

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Protests in Kashmir
defy Indian gov't repression
—PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 74/NO. 33 AUGUST 30, 2010

U.S. gov't adds more cops, drones at border

BY SETH GALINSKY

Under the guise of combating drugs and crime, Democrats and Republicans in Congress unanimously passed a bill that will increase the victimization of undocumented workers. President Barack Obama signed it into law August 13.

The "Southwest Border Security Bill" allocates \$600 million to beef up border policing. It adds 1,500 cops to the U.S.-Mexico border, bringing the total number there to more than 18,200. In May Obama ordered 1,200 National Guardsmen to the border.

The bill includes funding for more sensors to detect those trying to cross into the United States and \$32 million to increase the number of drone airplanes to patrol the border. The U.S. government currently uses seven drones there.

As part of the government's efforts
Continued on page 5

D.C. school chief fires teachers and staff

BY GLOVA SCOTT

WASHINGTON—Schools Chancellor Michelle Rhee fired 241 teachers July 23 under IMPACT, the city's new evaluation system. One hundred sixty-five teachers were dismissed after receiving a "poor" evaluation; another 76 were fired for alleged license problems.

An additional 61 school staff members also got the axe. The city is threatening to fire another 737 school employees next year if they do not "improve their practice," Rhee said.

At a July 26 news conference George Parker, president of the Washington Teachers Union (WTU), offered only a mild protest of the dismissals. "I'm not opposed to teachers being terminated, and I don't believe all 4,000 of ours are outstanding," he said. "But our teachers are entitled to an instrument that assesses their per-
Continued on page 3

General: Afghan war 'long-term proposition'



U.S. Department of Defense/Staff Sgt. Bradley Lail, U.S. Air Force
Gen. David Petraeus, commander of U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan, third from left, with Afghan National Army members August 2 in Bala Murghab Valley in northern Afghanistan.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

President Barack Obama's promise to begin withdrawing U.S. troops from Afghanistan in July 2011 must be based on progress in winning the war, and that may be a "long-term proposition," said Gen. David Petraeus, commander of U.S. and NATO troops in Afghanistan, August 15.

"I didn't come out here [Afghanistan] to carry out a graceful exit," he said in the interview on "Meet the Press," adding that when a drawdown could begin must be "conditions-based."

To "win overall," Petraeus said, "is going to be a long-term proposition"

requiring "a substantial, significant commitment," that "is going to have to be enduring."

Petraeus made clear that the biggest U.S.-led military operations still lie ahead. By the end of August U.S. forces will have almost tripled to 100,000 from when Obama took office; non-U.S. NATO troops will be up to about 50,000.

An important component of Washington's strategy is training Afghan soldiers and police to take over the fight against Taliban. But this hasn't been going so well.

On the night of August 3, the Af-
Continued on page 4

N.Y. Transit workers protest layoffs of 200 station agents

BY DAN FEIN

BROOKLYN, New York—Some 200 laid-off New York subway station agents, members of Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100, turned in their badges and other company property August 13 at the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) training

school here. The day before was their last day on the job.

About 50 union members and supporters held a protest against the layoffs outside the training facility. The laid-off station agents staffed subway booths selling fare cards, providing
Continued on page 9



Militant/Ruth Robinett

Members and supporters of Transport Workers Union Local 100 protest layoffs August 13 outside Metropolitan Transit Authority training center in Brooklyn, New York.

Economic crisis pushes more to file early for Social Security

BY ANGEL LARISCY

Because of the worsening economic situation, close to 3 million people filed for Social Security benefits last year—the highest number of any year in U.S. history. More working people are opting to collect early and receive less money. Some two-thirds of those on Social Security count on it as their primary source of income, even though the average annual benefit is a paltry \$14,000.

The retirement age for Social Security increased in 2009 from 65 to 66 years. Workers can collect at 62 if they give up 25 percent of their benefits for the rest of their lives. In a sharp change from past decades, last year three-quarters of all workers filing for Social Security took early benefits.

More and more older workers are being driven out of the workforce

through layoffs, business closings, or because they don't have the required skills. The unemployment rate for people 55 and older reached the highest level ever recorded in April, and
Continued on page 9

Also Inside:

- | | |
|---|---|
| Georgia: 30,000 try to get gov't subsidized housing | 2 |
| Communists in Sweden launch election campaign | 3 |
| Economic crisis fuels Tea Party campaigns | 4 |
| Financial and economic crisis looms in China | 6 |

Georgia: 30,000 try to get gov't subsidized housing

BY JACOB PERASSO

ATLANTA—Thirty thousand working people of all ages showed up at a shopping center parking lot in East Point, Georgia, August 11, hoping to get applications for government-subsidized housing, known as Section 8.

Only 455 vouchers and 200 public housing spaces are available and applicants could only hope to get placed on the waiting list. Located in the Atlanta metropolitan area, East Point has a population of 40,000.

“It’s ridiculous out here,” Ashley Philips, 25, told the *Wall Street Journal*. “People are talking about, ‘Go find a job.’ But there are no jobs.” Jacquelyn Cuffie, 50, noted, “It’s difficult to pay [the rent] with a disability check.”

Some camped out for close to three days in temperatures that neared 100 degrees. Under these conditions, a number of people collapsed in the heat.

The local police were in riot gear. Officers from four other police agencies were also out in force.

After waiting hours in line, housing personnel and the cops abruptly reorganized the crowd, forcing many to lose their position.

In the confusion that ensued 62 people were injured, as police enforcement incensed the crowd with pushing and shoving. “Renee Gray, a single mother holding her one-year-old daughter, came looking for a housing break and nearly got trampled,” reported the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.

