

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Bosses disregarded safety on Gulf oil rig

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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Socialist ballot drives gain workers' interest



Militant/Diana Newberry

Rebecca Williamson, left, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress in Iowa, campaigns at shopping center. Socialists in Iowa collected more than 2,100 signatures to place candidates on ballot.

Meat packers in Iowa sign petitions

BY HELEN MEYERS

DES MOINES, Iowa—During a shift change at the JBS Swift plant in Marshalltown, Iowa, 89 meat packers signed petitions to put Socialist Workers candidates on the statewide ballot. Margaret Trowe and Rebecca Williamson, SWP candidates for secretary of agriculture and U.S. Congress in the 3rd District respectively, used to work at the plant.

Iowa socialist campaigners have now gone over the top, with 2,133 signatures collected, well over the 1,500 required.

JBS workers readily signed when told the Socialist Workers program put safe-

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D.C. socialists go into final stretch

BY SUSAN LAMONT

WASHINGTON, June 27—Twenty-one volunteers for the Socialist Workers Party campaign were out in working-class communities around the city this weekend gathering nearly 1,600 signatures to put Omari Musa, SWP candidate for mayor, on the November ballot. This brings the total number of signatures in hand to 2,442, toward a goal of 5,500. The petition drive will wind up August 1.

Despite record-breaking heat, petitioners got a good response from many workers and young people they

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U.S. military exercises and sanctions threaten N. Korea

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In a show of force against North Korea, Washington is conducting its largest military exercises in years off the coast of the Korean Peninsula. The U.S. government also announced additional economic sanctions against the country.

The four-day air and naval joint exercises with the South Korean military began July 25. They include the 97,000-ton nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS George Washington, 20 ships and submarines, more than 200 aircraft, F-22 Raptor fighter jets, and 8,000 troops. Four Japanese military officers are on board the carrier to observe.

The Pentagon had announced the “war games,” named Invincible Spirit,

would take place in the Sea of Japan, to the east of South Korea, and in the Yellow Sea to the west.

The Chinese government strongly objected to U.S. military operations in the Yellow Sea, which divides China from the Korean Peninsula. Shortly before exercises began the Pentagon backed off, and is conducting the operations only off the Korean Peninsula's eastern shores.

“We are obviously concerned by some of the things China has said, some of the things China is doing in the military arena,” U.S. defense secretary Robert Gates told the *New York Times*. “They are worrying.”

Admiral Robert Willard, commander of the U.S. Pacific Command,

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Key parts of Arizona immigrant law blocked

BY SETH GALINSKY

July 28—In a victory for immigrant and workers rights, a federal judge granted an injunction today against four key sections of Arizona's new anti-immigrant law, which were set to take effect tomorrow.

Among the sections U.S. District Judge Susan Bolton put on hold are: requiring police to check the immigration status of everyone they stop if they have “reasonable suspicion” the person is in the country illegally; making it a state crime for undocumented immigrants to apply for work; and imposing criminal penalties on immigrants who do not carry their “alien-registration papers.” Bolton ruled that it was likely these sections will be permanently overturned.

Bolton refused to halt a provision that makes it a state crime to transport or harbor an undocumented worker

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Imperialists' challenges in Afghan war stir debate

BY SETH GALINSKY

At a July 20 international conference in Kabul, Afghan president Hamid Karzai said his goal was for the Afghan military and police to take the lead in the war there in 2014. But Washington's lack of progress in forging an effective national Afghan army and police force has led the U.S. military to arm anti-Taliban militias based in local villages and tribal areas of the country.

U.S. vice president Joseph Biden, who had previously asserted that “a whole lot” of U.S. troops would be leaving Afghanistan in 2011, now says that is unlikely. U.S. military commanders have stressed that any U.S. withdrawal will be “conditions-based.”

As the war drags on, some prominent politicians who support the U.S.-led war are raising concerns about

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Black farmers demand redress for USDA loan discrimination



Militant/Leah Morrison

Farmers protest outside U.S. Department of Agriculture July 28, demanding compensation for racist discrimination in loans. At far left is Alabama farmer John Binion.

BY SUSAN LAMONT

WASHINGTON, June 28—“We're here to shine a spotlight on the plight of the Black farmer,” Robert Binion, a farmer from Clanton, Alabama, told a group of Black farmers and supporters outside the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) this morning. “There have been two changes in the administration in Washington since the Black farmers' lawsuit was first filed. We don't just want words. We need action now!”

On February 18 the USDA and Justice Department announced a \$1.25 billion settlement to resolve long-

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4 killed in Pennsylvania as bosses ignore safety

BY CINDY JAQUITH

Less than two weeks after a blast at a U.S. Steel coke plant in western Pennsylvania injured 20 workers, explosions at a zinc refinery and a natural gas well in the state claimed the lives of four workers.

James Taylor, 53, and Corey Keller, 41, were killed July 22 when an explosion ripped through a refinery that produces zinc oxide at Horsehead Holding Corp. near Monaca, Pennsylvania, 28 miles north of Pittsburgh. They died of smoke inhalation.

Horsehead Holding is the largest U.S. zinc producer. The Monaca facility employs some 600 workers and is organized by United Steelworkers Local 8183.

The plant has a history of unsafe conditions. The Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) cited the company with eight serious safety violations four months ago.

In 2006 OSHA fined the company \$186,750 after a worker stepped into an uncovered pit of molten zinc, receiving severe burns. Horsehead knew the pit was open, the agency said, yet failed to provide any protective barrier.

In recent years OSHA has repeatedly fined the company for a range of safety violations, including failure to protect workers from cadmium and lead exposure or maintain required records of workers' exposure levels.

The day after the blast at Horsehead, a natural gas well owned by Huntley & Huntley Inc. blew up in Indianola, northeast of Pittsburgh, as a crew was welding. An oil storage tank was thrown 70 feet by the blast. Two workers employed

by Northeast Energy, an oil and gas exploration company, were killed. One of the victims has yet to be identified.

Shelley Henry, whose husband Kevin died in the blast, told the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* that he worried about welding around live pipes filled with explosive gas and raised concerns with the company. She also said he was given little rest between jobs. The night before the explosion, for example, he had to work until 10:00 p.m., and then be back on the job at 6:00 a.m. the next day.

Henry asked how the site got approved for welding. "I want to see the inspection report," she said.

In June a crew sinking a natural gas well in northern West Virginia hit a pocket of methane gas, causing an explosion that injured seven workers. In May, a worker was struck by a pipe and killed at a drilling site in Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania.

Montreal longshoremen win guaranteed work



Militant/John Steele

MONTREAL—After being locked out for five days, the 900 longshoremen in the Port of Montreal forced employers to rescind their decision to deny the 169 youngest workers a guarantee of 40 hours per week. The workers, members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, won the guarantee decades ago. Union members agreed in exchange to end their boycott of overtime. Negotiations for renewal of the collective agreement, which expired in December 2008, will resume shortly.

—MICHEL DUGRÉ

Imperialists' challenges in Afghan war stir debate

Continued from front page

Washington's lack of progress against the Taliban.

