC that the government should "concentrate on economic growth through tax fairness."

A study by the Centre for Economics and Business Studies reports that the average employee is taking home £1,000 (US\$1,600), less than two years ago, a 5 percent drop.

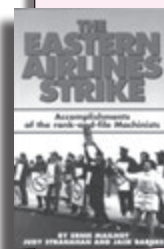
Workers were buoyed up by the action, including many who didn't participate. Those who did learned from one another about the fights they're involved in and are looking to breaking with years of a low level of union struggles, during which employers and successive governments have successfully driven to raise the rate of exploitation. As Anne Carroll, forced to retire early on medical grounds, emphasized to the *Militant*, "You've just got to take a stand."

Ögmundur Johnsson and Julie Crawford contributed to the article.

For Further Reading Teamster Power

By Farrell Dobbs

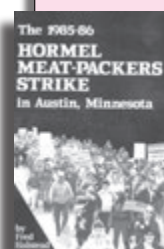
Describes the growth and consolidation of the Teamster union in Minneapolis and its class-struggle against the I L state over-the-road organizing campaign. Union power for the first time to much of



The Eastern Airlines Accomplishments of t

By Ernie Mailhot, Jack Barne

The story of the 686-day strike. The Machinists prevented Eastern's ing the road to a profitable no



The 1985-86 Hormel By Fred Halstead

The hard-fought strike against packinghouse workers that—t cannery workers, and western rout of the U.S. unions that be

Labor march in Iowa

Continued from front page

your rights or lay in the mud,” he told the *Militant*. “It’s good to get out and see others struggling and battling.”

Wade Kehler, 51, a wet corn mill operator at Roquette, attended both the Ottumwa and Des Moines rallies. “They woke a sleeping giant,” he said. “They totally underestimated us. You go to these rallies and you get energized.” Kehler noted the importance of the delegation to the Keokuk rally from locked-out workers in Metropolis, Illinois.

Seven locked-out members of United Steelworkers Local 7-669 at the Honeywell uranium processing plant in Metropolis participated in the rally here. The president of Local 7-669, Darrell Lillie, told the crowd, “They want to take away our rights. If it’s right, it’s worth fighting for, and you’re fighting the right fight. It’s hard but you’re not doing it by yourself. It’s a war on the working class and if we don’t stand up they’ll take us down.”

The Local 48G rally was chaired by locked-out member Todd Miller. He told the demonstrators, “You can sit down and die or stand up and fight.” Steve Underwood, president of Local 48G, said, “We’re here to show unification and solidarity to fight off the attack by corporate America to cut wages, benefits, and working conditions.”

Jethro Head, BCTGM Region 3 representative and the international union’s representative in the negotiations, explained to the crowd that Roquette failed to show up for the last scheduled negotiations in early March. Despite the union offering to meet with them any day during this past month, the company has not responded.

Ken Sagar, president of the Iowa Federation of Labor, urged participants to vote for the Democratic Party. That sentiment was echoed by other union officials and politicians.

David Rosenfeld, who was the 2010 Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of Iowa, addressed the rally. “The billionaires own the factories, mines, and mills. They own the government. They own the Democratic Party and Republican parties,” he said.

“They talk about ‘equality of sacrifice.’ We say no! Our weapon is solidarity.”

Buddy Howard, a locked-out member of Local 48G and president of the Lee County Labor Council, called for a moment of silence for Brian Stice, a 31-year-old sanitation worker at Pinnacle Foods in nearby Ft. Madison. Stice was killed the night before when his arm got caught while cleaning the spiral auger of a machine. He was a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 617. A number of unionists from Local 617 attended the rally here.

A contingent of workers from BCTGM Local 342 in Bloomington, Illinois, who work at the Nestle candy plant there, came to show their support. They put their cash together to buy \$200 in tickets for the 50/50 raffle, hoping to win and give their share back to Local 48G. They won and did just that.

At the end of the rally participants marched down Main Street to honks and raised fists of support from many



Militant/Laura Anderson

Contingent of locked-out steelworkers in Metropolis, Illinois, participate in labor rally March 26 in solidarity with grain millers locked out by Roquette America in Keokuk, Iowa.

of those who passed by. Several stores had signs backing 48G and some restaurants and bars offered discounts to the locked-out workers.

Rally participants were offered a benefit lunch at the Labor Temple, where

48G members sold solidarity T-shirts and a local band performed. The day concluded with a large contingent gathering at the Roquette plant gate to walk the picket line and urge scabs entering and leaving the plant to go elsewhere.