At least 60 people were taken to the hospital because of the heat or

scuffles; some were carried out on stretchers.

Lisa Potash, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate in Georgia, campaigned in East Point the weekend after the applications were distributed.

“The fact that people were left standing in the hot sun for hours and treated without respect is an example of the day-to-day indignities that working people are faced with. The housing stock should be made available to all based on human need, not profit.”

Other cities that have opened their subsidized housing waiting lists have also had thousands of applicants. This summer the Chicago Housing Authority opened its list for the first time in a decade. Nearly 100,000 applied online the first day. Within the four-week window to apply, 215,000



Associated Press/Vino Wong

Working people in East Point, Georgia, being hassled by cops as more than 30,000 line up for government-subsidized housing vouchers August 11.

people did so.

Eligibility for Section 8 housing is limited. A family’s income cannot exceed 50 percent of the median income for the county or metropolitan area in

which they choose to live. Subsidies are paid directly to the landlord by the housing authority and families pay the difference between the actual rent charged by the landlord and the subsidy.

Native American farmers fight USDA discrimination

BY ANGEL LARISCY

For more than a decade Native American farmers and ranchers have waged a legal battle against the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for discrimination.

Keepseagle v. Vilsack charges the USDA denied loans, or imposed more stringent credit terms, to thousands of Native American farmers and ranchers, compared to farmers who were white with similar financial standing. Native American farmers say they were called “injuns” and subjected to other racial slurs from USDA employees. When they complained, nothing was done.

The class-action lawsuit includes all Native Americans who farmed or ranched between 1981 and 1999 and applied to the USDA for a loan or subsidy during that time or filed a discrimination complaint. Indian farmers say the USDA has continued to discriminate against them since the lawsuit was filed in November 1999.

George and Marilyn Keepseagle, who have spent the last half century ranching on the Standing Rock reservation in North Dakota, are the lead plaintiffs in the lawsuit. They, like other Native American farmers, sought a loan from the USDA when they couldn’t get one anywhere else. Because of its onerous conditions, the Keepseagles fear garnishment of Social Security payments and possible foreclosure if they can’t pay it back.

In 1999 Black farmers won a large settlement in the *Pigford v. Glickman* class-action lawsuit against the USDA, but most of them have still not been paid. Latino and female farmers also have lawsuits alleging USDA discrimination that are tied up in the courts.

Keith and Claryca Mandan, who have a ranch on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation in western North Da-

kota, were repeatedly denied USDA loans and subsidies they needed to build a barn and machine shed on their ranch. Until 2006 they had to haul water 15 miles for their livestock. They joined the suit in 1999 when the government tried to foreclose on them.

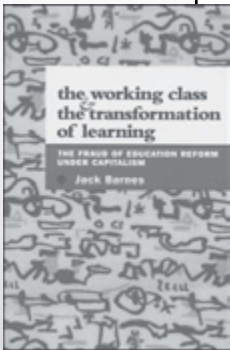
“Had we been given credit, and the opportunities and the programs that all of our non-Indian neighbors had gotten, we would be on par with them today,” said Claryca Mandan in a radio interview. “All we were asking for was equal treatment, and we never got it.”

The Working Class & the Transformation of Learning
The fraud of education reform under capitalism

by Jack Barnes

“Until society is reorganized so that education is a human activity from the time we are very young until the time we die, there will be no education worthy of working, creating humanity. That is the historical truth.”
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THE MILITANT

Imperialist troops out of Afghanistan!

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Associated Press/Musadeq Sadeq

Afghan women in Kabul August 1 chant slogans against NATO and U.S. forces.

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Communists in Sweden launch election campaign

BY CATHARINA TIRSÉN
STOCKHOLM, Sweden—“Six hundred soldiers have been sent to Afghanistan by the Swedish government. They are right now participating in an imperialist war of robbery,” explained Anita Östling, who along with Dag Tirsén are the two lead Communist League candidates for Swedish parliament for the county in Stockholm, and for Stockholm municipality. “It is only one of the wars taking place at the same time the world sinks deeper into economic depression and social crisis.”

Östling was speaking at an August 14 meeting to launch the election campaign here. Tirsén chaired the meeting. “The ruling classes around the world, including here in Sweden, attack health care, pensions, and other social gains that we look upon as rights,” stated Östling.

Other political parties never mention the word depression in the unfolding debate leading up to the elections on September 16. Östling described the attacks on pensions and sick leave benefits, begun in the 1990s under the social democratic government and continued by the parties in the so-called alliance government formed in 2006. Unemployment benefits, for example, have not been raised since 2002.

“No matter what election coalition wins on September 16, the attacks on working people will continue,” she said. “That means we will need to use our organizations to defend ourselves.”

“The garbage collectors organized a strike in 2009 to defend their working conditions against speedup and wage cuts. Despite antistrike laws that have hamstrung the unions since working-class struggles were defeated in the 1930s, workers can use their unions and build unity to defend themselves,” Östling said.

Östling also pointed to the fight by Somali immigrants in 2008 to free two of their leaders who spent four months in prison, accused of terrorism. They were freed and charges dropped.

“I don’t think that workers in Sweden have become more capitalist minded,”

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA
Los Angeles
How the Labor Movement Can Fight for Jobs for All. Speaker: Bill Arth, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Aug. 27, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 4025 S. Western Ave. Tel.: (323) 295-2600.
San Francisco
How and Why the U.S. Government Uses Its ‘War on Terrorism’ to Attack Workers Rights. Speaker: Joel Britton, SWP. Fri., Aug. 27, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5; unemployed: \$1. 5482 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

NEW YORK
Manhattan
China’s ‘Economic Miracle’ and the World Capitalist Economic Crisis. Speaker: Brian Williams, SWP. Fri., Aug. 27, 8 p.m. Donation: \$5. 307 W. 36th St., 10th floor (use north elevators). Tel.: (212) 736-2540.