Republican senator Richard Lugar, a prominent supporter of U.S. intervention in Afghanistan, complained at a July 14 Senate hearing that Washington was "proceeding without a clear definition of success."

Democratic senator John Kerry, who heads the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, added, "Many people are asking if we have the right strategy."

The disclosure of 92,000 U.S. military reports by WikiLeaks, which posted the

documents on its Web site July 25, has added to the uneasiness in Washington. While revealing little new that adds to the understanding of what is going on in the war, the documents highlight the obstacles U.S. imperialism faces in the region.

Karzai initially opposed the local militia plan put forward by Gen. David Petraeus, who recently took command of the U.S. and NATO military forces in the country. But the Afghan president later acquiesced to a major expansion of local "community police forces" to fight the Taliban.

U.S. officials told the *Times* that they would like to rapidly arm as many as 10,000 militia members. U.S. Special Forces have already set up militias, especially in the southern part of the country. Karzai worries that strengthening the militias would undermine the already weak power and authority of the central government.

Tribal militias and private armies held sway in Afghanistan before Taliban forces took control of much of the country in 1996. After the U.S. invasion overthrew the Taliban in 2001, many of the warlords who cooperated with

Washington hoped to regain their power and control.

Petraeus's plan to bolster these local groups is an indication that Washington has been unable to transform the undisciplined Afghan army and police into a reliable fighting force.

NATO is training some 20,000 Afghan soldiers at any one time in its bid to increase the size of the Afghan army from its current 119,000 troops to 171,000 by 2014. However, they have not made headway in stemming desertions or improving its fighting capacity.

Petraeus is the main architect of the counterinsurgency strategy implemented by his predecessor, Gen. Stanley McChrystal. The strategy says U.S. forces should focus on clearing Taliban and other insurgent groups from populated areas, send in enough troops to hold those centers, and use "aid programs" and other incentives to win support from the population and local rulers.

The well-publicized February offensive in Marjah in Helmand Province was supposed to be a shining example of this strategy. Some 15,000

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THE MILITANT

Support socialists' ballot drive

Supporters of Socialist Workers Party candidates for public office in New York, Iowa, and Washington, D.C., are campaigning to win ballot status for the party. Follow this important effort and find out how you can help by reading the 'Militant' each week.



Militant/Maggie Trowe

Helen Meyers, SWP candidate for lieutenant governor in Iowa, campaigns in Des Moines.

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Abortion rights pickets defend N. Carolina clinic

BY LISA POTASH

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina—Sixty people participated in a spirited picket line defending the Family Reproductive Health Clinic here July 24. The clinic provides women's health services, including abortions.

The antiabortion outfit Operation Rescue/Operation Save America (OR/OAS), which was holding a conference in town, announced it would mobilize pickets against the clinic on that day. The National Organization for Women (NOW) and clinic appealed for help.

Family Reproductive Health Clinic staff member Cari Napier explained that antiabortion groups have targeted this particular clinic because it is highly regarded by many doctors and patients who have been treated there.

On July 24, only eight opponents of a woman's right to choose abortion showed up to protest. OR/OAS instead sent 50 people to picket another



Militant/Jacob Perasso

Defenders of abortion rights outside Family Reproductive Health Clinic in Charlotte, North Carolina, July 24.

clinic whose administration had not requested defense.

The abortion rights picket line at Family Reproductive Health attracted a number of young women and men. Two college students said that it was the first time either had taken part in any kind of protest.

At the end of the morning, clinic staff member Kenya Mauldin came out to speak to supporters. "This is the first [Saturday] in eight years that we have not had problems with harassment of patients and staff," she said.

Mauldin told the *Militant* that the right-wingers built scaffolding so

they can peer over the fence. "They are allowed to block the driveway and yell 'whores,' 'fat,' 'crackhead,' at patients and family," she said. At times the clinic has had to organize to escort patients from their cars to the clinic entrance.

Activists from several organizations participated in defending the clinic, including Charlotte NOW, Feminist Majority, Georgia Socialist Workers Party, and The World Can't Wait.

Jacob Perasso contributed to this article.

Judge blocks key aspects of Arizona law

Continued from front page

and a section that makes it a crime for day laborers to get into a vehicle if it "impedes the normal movement of traffic."

Protests against the law have been held in dozens of cities across the United States over the last several days. Demonstrations will take place in Phoenix and Tucson tomorrow.

While the U.S. Justice Department sued to block the law's implementation—one of seven lawsuits asking the courts to overturn parts of the legislation—much of the Arizona law echoes already existing federal laws.

In 2006, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) created a special unit in Phoenix, the Law Enforcement Agency Response unit, to work with local cops 24 hours a day. Since October of last year the unit has detained 3,528 people, who were handed over to them by the cops.

ICE has also signed 287(g) agreements with nine police agencies in Arizona. The state, along with Virginia, has the highest number in the United States. These agreements allow local cops and jailers to act as immigration agents.

The Secure Communities program, which checks fingerprints of those in jail for any reason against a Department of Homeland Security database, will be expanded to Arizona next year. ICE plans to have the program in place nationwide by 2013. From October 2008 through May this year, 2.6 million peo-

ple were screened under the program.

The Barack Obama administration has cut back the number of factory immigration raids. These were unpopular among many working people who did not like seeing their coworkers handcuffed, jailed, and deported. The raids were often met by immediate public protests.

In the last nine months, 765 undocumented workers have been arrested on the job, compared to 5,100 in 2008. At the same time, ICE has expanded the number of immigration audits from 503 in 2008 to 1,444 in 2009, and 1,525 so far in 2010, leading to the firing of thousands of workers.

Removal orders at record levels

The Obama administration has not detained and deported more immigrants than previous presidents. However the number of those stopped by ICE or the U.S. Border Patrol and given "orders of removal"—instead of being allowed "voluntary" departure—is at the highest level ever. Workers with removal orders face the threat of felony charges if they reenter the United States.

ICE has stepped up the number of well-publicized sweeps of alleged "criminal aliens." Arizona governor Janice Brewer has taken this attempt to criminalize immigrant workers even farther. In a June 25 debate with Republican party candidates in the upcoming gubernatorial race, Brewer claimed that "the majority of the people that are

coming to Arizona and trespassing are . . . drug mules," bringing marijuana and other illegal narcotics.

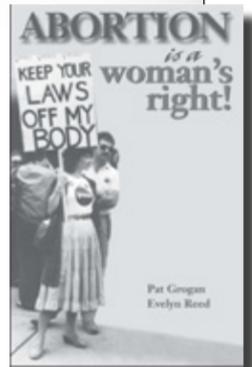
The anti-immigrant measures heighten insecurity among immigrant workers, help maintain a superexploited layer of workers, and allow the government more control over the flow of labor to meet the needs of factory and farm bosses.

Some workers had decided to leave Arizona before the law takes effect. Gabriela Jaquez told Reuters news service that she and her husband, a legal U.S. resident, are moving to New Mexico. "Under the law if you transport an illegal immigrant, you are committing a crime," she said. "They could arrest him for driving me to the shops."