L.A. rally: ‘We stand with Wisconsin unions’

BY JAMES HARRIS

LOS ANGELES—More than 10,000 people gathered at the Los Angeles Convention Center March 26 to support public workers in Wisconsin and protest attacks on the union movement and working people in southern California and statewide.

Called by the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor (LACFL) after 161 of its members flew to Madison, Wisconsin, for a solidarity rally in February, the march was overwhelmingly made up of union members.

The Teamsters brought the largest contingent, numbering several thousand. Some of the other sizable contingents included the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), United Teachers Los Angeles, UNITE HERE, Service Employees International Union (SEIU), and United Farm Workers.

Also participating were community organizations protesting the cuts in the state budget signed into law by Gov. Edmund Brown a few days earlier.

The march from the convention center wound through the streets of Los Angeles, stopping at the Luxe Hotel where workers organized by UNITE HERE are fighting against speedup and firings, and at Ralph’s grocery store, a chain where more than 60,000 UFCW members are working under an extended contract as they are at Albertson’s and other grocery retailers.

Many of the union officials addressing the rally directed the energy of demonstrators into getting out the vote for the Democratic Party. No mention was made of Governor Brown, a Democrat, and his massive cuts directed against the working class. “We need to register to vote,” said Teamsters leader James Hoffa. A Teamsters flier featuring the union’s reactionary campaign against Mexican truckers being admitted into the United States was widely distributed at the demonstration.

Mayra Rodarte, a senior at Animo Leadership Charter High School, said, “I’m here to get the message across to



Militant/Eric Simpson

Demonstrators in Los Angeles March 26 back workers fighting antiunion assault in Wisconsin and protest similar attacks by California government.

the government to stop the wars and find other sources of income than taxing and cutting us and raising prices. They created the problem—not us.”

Jack Bryson, a member of SEIU and a leading activist in the fight to prosecute the cop who killed Oscar Grant, a Black worker shot in Oakland in 2009,

said, “They cut our schools and then build more prisons. People are losing jobs and we are losing Oscar Grants to the police. We have to bring up all these issues for the unions also.”

Carole Lesnick and Laura Nunez contributed to this article.

Join April 4 labor rallies!

Striking workers at U.S. Tsubaki in Sandusky, Ohio, are looking forward to an April 4 rally there called by their union, International Association of Machinists Local 2159. The action is one of more than 100 labor events scheduled nationally in response to a call by the AFL-CIO for April 4 “We Are One” actions to commemorate the anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King and “stand in solidarity with working people in Wisconsin and dozens of other states.”

The U.S. Tsubaki workers have been on strike since January 31, after voting down a contract that provided no raise in the first year, an insulting 0.5 percent in the second year, deductibles as high as \$500, and increased doctor copays. The company has brought in strikebreakers.

Other April 4 events are planned for Cincinnati, Columbus, and elsewhere in Ohio, where the legislature is poised to adopt an antiunion bill that abolishes collective bargaining by public employees except on wages.

Local 48G of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union in Keokuk, Iowa, is planning an event that day.

To find out about other rallies, contact unions in your area. We urge our readers to send in reports and photos from the events you take part in.

—CINDY JAQUITH

Teamster Power

of the Teamsters leadership, and campaign that brought of the Midwest.—\$19

Teamsters Strike

the Rank-and-File Machinists, Judy Stranahan

in which a rank-and-file resistance by union-busting onslaught from becoming union airline.—\$12

Hormel Meat-Packers Strike

Hormel opened a round of battles by together with strikes by paper workers, coal miners—marked a break in the began with the 1981–82 recession.—\$5

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Forging labor solidarity: Lessons from 1930s fights

Below is an excerpt from Teamster Politics by Farrell Dobbs, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for April. The book examines how a class-struggle union leadership in the 1930s fought for independent working-class political action. The piece below describes how the bosses sow dissension along race, sex, and job skills lines to keep workers divided. But as conditions worsen and discontent mounts, workers seek out ways to use union power to defend themselves effectively as a class. Copyright © 1975 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY FARRELL DOBBS

Under the present system, workers are conditioned from childhood to accept capitalist exploitation as something decreed by natural law. Indoctrination of this kind begins within the family,

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

where the young are influenced by their brainwashed elders. From there the process is taken over by the propaganda media—schools, churches, television, radio, newspapers, and other sources of misinformation and manipulation.