WASHINGTON
Seattle
The Fight for Women’s Rights on the Road to Workers Power. Speaker: representative, SWP. Fri., Aug. 27, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 5418 Rainier Ave. S. (Brandon St. stop on Rainier, bus #7 or #9). Tel.: (206) 323-1755.

one worker said in the lively discussion period. He asked, “How come the social democrats and the election coalition they lead do not appear to be headed toward an easy electoral victory?”

“The social democrats always administered the extraction of surplus value for the Swedish capitalists by presiding over their state. They promised reforms and a better life, but that is not possible any more. When capitalism is in crisis, the social democracy, like the Stalinists, are in crisis too,” Östling responded.

Others asked why the Sweden Democrats—a right-wing party that began in 1988 formed out of violent street gangs called “Keep Sweden Swedish”—gained seats in 130 municipalities in the 2006 elections and now, on September 16, seems will get more than 4 percent of the votes needed to retain seats in parliament. “The main capitalist parties paint a rosy picture of the situation, while working people sense that their future is uncertain,” Östling said. “The Sweden Democrats play on this fear, blaming the crisis on immigrants.

“All parties, from the Sweden Dem-

Teachers, staff fired in Washington, D.C.

Continued from front page
formance fairly, and this evaluation system does not.” The union will file a lawsuit.
In June the WTU and the D.C. City Council approved a contract that wipes out long-standing job security provisions in exchange for raises and merit pay based on classroom test performances. Teachers will receive a 21.6 percent salary increase. The new contract provides for a “performance pay” system with bonuses of \$20,000 to \$30,000 annually for teachers who meet certain benchmarks, including growth in test scores.

SWP candidate denounces ‘reforms’
Omari Musa, Socialist Workers Party candidate for district mayor, said, “The school ‘reforms’ being implemented by Chancellor Rhee and promoted by the Democratic and Republican party candidates are part of the competition between school districts for scarce funds—between teachers over who gets hired or fired, and between individual families for which students get into better schools, all the while maintaining education as an institution that reinforces the social relations and privileges of capitalism.
“The reforms amount to scapegoating teachers for the crisis of the U.S. education system,” Musa said. “They aim to divide teachers by ‘effectiveness.’ Basing compensation on student test scores is simply a way to ig-

—CALENDAR—
UNITED KINGDOM
London
Culture and the Cuban Revolution. Speaker: Aida Bahr, member of the National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba and one of the organizers of annual Havana International Book Fair. Sat., Sept. 11, 3 p.m. Birkbeck College, Room B36, Malet St. (nearest tubes Goodge St. and Warren St.). Tel.: 07930-570667.

Tehran daily serializes ‘Teamster Rebellion’



The Tehran daily *Donya-e-Eqtesad* (The World of Economics) is serializing the Farsi-language translation of *Teamster Rebellion*. The newspaper is sold at newsstands throughout Iran.

In introducing the series, the paper wrote that *Teamster Rebellion* is “written by Farrell Dobbs, an American communist. The book is published by Talaye Porsoo Publications and is devoted to the struggles of American workers. In the next few issues you will be reading parts of this book.”

The book tells the story of the militant 1934 strikes in the United States that built the industrial union movement in Minneapolis and helped pave the way for the CIO, recounted by a central leader of that battle.

Each installment in the Tehran paper has a photo and caption. The book was originally published in English by Pathfinder. Editions in English, Farsi, Swedish, and Spanish are available from distributors listed on page 8 or pathfinderpress.com.

—CINDY JAQUITH

ocrats to small parties on the far left of bourgeois politics, are nostalgically defending the ‘welfare state.’”
But no one can get this “welfare state” back, explained Östling. “Today working people face restrictive laws against strikes and spying and harass-

ment of militant workers. We need to fight to defend every millimeter of gains, and defend ourselves against government attacks against us. The fights will not be over until we topple the rulers and their state in a proletarian revolution.”

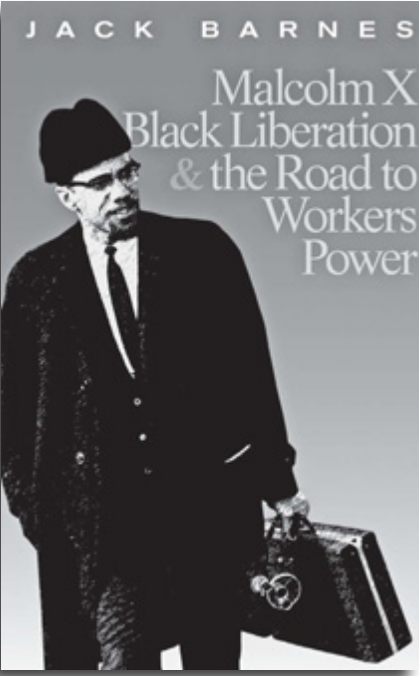
nore wage and seniority provisions in union contracts. We must strengthen our unions and fight for independent working-class political action to defend ourselves.”
On August 13, 75 people gathered outside the District of Columbia Public School headquarters to protest the firings of teachers’ assistants, family social workers, Head Start personnel, and other staff who also received low ratings under IMPACT. The rally was called by Local 2921 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).
Union local president Michael Flood noted that “the members who have been targeted have tenure and seniority.” Flood called for “the immediate reinstatement of those who were fired and for a fair contract that ends poverty wages.” AFSCME

members have been working without a contract for three years.
Lakesha Johnson, 34, lost her job as a teacher assistant at the Frederick Douglass Phase II Program in southeast Washington that services infants and young children. The three- to five-year-old category was terminated, forcing her to find another job in the public school system. Under the United Planning Organization that took over the remaining program, “people get higher pay,” Johnson pointed out, “but no health care, no dental, no vision, no sick leave, no annual leave like I did.”
Yvonne Richardson, 40, a nonunion Head Start staff assistant who lost her job, was at her first protest action. She explained how she and others were given five minutes to gather their belongings and leave the building when they were fired.