A poll for the *Arizona Republic* said a majority of Arizona residents support the new law. But the poll found an even larger majority, 62 percent, are for giving amnesty to undocumented workers.

Abortion Is a Woman's Right by Pat Grogan

Why abortion rights are central not only to the fight for the full emancipation of women, but to forging a united and fighting labor movement. —\$6



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Supporters Appeal tops \$51,000 per month—Miami leads way

MIAMI—Stepped-up activity by organizers of the Supporters Monthly Appeal has led to an increase in monthly pledges to help advance the work of the Socialist Workers Party. An additional \$1,246 in pledges from 42 current backers of the Appeal and three new contributors have been made over the past few weeks.

Miami is leading the way. Meetings here with supporters of the communist movement over the July 24–25 weekend led to winning \$558 in pledge raises from 11 contributors.

The new pledge total reached \$51,000 toward the goal of \$55,000 a month by the beginning of the new year—a substantial contribution to help finance the work of the SWP and build the communist movement!

Meetings with contributors have focused on discussions about the conclusions of the June SWP convention on political developments in the world and opportunities for building and strengthening the party. The effort in Miami was given a boost by a lively Saturday evening social celebrating

the Cuban Revolution.

"One of the things we came out of the weekend with is more experience and greater confidence in organizing meetings to discuss politics, on the road to winning increases and new contributors," said Jim Kendrick, a leader of the work in Miami.

San Francisco pledges have increased \$195. "Following the SWP convention we sent out a letter to all contributors and these are just the first responses we've gotten," said Jim White, an organizer of the effort there.

"We also added three new contributors by talking to people who have been attending the Militant Labor Forums here," said White. Boston raised pledges a collective \$126 in the last couple weeks.

The number of contributors now stands at 466 toward a goal of 500 and beyond by the New Year. Anyone interested in joining the effort can contact distributors of the *Militant* listed on page 8.

—Don Mackle
and Carole Caron



Students demonstrate in Washington, D.C., July 20 demanding immigrant rights. Protesters chanted that they are "undocumented and unafraid."

N.Y. meeting celebrates Cuban revolutionary day

BY MICHAEL FITZSIMMONS

NEW YORK—A July 24 meeting here marked the 57th anniversary of the attack on the Moncada garrison in Cuba, led by Fidel Castro, which began the popular armed struggle against the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista that culminated in the 1959 revolutionary victory. The celebration drew about 150 participants.

“The fighters at Moncada came from the most humble layers of Cuban society,” said featured speaker Rodolfo Benítez Verson, deputy permanent representative of Cuba to the United Nations.

Since 1959, he said, “hundreds of thousands of Cubans have volunteered in 167 countries, from defending Angola’s independence, to providing eye surgery and teaching literacy, always serving with modesty, solidarity, and heroism.”

Benítez stressed the importance of the gains made in the worldwide campaign to win freedom for the Cuban Five. Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, and René González have been in prison since their arrest in 1998. They had been gathering information on counterrevolutionary Cuban American groups that have a history of violent attacks on Cuba and operate from South Florida with Washington’s complicity.

The five were framed up and convicted in 2001 on charges that included failing to register as agents of a foreign government and “conspiracy to commit espionage.” They were given sentences ranging from 15 years to life. Hernández, who was also falsely accused of “conspiracy to commit murder,” was sentenced to two life terms plus 15 years.

Benítez reported that over the past year the sentences of three of the five have been reduced. “The effort around the world and in the United States must be to raise a voice so loud that we win their freedom and their return to Cuba,” he said.

Nancy Cabrero, president of Casa de las Américas, a group of Cuban

Americans in New York who support the revolution, reported on local efforts to win visas for the wives of two of the Cuban Five. Olga Salanueva, wife of René González, and Adriana Pérez, wife of Gerardo Hernández, have repeatedly been denied visas by the U.S. government to visit their husbands.

Other speakers at the event included Carol Delgado, consul general of the consulate of Venezuela in New York City; Joaquin Morante, a student from New York at the Latin American School of Medicine in Cuba; and Gabriela Quijano, a leader of the recent strike by students at the University of Puerto Rico (see interview on this page). Cuba solidarity activist Rosemari Mealy read greetings sent to the meeting from a Cuba solidarity organization in South Africa.

The cochair of the event along with Cabrero was Ike Nahem of the July 26 Coalition. He encouraged building and participation in upcoming events here in support of the Cuban Five. One of these will be a month-long exhibition of the artwork of Antonio Guerrero at the Clemente Soto Vélaz Cultural and Educational Center on the Lower East Side in September.

Cubans commemorate July 26 assault



Reuters/Desmond Boylan

Tens of thousands in Santa Clara, Cuba, participate in a celebration commemorating the anniversary of the July 26, 1953, assault on two army garrisons in eastern Cuba led by Fidel Castro. The attack marked a turning point in the forging of a disciplined, revolutionary vanguard of the toilers that would lead Cuba’s working people to victory over the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista and open the door to the first socialist revolution in the Americas. In front row from left to right: Cuban president Raúl Castro, Venezuelan minister of energy and petroleum Rafael Ramírez, Commander of the Revolution and Vice President Ramiro Valdés, Commander of the Revolution Guillermo García, and Cuban vice president Esteban Lazo.

—DOUG NELSON

Puerto Rico student describes victorious strike

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK—“The most important thing we achieved is that we showed it’s possible to fight and win,” said Gabriela Quijano. She was talking about the more than two-month struggle by students in Puerto Rico against attempts to increase fees and reduce the number of students eligible for tuition waivers at the state-run university system.

Quijano, 20, an anthropology major at the University of Puerto Rico’s Río Piedras campus in San Juan, was an active participant in the student strike, which ended June 21. She spoke to the *Militant* while in New York City July 25.

There are some 62,000 students at the university’s 11 campuses on the island, which is a U.S. colony. Over the last couple of years “there was a big drop

in the number of courses students can take, a hiring freeze was imposed, and the book budget for the library was cut,” she explained.

The cuts got worse after Law 7, the “Fiscal State of Emergency Law,” was approved in March 2009, she added. It ordered the layoff of 17,000 government employees and a 10 percent across-the-board spending cut.

“We won support not just from students, but from university professors and from working people,” Quijano said. She described how at one point the police were ordered to block the delivery of food and drink to students occupying the campus. After a few days the police were forced to back down.

When it was clear the students had won broad support and would not give up, the

University Board of Trustees agreed to maintain the tuition waiver program, and to not increase summer session fees or privatize any of the 11 campuses. It said no increase in general fees would take place before January 2011.

There are reports the trustees are considering an \$800 fee hike. “That would double the costs of going to school,” Quijano noted. As part of the accord students reserved the right to reinstate their struggle if the administration attempts to raise fees.

“The assembly that approved the accord had students from all 11 campuses, the first time there was ever an assembly like that,” Quijano said.

The university administration recently brought disciplinary charges against three students involved in the strike. “They are not allowed to return to class until the hearing,” she explained. “This is a violation of their constitutional rights.”