As young workers enter the labor force they are subjected to refinements in ruling class doctrine. Without capitalist employers, they are told, there would be no jobs; so those benefactors deserve



Omaha World Herald

Truck drivers on strike in Omaha, Nebraska, 1937. Victory in winning union recognition by drivers in Minneapolis in 1934 led to 11-state over-the-road campaign throughout Midwest to organize and strengthen Teamsters union.

unswerving loyalty from their employees in order to promote the “common good.” It is also stressed that the bosses got where they are by practicing rugged individualism. That preachment is intended to encourage the workers to do likewise if they hope to get ahead. The norm for personal conduct thus becomes: don’t think about others, just take care of yourself.

As another means of dividing labor’s ranks, use is made of factors serving to demarcate one group of workers from another. Skin color, ethnic background, sex, religion—anything that will help to sow dissension between groupings—is turned to capitalist advantage. . . .

Individuals in the more favored groupings are likely to get the better paying, skilled jobs. Those in the less favored categories, more or less in descending order, are next in line for the unskilled work and, after that, the menial tasks. For people at the bottom of this preferential sequence, the situation can be summed up in the phrase: last to be hired, first to be fired. Through such patterns of discrimination the bosses are able to pit one category of workers against another—skilled versus unskilled, to cite a single example.

Relative economic privilege thus takes its place alongside race and sex bias as a device for splitting the working class so as to minimize organized resistance to capitalist exploitation.

Life on the job being what it is, however, other factors intrude to cause dif-

ficulties for the ruling class. Motivated by what is delicately called “the profit incentive,” capitalists develop insatiable greed. Lust for private gain makes them strive to hold down wages, extend the hours of labor, disregard health and safety hazards, and impose poor job conditions. As a result, workers are constantly reminded through daily experience that they have problems in common as a class, and that collective action is needed to obtain redress of their grievances against the bosses.

This clash of class interests is what gave rise to trade unions on a world scale; because of the elementary level of class consciousness involved, these formations, as a rule, originated and developed as a movement for economic and social reform under capitalism. . . .

Mounting discontent leads the workers into a search for some way to defend themselves effectively as a class. Divisive walls—built of self-centeredness, prejudice, special interests, class collaboration, and lying capitalist propaganda—begin to crumble. New potential develops for strengthening labor solidarity, elevating class consciousness, and raising the anticapitalist struggle to a higher plane.

A dramatic change of that nature took place in the aftermath of the 1929 stock market crash, which heralded the onset of severe economic depression. As the slump deepened, millions lost their jobs. Earnings were slashed for those who still had employment. Working condi-

tions went from bad to worse, as did living standards in general.

At first the workers accepted these blows in a more or less passive manner. They had been stunned by the economic debacle and it took time to recover from the shock effect. Then, when they did begin a quest for ways to defend themselves, only scant means were at hand. Less than three million were organized into the AFL, mainly workers in skilled trades. The great bulk of the working class, especially in basic industry, was not unionized at all. On top of that, the AFL bureaucrats showed no real concern about the plight of the unorganized, whether employed or unemployed. In short, labor was caught in a crisis of organization and leadership.

But limited patterns of struggle gradually began to emerge, characterized by ups and downs in scope and tempo. In the initial stage the actions centered mainly on protest demonstrations by the unemployed. Then, during 1933, strikes broke out here and there in industry, the biggest one being conducted by textile workers. These walkouts resulted from the interaction of two basic factors: the workers’ determination to regain ground they had lost in the depression and their rising confidence—stimulated by partial economic recovery under the New Deal—that their objective could be attained.

Developments of this kind were viewed by the AFL business unionists as a threat to their class-collaborationist line rather than as an opportunity to strengthen organized labor. So those worthies helped government mediators snooker rebellious workers into formal agreements with the bosses that brought precious few gains to the union rank and file.

But sellouts engineered in that way could not be made to stick very long. Combative moods among the workers continued to grow in intensity, and within the unions radicals were able to increase their leadership authority. As a result, miniature civil wars were fought in 1934 by Minneapolis truck drivers, San Francisco longshoremen, and Toledo auto workers. In each case, labor emerged victorious. Inspired by proof that strikes conducted militantly could be won, the main detachments of the working class in basic industry began to move toward action against the monopoly corporations.

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April

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8 The Militant April 11, 2011

An alliance of workers and farmers

The 53 tractors driven by farmers at the March 12 Madison, Wisconsin, rally to support public workers unions put a spotlight on the need for a fighting alliance of workers and farmers to respond to the capitalist offensive on our living and job conditions. “Busting unions will only make all of us more desperate,” said farmer Tony Schultz. The antilabor attacks by the bosses’ government and political parties in Wisconsin hit farmers as well. Rural schools are losing funds and teachers. State-subsidized health insurance, which many farmers depend upon, is being slashed.