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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.

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Economic crisis fuels Tea Party campaigns

BY SETH GALINSKY

Victories by Tea Party-backed candidates in recent midterm primaries are exposing some fracture lines within the Republican Party in several states.

In Colorado, Tea Party candidate Dan Maes narrowly won the August 10 primary for the Republican nomination for governor against Congressman Scott McInnis, who was preferred by the Republican Party establishment. His Democratic rival in the November election will be Denver mayor John Hickenlooper.

Maes, a businessman, said he “grew up on the wrong side of the tracks” and was campaigning against the Republican Party “kingmakers.”

“Instead of being fueled by special interests and big money, Dan Maes’s campaign is fueled by traditional American values,” campaign supporter Paige Rodriguez told the press.

Tea Party supporters have challenged Republican establishment candidates in Alabama, Arizona, Kentucky, Nevada, Florida, Virginia, and Utah. Like other populist groupings before it, those who identify with the Tea Party are heterogeneous and hold competing points of view.

Resentment and insecurity

Although the Tea Party burst on the scene with a number of highly publicized demonstrations, its supporters are now focused on making their voice heard through elections, not through mobilizations in the streets, arguing that they are the ones who can best defeat the Democratic incumbents, who they view as especially corrupt and unpopular. The development of the Tea Party is a reflection of growing resentment and insecurity due to the grinding economic crisis and distrust toward both the Democratic and Republican Parties.

Based especially on middle-class layers, including professionals, lawyers, and small business owners, it also has won support from some working people.

In an article titled “The Two Faces of the Tea Party” in the *Weekly Standard*, a conservative magazine, Matthew Continetti writes, “The Tea Party is unified by the pervasive sense that the country is wildly off course. It believes the establishment has bent and twisted the rules for its own benefit.” By the establishment, they mostly mean the Democrats and the Barack Obama administration, who some Tea Party backers label as socialists.

The Tea Party is “opposed to bailouts, which favor the wealthy and connected. It’s opposed to out-of-control spending at every level of govern-

ment,” Continetti notes.

While often using vague, demagogic appeals to “take back the Congress,” to stop “Obama-care” or “turn things around,” candidates who identify with the Tea Party offer no coherent program or solutions to the crisis. They are united more by what they are against, not what they are for.

But because the working class in the United States does not have its own organization or leadership on a mass scale, the Tea Party populists gain a broader hearing.

The Tea Party is made up of scores of competing national and local groups. The National Tea Party Federation, which claims it is comprised of 85 organizations, emphasizes that it’s for “fiscal responsibility,” “constitutionally limited government,” and “free markets.”

The federation expelled the Tea Party Express and its leader Mark Williams from its ranks after Williams wrote a racist parody attacking the NAACP.

Black Tea Party candidates

Unlike previous populist campaigns, like Ross Perot’s 1992 presidential run, the Tea Party has a significant number of Black spokespeople and candidates.

Angela McGlowan, a Fox commentator who is Black, addressed the convention of one faction of the Tea Party in Nashville, Tennessee, in February. The Tea Party is about fighting against “greed and the loss of jobs in America and that Washington, D.C., has lied to us,” she told the cheering crowd. The solution she put forward was “voting people out of Congress and out of the White House.”

Arizona Tea Party groups have spearheaded actions aimed at scapegoating undocumented workers for unemployment and crime, but other Tea Party groups and candidates have put immi-



Fibonacci Blue

Tea Party rally March 13 in St. Paul, Minnesota. Fueled by growing insecurities among middle class layers, Tea Party forces are united by what they are against, not what they are for.

gration, abortion, and other social issues on the back burner.

Colorado gubernatorial candidate Maes puts “stricter enforcement of existing legislation” on “illegal immigration” as point number 10 on his campaign platform, well below his call for tax incentives to small businesses and streamlining government.

When notorious immigrant-basher Tom Tancredo, ex-congressman from Colorado, spoke at the Nashville Tea Party convention, he got a mixed response. Some applauded his remarks. But Jonathan Raban, who reported on the convention in the *New York Review of Books*, noted, “I saw as many glum and unresponsive faces in the crowd as people standing up to cheer.”

Conspiracy theories

The Tea Party is also permeated by conspiracy theorists, who see no other explanation for the deepening economic and social crisis than a plot by powerful forces that have “perverted” the system.

Conservative radio talk show host Glenn Beck personifies this trend in the

Tea Party. He says, “We can’t trust anyone.” In his book *Common Sense*, Beck writes, “Our political leaders have become nothing more than parasites who feed off our sweat and blood.”

Even as the Republican Party and Tea Party leaders hope to make advances in the November midterm election, President Obama has gone on the offensive to defend his record and back Democratic Party candidates.

Far from seeing Obama as the kiss of death, many Democrats in tight races are welcoming his assistance.