Students involved in the two-month struggle hold a wide variety of political views, she added. “There are independence supporters and socialists, supporters of the commonwealth [the name given to Puerto Rico’s current colonial status], and supporters of statehood.”

But the impact of the economic crisis and the student struggle “has meant that there’s more questioning of the colonial relationship,” Quijano said.

Black farmers demand redress from USDA

Continued from front page

standing claims of discrimination by the USDA in loans to Black farmers. Earlier this year the U.S. House of Representatives voted to allocate compensation for the farmers. But the Senate refused July 22 to pass the measure. It also rejected \$3.4 billion to Native Americans for royalties denied them by the U.S. government.

The Senate denial of redress is the latest turn in the fight by Black farmers to correct injustices coming out of the 1999 settlement of the historic *Pigford v. Glickman* class-action lawsuit. The 1999 settlement ordered the government to give claimants \$50,000 each, debt forgiveness, and preferential treatment in future loan applications.

Forty-one percent of the claims by farmers were denied. Many did not even learn of the settlement until after the deadline for filing had passed.

“I faced threats for supporting [President Barack] Obama in the 2008 election,” Binion said. “Now I want him to support me. We are tired of making this trip to Washington. We want to go into 2011 with a clean slate!”

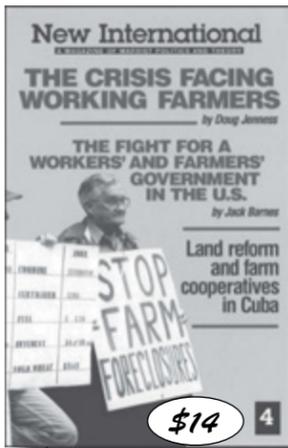
Binion promised further protests by farmers if Congress doesn’t act swiftly to approve funds.

Also speaking were Lawrence Lucas, president of the USDA Coalition of Minority Employees, and Glova Scott, Socialist Workers Party candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives from the District of Columbia. In addition to farmers from Alabama, Texas, and Oklahoma, the protest drew several Black workers from the Washington area whose families have farms in the South.



Militant/Seth Galinsky

Gabriela Quijano, University of Puerto Rico student, took part in fight against fees.



New International Magazine of Marxist Politics and Theory

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by Doug Jenness

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by Jack Barnes

Land Reform and Farm Cooperatives in Cuba
Two Speeches by Fidel Castro

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ON THE PICKET LINE

Textile workers strike for wage raise in Pakistan

More than 5,000 power loom workers in several cities in Pakistan went on strike July 20 demanding a 17 percent wage increase. A protest action called by the Labour Qaumi Movement (LQM) was attacked by police with tear-gas shelling and a baton charge.

The LQM said scores of workers were injured and more than 100 taken into custody, though police denied this claim. Demonstrations took place in Faisalabad, Sadhar, Jhang Road, Samundri Road, and Ghulam Mohammad Abad, reported *Dawn*, a Pakistani newspaper. The rallies took place despite the imposition of a law in the district July 19, banning all public gatherings after two individuals accused of blasphemy were killed.

—Brian Williams

Italy: Auto workers halt production at Fiat

Fiat workers in Turin, Italy, went on strike July 23 to protest the size of a bonus and the firing of five unionists. The workers stopped work for two hours per shift, slowing production, reported the *Wall Street Journal*. The factory produces Alfa Romeos.

In June workers there voted by a 63 percent margin to accept the company's demands that penalize employees for taking too many sick days, shorten their lunch breaks, and forbid them from striking during periods of high demand. FIOM, which called the strike action, was the only one of five unions to vote against the plan.

"He wants to impose American-style standards," factory worker Nello Niglio told the *New York Times*, in response to the company's takeback demands. "Too much work is going to kill our workers." Among the steps taken by the bosses is to send a doctor to the home of employees who do not show up for work. Fiat bought up 20 percent of Chrysler last year after the U.S. automaker filed for bankruptcy.

—Brian Williams

Strike by workers at Mott's in N.Y. solid after 2 months

The strike by workers at the Mott's applesauce and juice plant in upstate New York is solid after two months on strike. The unionists, members of Local 220 of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, walked out May 23 after rejecting concessions demanded by the company. The bosses' proposed contract called for a \$1.50 an hour wage cut, eliminating pensions for future workers, and reducing company 401(k) contributions. The company has refused to put a new offer on the table.

According to the union only seven or eight workers out of a workforce of 305 people have crossed the picket line. The company is attempting to operate the plant with temporary workers and company staff. Mott's is owned by Dr. Pepper Snapple Group.

—Brian Williams

Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay
By Leon Trotsky \$16
www.pathfinderpress.com

New Zealand rally condemns government's antiunion plans

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—As many as 300 people joined a union rally here July 18 outside the conference of the ruling National Party. Targeting the keynote speech by Prime Minister John Key, the protesters—who included representatives of most major unions—condemned proposed government measures that would hand employers more tools to harass and fire workers. The proposals would give bosses a freer hand to dismiss workers at any time in the first three months of their employment, and enable them to compel a worker to provide proof of illness for taking even one sick day. Union representatives would have to receive a boss's consent to enter a workplace.

—Patrick Brown



Militant/Terry Coggan

Union rally in Auckland, New Zealand, July 18 against government measures that would give bosses freer hand to harass and fire workers.

New book about Yugoslavia published in Greece

BY BOBBIS MISAILIDES

ATHENS, Greece—Diethnes Vima, which publishes and distributes many titles of Pathfinder Press in Greek, has just put out a book titled *The Breakup of Yugoslavia, Articles and Documents from 1992–2008*. It contains a selection of first-hand articles by *Militant* correspondents who participated in reporting trips through the decade of war in the 1990s in Yugoslavia that consolidated the breakup of that country.

The book is based on material from Pathfinder's book *The Truth About Yugoslavia: Why Working People Should Oppose Intervention*, which Diethnes Vima published in Greek in 1995. The new edition contains articles from the *Militant* explaining how Washington and other imperialist powers took advantage of war between competing bureaucratic gangs of wannabe capitalists in Yugoslavia to intervene first in Bosnia and then in Kosova.

The authors explain how the breakup of Yugoslavia was not a product of the "age-old national and religious hatred that supposedly characterizes the Balkan peoples." On the contrary, it was a product of the crisis of the world capitalist system and the sharp-

ening interimperialist conflicts that it fuels. The purpose of imperialist intervention was never to stop brutal assaults and slaughtering of Muslims in Bosnia or Albanians in Kosova. The U.S. government "used military power and asserted its domination over its European rivals on the corpses of working people of Yugoslavia." One of the articles is an eyewitness report on Washington's bombing campaign in 1999 targeting the working class of Serbia.

The new book expands the sections on Kosova and Macedonia. It describes the unfolding struggle by Albanians in Kosova for self-determination against Serb domination, up to the declaration of independence in 2008 by Kosovar Albanians. The section on Macedonia contains articles from the *Militant* on the struggle by Albanians there for their national rights, and the continuing imperialist drive by Athens against the Macedonian people.