The solidarity between workers and farmers in Madison flows from their shared exploitation—although they are exploited in different ways—by the capitalist families that rule this country. Now is a good time to sharpen our understanding of this fact—something brought to our attention recently by two long-time *Militant* readers, one of them a farmer, as well as by a volunteer who translates articles to Spanish.

The farmer correctly objected to use of the term “family farmer” in the March 7 issue to describe some participants in an earlier Wisconsin labor rally. Doing so obscures class divisions among farmers, who do not as a whole have common class interests.

In addition to large capitalist farms and ranches owned by big corporations, there are other farmers—whose farms are often owned and operated by a single family—who either rely almost entirely on hired wage labor, or on both farm workers and family members. These small capitalists often call themselves “family farmers,” falsely claiming that they and their organizations (like the Farm Bureau and others) speak and act in the interests of working farmers, who employ little or no wage labor.

In fact, growing numbers of exploited farmers in recent decades depend upon a second job, often in a factory, simply to make ends meet. They are exploited as farmers—as *debt slaves* heavily mortgaged to the

bank, and squeezed between high prices they pay monopolies like Cargill and Monsanto for seed, fertilizer, and other supplies to put in their crops each year, and the low prices they get for their harvests from capitalist wholesale and retail outfits like Del Monte, Krogers, Wal-Mart, and others. Many of these farmers are also exploited as *wage slaves* like other workers.

In addition to these allies of the working class, there are also several million farm workers in the United States. Together with other wage workers in small towns and rural areas, they are the bedrock of any fighting labor movement in these parts of the country. They face among the lowest wages and most hazardous job conditions. Farm laborers are not covered by the minimum wage, have few benefits, and are whip-sawed by seasonal work. Many are immigrants and subject to superexploitation on that basis as well.

The headline in the March 28 *Militant*—“Labor-farmer unity in Wisconsin”—introduced an additional confusion. Over the past century, worker-farmer *unity* has often been used by class-collaborationist forces—such as the Stalinist Communist Parties here and around the world—instead of a worker-farmer *alliance*, or *solidarity*. Their aim is to obscure class differences in order to rationalize subordinating struggles both of workers and exploited farmers and other toilers to the interests of the capitalist class and its parties—in this country, especially the Democrats.

As the capitalist crisis deepens, the need to forge an alliance in struggle between these two classes of exploited producers—wage workers and working farmers—will be posed more and more sharply in the factories, on the land, and in political and social battles of all kinds. That’s an irreplaceable part of building a mass revolutionary movement that can overturn capitalist rule, establish a workers and farmers government, and begin transforming social relations in the interests of the vast working majority.

Letter from reader

To the editor,

Today there is an unfolding catastrophe in Japan brought on by capitalist greed. Nuclear power plants are melting down because of cost-cutting measures of the Japanese government, Tokyo Electric, and the General Electric Corporation. As this crisis unfolds, I believe it is useful to review the position of the Socialist Workers Party with respect to nuclear power, found in an article by Jack Barnes in *New International* no. 13 titled *Our Politics Start with the World*. Barnes states: “The communist movement does not have ‘a position on nuclear power’ for or against.”

Clearly working people have an interest in defending the right of people throughout the semicolonial world to develop electrification. Without it, large areas of the world lack goods and services that working people in the developed world take for granted. Clearly we can imagine a future where nuclear power might operate safely and supply the world with vast sources of energy.

However, in light of the unfolding catastrophe in Japan, a basic question must be asked. In today’s world, dominated by imperialist property relations, can nuclear power be operated in a safe manner? Even if the answer is yes, which is doubtful, we need to recall that the Israeli Air Force bombed a nuclear power plant in Iraq. While the plant was not on line, given the history of imperialist military actions, there is no guarantee that in the future the imperialist armed forces would not bomb an active nuclear power plant.

We might consider that all sources of electrical power run by capitalist property relations are dangerous. Thousands of people die or have respiratory problems every year from inhaling fumes of coal-fired plants. But the unfolding catastrophe in Japan makes it clear that nuclear power is the most potentially dangerous form of electrical power.

So my question is: Would the SWP consider an alternative position, which is that today, given that imperialist property relations dominate the world, that nuclear power is inherently unsafe?