Not quite halfway through his first term as president, Obama still has the initiative in national politics, having won passage of his health-care and banking reform plans along with a new extension of unemployment benefits. He began a three-day campaign swing through five states on August 17, proclaiming that his policies has put the United States on the road to economic recovery.

The president derided the Republican candidates as the “no, we can’t crowd” that has tried unsuccessfully to block his agenda.

General: Afghan war ‘long-term proposition’

Continued from front page

ghan army sent a battalion of 300 soldiers to drive Taliban out of Bad Pakh village, in Laghman Province in eastern Afghanistan. Unlike most operations it was not coordinated in advance with U.S. and NATO officials.

The Afghan troops were promptly routed by Taliban forces and had to be bailed out by U.S. and French troops. According to a U.S. military spokesperson, about 10 soldiers were killed and another 20 missing. The Red Crescent relief organization said the Taliban had destroyed 35 Ford Ranger trucks that each usually carry six or more soldiers, reported the *New York Times*.

A week after this debacle, Petraeus announced that this year’s goal of increasing the size of the Afghan National Army to 134,000 troops had been met three months ahead of schedule. A projected 109,000-member police force has also been put in place.

In addition to the 30,000 troops Obama ordered to Afghanistan last December, the Pentagon has been sending trainers to work with the Afghan army and police. Hundreds of artillery troops and air defense artillery soldiers from Fort Sill in Oklahoma and Fort Campbell in Kentucky were shipped to Afghanistan in July for a year. An 800-soldier battalion from the 82nd Airborne Division just got back from a three-month training mission.

Civilian deaths spark protest

About 300 protesters, shouting “death to the United States,” blocked a highway linking the capital Kabul and southern Afghanistan August 12 after U.S. forces killed three civilians and arrested five others in the Zarin Khil village in central Maidan Wardak Province.

According to elders from that village, before dawn that day U.S. troops “stormed into a family’s house and shot three brothers—all young men—and then took their father into custody,” reported *Dawn*, a Pakistani newspaper.

Protesters told *Tolo News* that those killed were university students from Kabul in the province for the holidays, while NATO forces claimed they were “suspected insurgents.” The same day NATO aircraft fired on a house in the farming village Luchak in central Helmand Province killing another five civilians, the *Times* reported. The day before U.S.-led troops, while fighting Taliban forces in the same province, shot and killed an Afghan woman bystander.

In the first six months of this year, nearly 1,300 Afghan civilians have been killed, up 21 percent this year, according to a UN report. Including the 2,000 injured, overall civilian casualties are 31 percent higher. The report said Taliban were responsible for 76 percent of civilian deaths. U.S.-led forces killed 386 civilians during this period.

In an editorial August 13 that took up two full columns, the *Times* expressed its misgivings about the war. “We are increasingly confused and anxious about the strategy in Afghanistan,” it stated, “and wonder whether, at this late date, there is a chance of even minimal success.” Blaming the George W. Bush administration for not “invest[ing] enough troops, money or attention” to the war, it said, “Obama needs to do a better job right now of explaining the strategy and how he is measuring progress.”

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By Farrell Dobbs

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Also available from Pathfinder Press: *Teamster Power* and *Teamster Bureaucracy*

PathfinderPress.com

Iowa SWP candidates campaign at state fair

BY ELLEN BRICKLEY
AND MARGARET TROWE

DES MOINES, Iowa—David Rosenfeld and Rebecca Williamson, Socialist Workers Party candidates for governor of Iowa and U.S. Congress in the 3rd District, respectively, participated in the recent *Des Moines Register*'s "Soapbox" program at the Iowa State Fair.

Set among hay bales in front of the *Register* building on the busy main concourse of the fair, the "Soapbox" is covered by the media. Videos of the candidates' speeches can be viewed afterwards on the paper's online site.

Rosenfeld spoke shortly after the incumbent governor, Democrat Chet Culver, gave a talk at the forum. In response to Culver's boast that Iowa has maintained its "AAA" bond rating despite the economic depression, Rosenfeld said that it showed how capitalist politicians "attack the working class while they protect the bondholders' hundreds of billions of dollars."

Rosenfeld explained, "The real choice in this election is between

those who advocate capitalist policies that damage workers and farmers and those who are putting forth working-class politics like the Socialist Workers Party."

'He's got good ideas'

Republican challenger Terry Branstad, who served four terms as governor in the 1980s and '90s, called for making people prove their citizenship status when stopped for traffic violations. Culver countered that this would be too costly to the state.

When Rosenfeld said, "We need jobs, jobs for everybody . . . we need to fight for the rights of all workers, including legalizing immigrants," several young Latino workers listening to the talk cheered.

"He's got good ideas," said another worker who stopped by to hear the SWP candidate.

Rosenfeld's talk was featured in a *Register* article titled, "Iowa's unions are too weak, Democrats too focused on the rich" by Jennifer Jacobs. She listed Rosenfeld's key message as: "Io-



Militant/Ellen Brickley

David Rosenfeld, Socialist Workers candidate for Iowa governor, left, and Margaret Trowe, SWP candidate for Iowa secretary of agriculture, center, campaign August 12 at state fair.

wans need to build a world based on human solidarity, not the dog-eat-dog brutal competition of capitalism."

Jacobs described his issues in this way: "Iowans face 'a permanent state of war,' unemployment, foreclosures on homes and farms, and cutbacks in social programs. They need to fight for access to health care, to legalize all immigrants, to defend abortion rights,

and to oppose any laws that discriminate against same-sex marriage."

Responding to Rosenfeld's statement that he is the only candidate representing working people, Jacobs quotes Culver's campaign as saying, "There's only one candidate in this race who has been a champion for workers and that candidate is Chet Culver."