The book closes with an appendix containing a 1932 discussion by Leon Trotsky with Greek communists on the Macedonian national question, a 1920 resolution by the Balkan Communist Federation, and a 1939 article by Greek communist leader Pantelis

Pouliopoulos on the coming second world imperialist war and the national question in the Balkans.

In his discussion with Greek communists, Trotsky said that "if the Macedonians are oppressed by the bourgeois government [in Greece], or feel that they are oppressed, we must give them support." Trotsky further explained, "What disturbs me is not so much the question of the Macedonian peasants, but rather whether there isn't a touch of chauvinist poison in *Greek workers*."

As the introductory note to the new book explains, "This book is not simply a chronicle of the breakup of a country. It is about today and tomorrow of the Balkans." Working people in Serbia overthrew the hated Stalinist police regime of Slobodan Milosevic and Albanians in Kosova got Serbian domination off their backs.

The working classes in all republics of the former Yugoslavia are now confronting expanding possibilities to develop their independent organization and fight for their rights and betterment of their living standards, as the ruling castes try to integrate these republics further into a world capitalist market that is in the beginning stages of a depression.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



August 9, 1985

The U.S. government continues to support the racist regime in South Africa as it steps up murders, jailings, and other forms of repression against heroic Black youths, trade unionists, and others who are fighting to put an end to apartheid.

As of July 31, South African cops admitted having arrested more than 1,200 and killed at least 20 people since the state of emergency was imposed on 36 urban districts July 20.

But Black rights groups like the Detainees' Parents Support Committee insist that the figures are higher.

Nor has the escalating repression ended the current wave of protests although news about protest actions has been reduced to a trickle under the state of emergency.



August 8, 1960

The Cuban revolution is an event of major significance to North as well as South America. Not since the victory of the Chinese people over dictator Chiang Kai-shek in 1949 have the two continents been so stirred. The rise in fear among the reactionary property-holding classes is registered in the preoccupation of the capitalist press and the State Department over the "menace" that has appeared on the tiny island in the Caribbean. In contrast, the rise in hope among the workers and peasants throughout Latin America is visible in constant trade-union resolutions and popular demonstrations in support of Cuba. Moreover, the progress of the political, economic, and social overturn in what was formerly one of Wall Street's holdings has inspired fresh political currents.



August 10, 1935

PORTLAND, Oregon—Determined to smash the solidarity of the marine workers of the Pacific Coast, evidenced by the formation of the Maritime Federation of the Pacific refusal to handle scab cargo, and the ousting of such reactionary officials as Scharrenberg of the International Seamen's Union, the waterfront employers have launched a drive that has as its goal the smashing of every marine union on the West coast and a return to the intolerable conditions prevailing prior to last summer's strike.

Time after time during the past year the longshoremen and seamen have demonstrated their working-class solidarity by refusing to handle scab cargo and work ships loaded by scabs.

Oil bosses disregarded work safety on Gulf rig

BY ANGEL LARISCY

In the weeks and days before the April 20 explosion of the Deepwater Horizon oil rig, interviews with workers and internal documents show a lack of attention to safety, a fear of reporting problems, and an atmosphere of drilling for oil no matter the risk.

The blast killed 11 workers and unleashed three months of gushing oil into the Gulf of Mexico. BP leased the oil rig from Transocean, which employs a large share of the workers on board.

In a survey commissioned by Transocean in the weeks before the explosion, workers said they “often saw unsafe behaviors on the rig.” The report, obtained by the *New York Times*, says that workers also thought “drilling priorities [were] taking precedence over planned maintenance.”

Twenty-six components and systems on the rig were in “bad” or “poor” condition, according to the survey. Crucial elements of the blowout preventer, including safety valves, had not been properly inspected for 10 years, despite rules requiring inspection every three to five years. Workers report they were scared to say anything about the safety problems. “The company is always using fear tactics,” said one.

Mike Williams, chief engineer technician on the Deepwater Horizon, testified before federal hearings conducted by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement and the Coast Guard. He said the fire and gas leak alarm systems had been in the “inhibited” mode for at least a year before the April explosion. In answer to his repeated complaints about disabled warning systems, Williams said that he was told, “They did not want people to wake up at 3:00 a.m. due to false alarm.”

The computers used to monitor and control the drilling operations froze intermittently and one of the panels that controlled the blowout preventer had been placed in bypass mode to work around a malfunction.

“From day one, he deemed this the well from hell,” said Natalie Roshto of

her husband Shane Roshto, a 22-year-old worker who died in the explosion. “I don’t think we need to make any more safety rules. I think they need to be implemented harder for our men who work out there.”

Cleanup workers protest

While BP appears to have capped the well for the meantime, workers involved in the ongoing cleanup effort continue to face harsh working conditions.

“We worked out there for 30-something days before they even let us know that we had to have protective equipment,” Jarred Bourgeois told a New Orleans television station. From the end of April to mid-July, the federal government reported 571 incidents of illness and 757 injuries related to the oil spill cleanup. Two workers have died and dozens have been taken to the hospital.

On July 16, Kenneth Feinberg, the federal official in charge of administering BP’s \$20 billion oil-spill fund, told a town hall meeting in Biloxi, Mississippi, that those being paid for work on the cleanup would have their wages deducted from any settlement they receive. The fund is intended to



Jordan Macha

Oil covered boat in Barataria Bay, Louisiana, being used in Gulf cleanup. Fishermen and shrimpers are working for BP on cleanup because many fishing areas are closed.

compensate fishermen, shrimpers, and others who are out of work because of the oil spill.

Tuget Nguyen, one of the thousands of jobless workers because much of the Gulf is closed to fishing, said, “I am furious about this. . . . It’s not fair.” The amount BP is paying fishermen to rent their boats is far below what they make during a regular season.

A group of fishermen who are working on the cleanup in Myrtle Grove, Louisiana, have gone on strike because of unacceptable living conditions and

lack of pay. “We’re on strike, so we’re not going to work,” said Jules Dag, a fisherman for 50 years.

Workers are protesting the fact that BP is housing them in “flotels,” shipping containers stacked on top of each other on a barge, powered by generators. Each container holds 12 bunks. One worker compared the accommodations to prison.

Dag said some workers have been forced to accept the conditions because they have not been paid. “Forty days, we ain’t seen nothing yet,” he said.

Iowa socialists complete successful ballot drive

Continued from front page

ty first on the job. “Not the ‘safety’ the company talks about while they continually push for more production,” Trowe explained at the plant gate. “My program is for the workers controlling the line speed and all aspects of health and safety on the job, including no forced overtime.”

While campaigning here, Helen Meyers, SWP candidate for lieutenant governor, met Billy Byrd, a worker who is Black. He said his son had been killed by the police in 2007. Byrd signed the petition and bought a *Militant*. “As long as no one says anything, it stays the same at best, or gets worse,” Byrd told Meyers.

A panel of SWP candidates from the Midwest spoke at a victory celebration

for the petitioning effort July 24.

John Hawkins, SWP candidate for governor of Illinois, said, “You had to be joyous when you heard about the conviction of Johannes Mehserle,” the Bay Area transit cop who killed Oscar Grant, a young Black man, more than a year ago. “This was a victory for Blacks and a victory for all workers.”