Steve Halpern, Philadelphia

Why communists fight to close gap in workers’ conditions

Continued from page 5

Europe, Japan, and the Pacific and the billions elsewhere on earth.

More than 150 years ago, Karl Marx answered those in the young working-class movement of the times who urged workers to oppose the development of machinery and other productive forces so long as capitalism exists. In an 1856 speech to supporters of a working-class newspaper in London, Marx said that there is without doubt an “antagonism between modern industry and science on the one hand” and “modern misery” on the other.

“Some parties may wail over it; others may wish to get rid of modern arts in order to get rid of modern conflicts,” Marx said.

As for the revolutionary workers movement, however, “We know that to work well the new-fangled forces of society, they only want to be mastered by new-fangled men—and such are the working men. . . . They will then, certainly not be last in aiding the social revolution produced by that industry, a revolution, which means the emancipation of their own class all over the world.”

A class question, not a technical one

For class-conscious workers, Barnes explains in the 2001 article, a course to expand energy production for electrification and industrial progress must start with where it “fits along the line of march of workers and farmers toward the revolutionary struggle for national liberation and socialism on a world scale.”

He continues: “The competition of capitals, the drive to maximize profits, spurs technological innovation under capitalism and will continue to do so for as long as this social system exists. . . . In the process, capitalists display wanton disregard for the health and safety of workers and the broader population. Nor do they care one whit about the long-term or short-term consequences for the natural environment.”

Both conclusions have been verified time and again.

In face of global competition for markets, and the sharp falloff in orders for new nuclear power plants after Three Mile Island and Chernobyl, capitalists have improved reactor safety. Containment vessels are more resistant to destruction, and operations are less dependent on electrical-driven pumps and cooling systems like those that failed at Fukushima’s older reactors.

At the same time, both Tokyo Electric, the owner of the Fukushima plant, and Japan’s imperialist government have displayed flagrant disregard for safety. “Over the decades, preparedness against tsunamis never became a priority for Japan’s power companies or nuclear regulators,” says an article in the March 26 *New York Times* headlined, “Nuclear Rules in Japan Relied on Old Science.” But maximizing “new profits,” not relying on “old science,” is the source of the unconscionable negligence.

Tokyo Electric, for example, never even shelled out minimal funds to put backup electrical generators on higher ground to withstand anticipated tsunamis. When the giant waves struck last month, the company deliberately delayed action to cool the reactors in hopes of preserving their assets.

Is socialist revolution possible?

Finally, Halpern argues that “given the history of imperialist military actions, there is no guarantee that in the future the imperialist armed forces would not bomb an active nuclear power plant.” Yes, there’s *never* any guarantee what our ruthless class enemies will do when workers and our allies enter into struggle—from a strike, to the revolutionary battle for state power.

Despite his intentions, however, Halpern’s warning boils down to little more than an argument against socialist revolution.

What’s more, it is an argument that discounts the demonstrated capacity and determination of working people to mobilize, arm, and defend our revolutionary conquests in face of imperialist hostility—as the working people of Cuba have done for

more than 50 years. And it discounts the capacity and determination of workers in the United States and other imperialist countries to take action in the factories and the streets to stay the hand of the war makers, in solidarity with our brothers and sisters the world over.

In the section of the 2001 article Halpern proposes scrapping, Barnes writes: “Given the unmet energy needs of billions across the globe, especially in the semicolonial countries; the rising extraction and refining costs of the world’s oil resources; and accumulating and accelerating damage to the earth’s atmosphere from the burning of oil, coal, and other fossil fuels, nuclear reactors *will* be used to generate a growing percentage of the world’s electrical power in the twenty-first century. That’s for sure, and necessarily so.”

The question, the Socialist Workers Party leader adds, “is how long will the design and construction of containment vessels, the monitoring of reactor operations, and disposal of atomic waste products—with all the consequences for public health and safety—be carried out by governments beholden to the imperialist ruling families and other capitalist exploiters.

“How long before these vital matters, including the eventual transition away from nuclear power toward other, safer energy sources yet to be developed, will be organized by workers and farmers governments acting in the interests of the great majority of humanity.”

“The communist movement does not have ‘a position on nuclear power,’ for or against,” says Barnes. “We have a proletarian internationalist course to advance the revolutionary struggle for national liberation and socialism.”

Halpern looks forward to the day when imperialist property relations no longer “dominate the world.” So does the *Militant*.

Let bourgeois liberals and middle-class radicals traffic in fear and panic. Those are not tools in the chest of the revolutionary workers movement.