The Republican Party's booth at the state fair featured a petition protesting the Iowa Supreme Court's decision striking down a state law banning same-sex marriage.

Dairy farmers in crisis

On the opening day of the fair, Rosenfeld and Margaret Trowe, SWP candidate for Iowa secretary of agriculture, visited dairy and hog farmers showing their livestock at the fair's large show barns. One young dairy farmer who read the SWP platform flyer said, "Dairy farmers have been in crisis for 18 months. We're getting half prices for milk. I can't pay my feed bills. We're trying to buy our farm, and there's no real help for working farmers. We need aid now."

Rosenfeld said he agreed and pointed out that he and Trowe attended a rally in Manchester, Iowa, last year of dairy farmers protesting low milk prices.

U.S. gov't adds more cops, drones at border

Continued from front page

to label many immigrant workers as criminals, one-third of the money will go to the FBI, the Drug Enforcement Agency, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives to target drug dealers and "human traffickers."

Sen. Charles Schumer, Obama's point man for so-called immigration reform, said money to fund the plan would come mostly by increasing the fees by \$2,000 each for companies that employ more than 50 "guest workers."

Two days before Obama signed the border bill, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) completed a three-day sweep in Arizona against alleged "convicted criminal aliens." ICE director John Morton boasted it was the largest operation of its kind ever carried out in the state, arresting 63 immigrants.

In a statement detailing its operations in Arizona over the last two years, ICE said that it deports 1,500 immigrants from that state every week, some two-thirds of whom are not accused of anything except lack of proper papers.

The increased cop and military action at the border, along with campaigns to scapegoat immigrants for crimes and drug smuggling, are taking place when the number of immigrants attempting to cross is at its lowest level since 1970. The Border Patrol detained 556,000 immigrants in 2009 compared to nearly 724,000 in 2008. The decrease is due to the combined impact of high U.S. unemployment and stepped-up enforcement of anti-immigrant laws.

ICE deported almost 300,000 immigrant workers using removal orders in 2009. Figures for total deportations last year, including "voluntary departures," have not yet been released.

U.S. capitalists depend on immigrant labor to push down wages, boost profits, and more effectively compete with their rivals around the world, but during economic crises they seek to more tightly control the labor flow. They couple this with blaming immigrants for rising unemployment to deepen divisions in the working class.

Many anti-immigrant programs begun under previous administrations have been intensified since Obama took office. Among those measures are E-verify, which allows bosses to check the status of current or potential employees through the Internet; a five-fold increase in immigration audits, which lead to the firing of thousands of workers without papers; and the expansion of Secure Communities, a program to check the fingerprints of anyone who is in jail against a Department of Homeland Securities immigration database.

While the number of workers without papers crossing the border has declined, the Obama administration has increased the penalties for those who have been deported once and caught re-

turning to the United States. According to the *Washington Post*, most of those detained by the Border Patrol a second time now serve an average of 60 days in jail, before they are deported again.

At the same time the Obama administration has suspended or canceled deportation proceedings against many undocumented students who came to the United States as children.

Students and others have organized numerous protests demanding the "Dream Act," which would give legal status to undocumented youth who have graduated high school and have a "clean criminal record." Those who qualify under the bill, if passed, would have to enroll in a university or the military to obtain permanent residency.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



August 30, 1985

Responding to an emergency appeal issued by more than 50 trade unions and community organizations to demonstrate against the racist South African apartheid regime, 30,000 people rallied in New York August 13.

The mainly Black and union protesters marched from Mandela corner, which is across the street from United Nations Plaza, through midtown Manhattan to the U.S. Mission to the UN and South African Consulate chanting "Death to apartheid; free Mandela."

The participants came demanding an end to South Africa's state of emergency, an end to U.S. economic and political support to Pretoria, for divestment by U.S. corporations and banks doing business in South Africa, and for freedom for African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners.

The protesters were led by many of New York's top labor officials.



August 29, 1960

Farrell Dobbs, Socialist Workers party presidential candidate, strongly protested as unconstitutional and undemocratic the bipartisan move of the Democrats and Republicans to grant themselves a monopoly of free time over the airwaves.

In a letter to Rep. Oren Harris he inquired whether the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee intends to hold public hearings on the proposal to suspend the equal-time provisions of the Federal Communications Act.

"The Democratic and Republican candidates have such powerful financial backing that they can and will flood the country with publicity about their 'differences.' But in the great debate now going on throughout the world on the relative merits of capitalism and socialism, both the Democratic and Republican parties uphold capitalism. By denying the socialist side equal opportunity to present its case, they deliberately prevent a fair debate on this key issue."



August 31, 1935

Practically every shipping clerk in the ladies garment industry in New York is on strike. Responding to the call of Ladies Apparel Shipping Clerks Federal Union, between 12 to 15,000 walked out on Tuesday. It was an overwhelming response. The union was not prepared to handle such masses and some confusion resulted. With the support of other unions, efforts to perfect the strike machinery are being made.

Numerous clashes between pickets and company thugs have taken place. The young strikers, in all cases, gave a good account of themselves.

The shipping clerks, some of whom push racks of dresses through the streets, are the lowest paid and most overworked of all in the ladies garment industry. They are striking for union recognition, a \$23 minimum weekly wage and the 35 hour week.

The strike shows a great need of a change in the structure of the I.L.G.W.U. in the direction of an industrial union.