Hawkins pointed to the June 28 conviction of Jon Burge, a former Chicago policeman fired 17 years ago for using suffocation, electric shocks, and beatings to force confessions out of suspects. He was convicted of lying about torture in a civil lawsuit.

Pointing to the indictments of four New Orleans cops for killing Black people crossing the Danziger Bridge to get groceries after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Hawkins said, “These developments are significant for working people. They don’t happen by accident. They happen because of changes that have taken place throughout society, the weakening of racism, and because people, like those involved in Burge’s conviction, courageously continue to speak out.”

“No way can workers win justice in the capitalist courts,” continued Hawkins, “but these recent developments that went against the cops sends a message. It slows down their actions and gives encouragement to those who have been abused by the cops to stand up and speak out.”

Anthony Lane, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress in the 5th C.D., in Minnesota, also spoke at the rally.

Trowe, in her talk, began by denouncing Congress’s denial of a \$1.2 billion payment to Black farmers for discrimination by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Black farmers have been waiting decades for this partial redress of the racism the gov-

ernment has subjected them to.

She explained that working farmers throughout the country face the constant threat of losing their land, or not making enough to cover their costs. Iowa is the number one state in production of corn, hogs, and eggs.

As an agricultural state, the crisis of capitalism affects workers and farmers alike. The alliance between exploited producers in the city and on the land is crucial to working people being able to advance.

Guarantee farmers use of land

The Socialist Workers platform, Trowe said, calls for “the government to guarantee the costs of production to working farmers. This includes access to government-financed affordable credit and a halt to farm foreclosures. Farmers must be guaranteed use of the land they rent or hold title to without fear of eviction.

“David Rosenfeld, our candidate for governor, and I attended a rally of dairy farmers in Manchester, Iowa, last year, when milk prices had fallen below the cost of production,” continued Trowe. “We attend conferences and protests organized by farmers, and discuss the worker-farmer alliance with our co-workers in industry, some of whom are farmers or come from farm families.

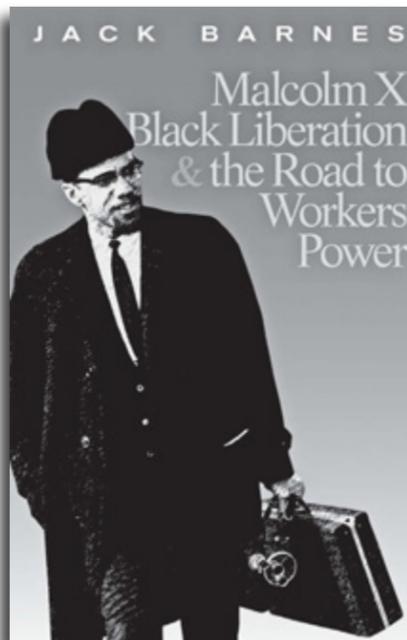
“Workers and farmers have a common exploiter, a common enemy in the dictatorship of capital. Their exploitation and all the misery and insecurity resulting from it can be eliminated only by a revolution that overturns capitalist rule.

“Along that road workers and farmers need to break from the capitalist parties—Democrats and Republicans, alike—and through the course of struggles throw their energies into building and supporting a labor party that is based on the unions.”

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by Jack Barnes



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

PathfinderPress.com

Socialist candidates hit streets of New York City

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

NEW YORK—After finishing a successful petition drive to put Róger Calero, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress in the 15th District, on the ballot, supporters were back on the streets July 24–25 for more political discussions with working people.

The party is also running Sarah Ruth Robinett and Willie Cotton for U.S. Senate and Dan Fein for governor. They are write-in candidates.

The socialist campaign's platform points to the need for workers to take political power and puts forward a series of demands workers can fight for to defend themselves from the assault by the bosses and their parties in government.

On July 25 Calero and Robinett joined supporters campaigning in Harlem at 145th Street and Frederick Douglas Avenue, a corner where hundreds of workers signed petitions for Calero. A young woman, originally from Grenada, spent 20 minutes talking with Calero about U.S. and world politics. She purchased *Maurice Bishop Speaks*, a collection of speeches by the leader of Grenada's 1979–83 popular revolution. She said in the last election she noticed the SWP was on the ballot and wanted to know more about what the party stood for.

"I signed the petition last week," a woman told one of the campaign supporters. Upon being shown a copy of the *Militant*, she added, "I got that last week too." Another woman, who said she had also signed, bought a *Militant*.

Outside a nearby Pathmark store, Robinett introduced the campaign to a store worker who was wearing a large button saying, "One Voice, One Union Contract." Robinett pointed to the campaign's support to workers' struggles to use union power, or to organize unions where none exist, to defend all working people against the bosses' assaults.

The same day Fein joined campaign supporters in Bedford-Stuyvesant, a working-class, predominantly Black neighborhood of Brooklyn, where he soapboxed with a bullhorn. A number of workers passing by stopped to listen.

"Workers need to stop supporting the Democratic and Republican parties, the parties of the capitalists, and launch a labor party based on a rejuvenated and militant union movement," Fein said. One woman commented, "I agree with what he said. Give me some more information." Two people bought the book *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*.

On July 24 Calero and Fein participated in a South Bronx outdoor festival in support of the fight for legalization of undocumented workers and to oppose anti-immigrant measures like Arizona law SB 1070.

Calero addressed the crowd in Spanish. "The attacks coming down on immigrant workers, whether through laws like the SB 1070, increased deportations by the administration of Barack Obama, or the recent increase of cops and the National Guard at the border," he said, "show the only road forward in the fight for legalization is one that is independent of the Demo-

crats and Republicans."

That evening the SWP candidates participated in a celebration of the Cuban Revolution. The meeting, sponsored by Casa de las Americas and the July 26th Coalition, marked the 57th anniversary of the launching of the revolutionary struggle that resulted in the toppling of U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista in Cuba, and the taking of political power by workers and peasants there.

A campaign supporter who is an electrician brought two Caribbean co-workers to the meeting, one of whom was a participant in the Grenada revolution. Between the two, they bought *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* and *Maurice Bishop Speaks* from the SWP campaign table.

SWP election campaign in Washington, D.C.

Continued from front page

spoke to. Several people brought petitioners ice and cold drinks to help them keep going.

"I'm interested," said Katherine Gill, 50, an early childhood teacher who stopped to see what the socialist campaigners were doing at a Safeway supermarket in the northwest part of the city. "Tell me more."

Gill was angry over the firings of 241 teachers by D.C. Schools Chancellor Michelle Rhee. After further discussion, she decided to subscribe to the *Militant* and bought a copy of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*. "This is what I've been looking for," she said.

So far during the petition drive campaign supporters have sold six copies of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, three subscriptions to the *Militant*, and 59 single copies of the socialist newsweekly.

Luis Chilibinca, 60, originally from Ecuador, joined a campaign team in the Columbia Heights area, where many



Sarah Ruth Robinett, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate, discusses party platform with worker at Pathmark grocery store in Harlem neighborhood of New York July 25.

Spanish-speaking workers live. The team went store to store, talking to customers about the socialist campaign. He is also helping produce a Spanish-language copy of the campaign platform.

Keith Blue, 40, who works as a cook in a big hotel in Crystal City, Virginia, campaigned both Saturday and Sunday and plans to go out again during the week. "I'm learning a lot," he said, "and I appreciate the opportunity to be part of this effort."

Campaign supporters filled the Socialist Workers campaign offices Saturday night to discuss the first big day of petitioning and hear talks by Musa and Paul Pederson, SWP candidate for chair of the D.C. City Council.

"The working class in the United States and around the world is living through the opening stages of the greatest capitalist crisis in over 75 years," Musa said. "We are being hit by the capitalist class and its twin parties—the Democrats and Republicans—on all sides. Many of us are beginning to see our problem is not good or bad politi-

cians. Rather, as one woman put it today, 'It's the system that's the problem.'"

"I'm often asked, 'what would you do if you were elected?' or 'how are you different from other politicians?'" Musa continued. "I explain that we are not interested in administering the capitalist system. We are about helping to build a revolutionary movement whose goal is educating and organizing the working class to take power and begin the process of expropriating the capitalist class, in order to put the wealth created by working people to use meeting our needs. As a first step, we need to break with the Democratic and Republican parties and begin to organize our own party, a labor party based on a fighting union movement. The working class can't fight effectively while we support the Democrats and Republicans. Those parties are the enemies of working people."

"The capitalists use their control of jobs to pit workers against each other and break down solidarity," Pederson said. "In this election, for example, Leo Alexander, who is running in the Democratic primary, is demagogically appealing to Black workers by saying 'immigrant workers are stealing our jobs.'"

"Today, I talked to two Black workers who at first refused to sign the petition because our campaign calls for legalization of undocumented workers," Pederson stated. "I discussed with them how the bosses use immigrant workers' 'illegal' status to drive down wages, keep people from fighting for their rights, and deepen divisions among workers, allowing the capitalists to generate more profits. I pointed to the massive May 1 demonstrations for immigrant rights that have taken place since 2006."

"There's a new privately run detention center being built in Virginia. The capitalists are trying to make immigrant workers appear as criminals, in the same way Black workers are stigmatized as 'criminals,'" Pederson said. "After our discussion, both workers signed the petition. 'I used to be a militant,' one of them said. 'I let them beat me down, but you're right.'"

The socialist campaign is fielding teams every day through the final weekend of petitioning July 31–August 1.



Socialist Workers campaign supporter Keith Blue, right, petitions July 25 to get Omari Musa, candidate for mayor of Washington, D.C., on ballot.

'Payoff when debt of business unionism comes due'

Below is an excerpt from *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions*, one of *Pathfinder's Books of the Month* for August. The book shows why only the working class can lead humanity out of the social crisis endemic to capitalism in its decline. It shows how millions of workers, as political resistance grows, will revolutionize themselves, their unions, and all of society. It explains the kind of party the working class needs to prepare for the coming class battles to take political power from the capitalist rulers and join the fight for the reconstruction of the world on socialist foundations. This excerpt is from the chapter titled "Leading the party into industry," a report approved by the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party in February 1978. Copyright ©1981 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Militant/Carole Lesnick

Protest in Plainfield, New Jersey, May 2008 against closing of Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center. "Fringe benefits are good in good times—for workers who have them," Jack Barnes notes. "But when the squeeze comes, this all begins to fall apart. Your pension funds are threatened. Your health-care plans are dismantled. The supplemental unemployment benefits run out."

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JACK BARNES

When we talk about the social and political responsibilities of labor we explain the need to combat the ruling-class policy of imposing on the individual family the responsibility for social services that should be taken care of by society—the care of the young, the elderly, the sick and disabled. But that's not the only way

capitalism works. The employers also try to impose upon the individual workers responsibilities that should be met by society. And more and more they try to establish that these responsibilities will be met only according to the profitability of each worker's own boss. I leave aside the most grotesque single examples such as the public-employee unions' officials sinking massive amounts of pension funds into city bonds in New York City. But more and more so-called general fringe benefits—pensions, health-care plans, supplemental unemployment benefits—all become contingent on the continuing profits of the boss you work for. We see this growing in industries like coal, steel, and auto.

These benefits are not won for the class as a whole, or even a section of the class. It's almost like a march back toward feudalism, not a march forward toward socialism. These fringes are good in good times—for workers who have them—because they're a substantial addition to everything else industrial workers can count on. But when the squeeze comes, this all begins to fall apart. Your pension funds are threatened. Your health-care plans are dismantled. The supplemental unemployment benefits run out. And the squeeze is on.

This is the payoff when the debt of business unionism comes due. This is the price paid for the class-collabora-

tionist policy of refusing to fight for the real needs of the class—the social security of the class, national health care, for national unemployment insurance that's real and high enough, for a shorter workweek at no cut in pay, for protection against inflation, and for independent working-class political action. This is the price paid for a bureaucracy that says independent social and political struggles are secondary, and says the employers' promises in the contract are decisive.

This is the payoff for the refusal of the labor bureaucracy to fight for the broad social needs of the working class and to build a political instrument to fight for them. And this is what raises the labor party question in a new way. This concretizes it in a new and more understandable way, because now these problems are immediately facing the section of the working class that thought they were the least vulnerable and had the best deal.

Another thing that is happening in this offensive is a conscious attack on trade union democracy. The *right to strike* becomes a special target of the employers. Other restrictions are institutionalized, such as lengthy probationary periods that give the bosses a chance to weed out union militants, "troublemakers" of all kinds. Speedup and the erosion of safety and health protection on the job, are more and more a factor. Incentive

pay and piecework plans are introduced in one form or another. Schemes like the Experimental Negotiating Agreement in steel with its no-strike pledge are generalized as much as possible.¹ And arbitration procedures are put into every nook and cranny of every contract, tying the workers' hands and leaving them without the right to use their strength to fight back. In this way class collaboration becomes institutionalized.

Class collaboration isn't simply a program or an attitude of bureaucrats. Class collaboration takes the form of institutions that tie the individual worker hand and foot, that make a worker dependent on someone other than the power of his or her co-workers and class. Trade union democracy of any kind, union control of conditions and pace of work, individual workers' rights on the job, are more and more opposed by the employer. The right to know, the right to vote on contracts, the right to elect your stewards and officers—these things can less and less be afforded by the employers. And they can less and less be tolerated by the union bureaucracy as well.

Finally, of course, class collaboration is the total dependence on the political parties and social programs of the employers.

A third thing that happens as a result of the offensive is the growing need for *solidarity*. That's become clearer in the struggles of the last couple years. Solidarity becomes crucial to success in the struggles that are breaking out. Each of these struggles, like the one on the Iron Range, like the coal miners today, turns into a political fight for the minds of the working class. Not only of the workers who are on strike but of the entire class. The strikers must appeal for support, and the employers, the government, must try to prevent that support, must whip up opposition. This is not only the source of the need for solidarity, it's also the source of the need for internationalism. Because ultimately class solidarity has to be worldwide.