Financial and economic crisis looms in China

(Third in a series)

BY DOUG NELSON

The Chinese economy, which recently overtook Japan as the second largest in the world, is often referred to as a “miracle” for the pace and scope of its expansion over the last three decades. But as the worldwide economic crisis unfolds, it too has been slowing down and showing signs of instability—a trend that has capitalists around the world uneasy as China has become so integral to the world capitalist economy.

China has experienced rapid growth and modernization in major urban centers of the country since the Chinese Communist Party government began to encourage the development of private business and market relations and open the country to direct foreign investment some 30 years ago.

A major aspect of the government’s strategy has been to rapidly expand industrial output and capture the largest share of the world’s merchandise export market.

Historic conditions and decades of anti-working-class government policies provided an opportunity to entice foreign capitalists to cash in on China’s cheap source of labor. With the development of foreign and domestic private business, workers’ labor was increasingly bought and sold as a commodity—the basic mode of exploitation under capitalism.

Disparities in living standards between urban and rural areas and between different parts of the country were leveraged to increase competition among working people, adding downward pressure on wages. This includes some 211 million migrant workers compelled to leave the countryside for work in the industrial centers, where they were denied social benefits extended to other urban residents. And use of state power, which includes state-controlled unions, was employed to keep workers in line and ensure a sufficient flow of labor.

Large amounts of foreign capital were attracted to the low wages, as well as cheap land, tax breaks, and other incentives provided by the gov-

ernment. To the foreign investment was added state funds toward the country’s export industries, infrastructure projects, and joint ventures with foreign capitalists. As a result, productivity increased through the development of productive forces and intensification of labor.

These are some of the factors that allowed the Chinese economy to capture nearly 10 percent of the world’s merchandise export market in a span of three decades.

Hundreds of millions of working people in China have paid the price for this course, which has resulted in massive displacement of rural toilers, disintegration of workers’ social wage, declining literacy and health, and worsening conditions of work and living.

Decline in exports and investment

The country’s economy has become heavily reliant on exports, making it vulnerable to declining consumption in the major capitalist countries. The value of China exports decreased for the first time in 2009 by \$240 billion, or 17 percent. In recent months it has decreased further, as China’s largest export market in Europe has contracted with the declining value of the euro.

Direct foreign investment has also shown susceptibility to the depression. After several years of rapid increase, foreign investment declined by 2.6 percent last year.

At the same time, a growing disparity has developed between the accumulation of wealth from China’s exports and the underdevelopment of its domestic market.

Domestic consumption as a percentage of gross domestic product declined from 46 percent to 36 percent from 2000 to 2009.

The government has announced intentions to work toward expanding the domestic market. As one stopgap measure it initiated household subsidies for cars and durable goods to “stimulate” consumer spending—the Chinese Communist Party’s version of the U.S. “cash for clunkers” program. Despite a surge in spending for these commodities, the overall year-on-year increase in retail sales in July was the lowest since February last year.

Capitalist methods have created a layer of wealthy individuals in China. The number of mainland Chinese millionaires (in dollars) is about 477,000, the fourth highest in the world. It is second only to the United States in the number of billionaires. A “middle class” capable of buying more than basic necessities—with annual incomes higher than \$5,000 and to whom such “stimulus” subsidies are largely directed—represents roughly 110 million people, or 8 percent of the population. Nearly half the population lives on less than \$2 per day.

Because market relations and profit motives have come to dominate the country’s mode of distribution, the Chinese economy cannot absorb the wealth generated by the state and private business. While more government funds have recently been directed toward development projects throughout



Imaginechina via AP Images (top)

Top: Rows of empty buildings in Haikou, the provincial capital of Hainan in China. Vacancy rates are extremely high in major Chinese cities, particularly in commercial and luxury housing developments, objects of speculative property buying spurred on by easy credit from state banking system. **Bottom:** Property fair in Jinan, capital of Shandong Province on east coast.

the country, a large portion of China’s assets is parked in investments and securities outside the country. State firms have invested billions in companies and major infrastructure projects abroad. China holds \$1.464 trillion in U.S. government and corporate debt, more than half in the form of U.S. Treasury securities.

As the largest holder of U.S. securities in the world, the Chinese economy has helped finance the U.S. federal budget deficit, playing a role in keeping U.S. interest rates low and paying for Washington’s protracted wars abroad.

The buying up of U.S. securities has been one of the methods employed by the Chinese government to keep the value of China’s currency low relative to the dollar and other major world currencies. This low exchange rate has been another factor in keeping prices of goods exported from China relatively low and restricting imports from the most advanced and productive nations, to the irritation of Washington and other imperialist powers who have made a ballyhoo with cries of currency “manipulation.”

Some of this pressure has lifted in recent months as Beijing has allowed its currency to begin to appreciate.

Banking crisis looms

The banking system remains dominated by the state, but increasingly has incorporated private and foreign banks and other financial entities. The state banking system’s chief role in the management of a centralized planned economy has receded; it increasingly functions as independent financial institutions focused on “making money.” Alongside legal banks, an underground lending system has also developed,

which accounts for roughly one-quarter of all loans.

Like those in major capitalist countries, Chinese banks have increasingly become involved in a whole range of transactions aimed at boosting bottom lines through leveraging of fictitious capital. About 20 percent of new bank credit is directed to stock market speculation, for example.

In response to the effects of the world economic and banking crisis in 2008, in which the country’s main stock market index lost nearly two-thirds of its value, the government enacted a two-year \$586 billion “stimulus” package to fund infrastructure projects, provide tax cuts to businesses, and subsidies to industry and consumers. The state banks went on a lending spree, providing easy low-interest credit for state and private business, investors, and speculators. Last year banks increased credit by one-third, reaching 140 percent of gross domestic product, much of which is considered uncollectible.