1. The Experimental Negotiating Agreement was a no-strike pact signed by the USWA officialdom and the basic steel corporations in 1973.

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August BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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U.S. out of Korean Peninsula!

The military exercises Washington is conducting off the coast of the Korean Peninsula and the latest round of economic sanctions it has imposed on North Korea should be denounced by working people worldwide.

The Obama administration has made clear these air and naval “war games,” the largest off the Korean coast in years, will be followed by more such operations in the coming months.

The U.S. imperialists, along with their ally in Seoul, have ceaselessly organized military provocations against North Korea. Their moves are part of more than 50 years of hostility since the workers and peasants of that country made a socialist revolution and defeated the 1950–53 U.S. invasion carried out under UN cover. Since then Washington has refused to sign a peace treaty with Pyongyang.

The U.S. government’s new economic sanctions further tighten those passed by the United Nations Security Council last year and will limit access to food, fuel, and funds.

Washington justifies this aggression as necessary to stop the North Korean “nuclear threat.” But it is Washington that introduced nuclear arms and delivery systems on Korea’s soil and maintains them throughout the Pacific, and for decades has stationed tens of thousands of U.S. troops in South Korea. It is Washington that has forcibly maintained the partition of Korea into North and South, despite strong support in both countries for reunification.

We should demand: Withdraw U.S. troops, ships, and weapons from the Korean Peninsula! End the sanctions against North Korea! Sign the peace treaty!

U.S.-led exercises threaten N. Korea

Continued from front page

said “future drills would take place in the Yellow Sea,” reported the *Financial Times*. Washington conducts large military exercises at least twice a year off the South Korean coast.

The current exercises take place four months after the South Korean warship *Cheonan* sank, killing 46 sailors. Seoul charged North Korea, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), of sinking the ship with torpedoes. Pyongyang has denied involvement. The United Nations Security Council in July passed a resolution condemning the attack, but did not directly accuse the DPRK of carrying it out.

Several days before the military operations, U.S. secretary of state Hillary Clinton and Gates traveled to Seoul for talks with their counterparts, South Korean foreign minister Yu Myung-hwan and South Korean defense minister Kim Tae-young.

The four visited the village of Panmunjom in the

middle of the demilitarized zone, which divides Korea into two. The truce that ended the Korean War was signed there July 27, 1953. Since then the U.S. government, aided by its South Korean capitalist allies, has never ceased its military threats against North Korea. It maintains 28,000 troops in the South.

Clinton announced that Washington will impose additional economic sanctions on North Korea, seeking to tighten the squeeze with the freezing of assets and limiting what Washington claims is trading of arms and related goods with the DPRK.

“The effectiveness of the [U.S.] measures will depend heavily on persuading banks in other countries to shun North Korea,” said the *Times*, “because no legitimate American banks do business with the North.”

Immediately after visiting Seoul, Clinton headed to the meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Hanoi to pressure the governments of the 27-member group to abide by the new U.S. sanctions.



U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Adam K. Thomas

Joint U.S. and South Korean naval exercise “Invincible Spirit” in Sea of Japan near Korean Peninsula July 26

LETTERS

Congratulations

I just finished reading about the Socialist Workers Party’s 46th national convention. [See July 12 *Militant*.] Congrats! The SWP, the *Militant*, and Pathfinder are playing a large role in my education on the class struggle. My family is even learning to respect your perspectives.

A prisoner
Maryland

Black farmers

The government decided to allow 17 executives of banks it recently bailed out to keep \$1.6 billion in compensation, but the U.S. Senate stripped both \$1.2 billion

designated to compensate tens of thousands of Black farmers for a legacy of discrimination by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and a \$3.4 billion settlement for Native Americans who said the government swindled them out of royalties.

‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

The Prisoners’ Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the Militant and earmarked “Prisoners’ Fund” to 306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

The reason the federal official gave for not trying to recoup the exorbitant bank executive compensation was that “shaming them was punishment enough.” The reason given for stripping funds to compensate Black farmers and Indians was the question: “Where would the money come from?”

Karl Butts
Plant City, Florida

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

Afghanistan

Continued from page 2

coalition troops pushed the Taliban out of town and planned to spread the central government’s control to the 80-square-mile farming community.

But by May Taliban forces were openly operating again throughout the area. In July the Afghan government replaced its representative in Marjah in an effort to establish stability there.

An article in the July 13 *Wall Street Journal* highlights some of the challenges Washington faces. It describes how the U.S. government spent more than \$100 million to upgrade the Kajaki hydroelectric plant in Helmand Province in an effort to undercut support to the Taliban.

But the paper noted that since the plant’s output doubled, nearly half of the total electric output goes to districts where the Taliban are in control. In those districts, the *Journal* reports, residents pay their monthly bills to Taliban officials.

The transmission lines crisscross both government- and Taliban-controlled districts, which are so intermingled it’s not easy to cut off the power in any one area without affecting another.

When Taliban commanders blew up an electrical pylon in the Sangin district, the Helmand provincial government shut down power to a Taliban-held area. Leaders of the main Pashtun tribes complained and a deal was worked out between the central government and the Taliban to restore electric transmission, at least for now.

International conference in Kabul

At the international conference in Kabul, some 60 governments jockeyed to advance their competing interests in Afghanistan. Hillary Clinton represented Washington. Foreign ministers from China, India, Iran, Pakistan, Russia, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates also participated.

Currently only about 20 percent of international aid money is channeled through the central government; the rest is disbursed directly by UN agencies, private contractors, and other organizations. The conference endorsed a plan to increase to 50 percent the amount of aid given directly through the Afghan government.

On the eve of the conference the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan signed a trade pact, indicating an improvement in Islamabad’s often acrimonious relations with the Karzai regime. The Afghan president also recently agreed to send Afghan military officers to Pakistan for training.

Pakistani intelligence agencies have long supported armed Islamist groups such as the Taliban in Afghanistan as proxy forces in their contest with the Indian government over influence there.

Indian investment since the U.S. invasion in 2001 is more than \$1.2 billion, making it one of the largest investors in Afghanistan. New Delhi has accused Islamabad of being behind frequent attacks on Indians working there.

Washington is tripling its economic aid to Pakistan to \$7.5 billion over the next five years. At the same time it is pushing Islamabad to take action against the Afghan Taliban and its allies that operate from Pakistan.

Correction

A political error appeared in the headline and final paragraph of the editorial in the August 2 issue of the *Militant*. The headline “Take the high ground—Free Cuban 5!” can be read as a call on Washington to “take the high ground.” But the U.S. imperialist rulers and their government never have, and never can, take the high ground on any question of interest to the working class and oppressed anywhere in the world. And the first two sentences of the final paragraph mistakenly imply that *Militant* readers somehow need to be called on to “take the moral high ground” on this international defense campaign.

If you change the headline to simply “Free the Cuban 5!” and keep only the closing sentence of the final paragraph—“Join the growing worldwide campaign demanding ‘Free the Cuban Five!’”—then the editorial expresses what was intended. —Editor