Many of these most recent loans provided the illusion of economic growth, while only inflating financial bubbles such as has developed on a massive scale in real estate.

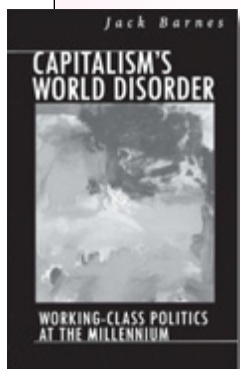
More recently, the government announced moves to tighten credit in an effort to avoid “overheating” the economy. However, about \$192 billion, amounting to 28 percent of state bank loans, were simply moved off the books to conceal the mounting credit risks. Similar to the way U.S. banks transfigured subprime loans and other debt as sellable assets, these loans were sold to trust companies and repackaged as securities.

The final article will review the consequences of the geographical shift in production and labor and development of the proletariat.

Capitalism’s World Disorder

WORKING-CLASS POLITICS
AT THE MILLENNIUM

By Jack Barnes



The social devastation and financial panic, coarsening of politics, cop brutality, and imperialist aggression—all are products not of something gone wrong with capitalism but of its lawful workings. Yet the future can be changed by the united struggle of workers and farmers increasingly conscious of their capacity to wage revolutionary struggles for state power and to transform the world.

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Protests in Kashmir defy Indian gov't repression

BY CINDY JAQUITH

August 16—Protests of hundreds of thousands have shaken the Indian-controlled portion of Kashmir, a Himalayan region, since the June killing of a Muslim Kashmiri youth by security forces there. As of today 57 civilians have been killed, many shot by Indian soldiers.

The demonstrations have demanded an end to army and police violence and that the 700,000 Indian occupation troops—one for every 14 residents of Indian-controlled Kashmir—get out.

The upheaval highlights the volatility of the South Asian subcontinent as Washington escalates its imperialist war in Afghanistan, accelerating class divisions and conflicts throughout the region.

The Kashmiris, Muslims in their majority, are an oppressed nationality. Two-thirds of their territory is dominated by the Indian government and one-third by the Pakistani government. New Delhi and Islamabad have gone to war over Kashmir three times, beginning in 1947.

Prior to 1947 Kashmir and today's India and Pakistan were part of the British colony called India. Coming out of World War II a movement of millions in India fought for independence, part of the colonial revolution that swept Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

The struggle in India, increasingly led by a young working class, began to forge unity among working people of the many different nationalities and religions on the Indian subcontinent. Deciding to cut their losses before that struggle grew into one where workers seized state power, the British capitalist rulers granted nominal independence to India in 1947.

To help maintain its economic and political influence, London maneuvered

for the partition of India along religious lines. It succeeded in pressing both Hindu and Muslim bourgeois forces to accept a majority-Muslim Pakistan and a majority-Hindu India that would keep the working class divided and unable to deepen its struggle.

Kashmir was one of some 600 princely states in colonial India. The British left it up to the monarch of each princely state to choose which country to join. The monarch of Kashmir, a Hindu, chose India, enraging many of his Muslim subjects. Sharp fighting broke out. The United Nations negotiated a ceasefire that placed two-thirds of Kashmir in Indian hands, today known as Jammu and Kashmir, and most of the remainder in Pakistani hands, now called Azad Kashmir. A referendum of the Kashmiris to decide for themselves their status was promised but never carried out.

Fight for self-determination

Kashmiris have fought for self-determination ever since. The Indian government has consistently opposed holding a referendum on the region's status and ruthlessly repressed anyone fighting for self-determination or independence. Islamabad, feigning sympathy for Kashmiris under Indian domination, has sought to exploit the situation to further its own gains. It sponsored the group Lashkar-e-Taiba, which calls for establishing an Islamic state under Sharia law, and other groups fighting in Kashmir against Indian rule.

When Washington invaded Afghanistan in 2001 it sought to reduce these tensions so that Islamabad would focus on fighting al-Qaeda and Taliban forces instead of India. It has encouraged both nations to negotiate a resolution of the Kashmir conflict.



Above: Kashmiris march in defiance of curfew June 28 in Indian-controlled Srinagar. Protests have erupted in wake of killing of Kashmiri Muslim youth. Inset: Young women and men hurl stones at police in Srinagar July 30.

The current battles for self-determination have a broad, popular character. Media accounts have stressed the youthfulness of the demonstrators. *The Nation*, a Pakistani paper, noted the role of women. "The women emerged on the streets, beating on their utensils, throwing stones at the Indian forces and chanting slogans for freedom. . . . Many women who do not directly take part in rallies carry drinking water to the protesters and also direct youths down escape routes as they flee baton charges, tear gas and gunfire."

On June 30 a curfew was extended over most of Jammu and Kashmir, schools and government buildings

closed, and the railroad shut down. In defiance, crowds poured into the streets in demonstrations almost daily.

The protests have engulfed both cities and small villages. In the town of Trehgam troops fired into a crowd of Muslims attempting to enter a mosque for Friday prayers August 13, in violation of the curfew. A teenager was killed, prompting Kashmiris from nearby villages to join the demonstration by the thousands, Associated Press reported.

'We want freedom!'

In Srinagar, the capital, authorities decided to lift a ban on Friday mosque services that had been in place for six weeks. Tens of thousands turned out to attend prayers chanting, "Go, India! Go back!" and "We want freedom!"

Initially Indian government spokesmen charged Lashkar-e-Taiba was behind the upheaval, but they have been unable to maintain that stance. Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh gave a speech in New Delhi August 10. "I can feel the pain and understand the anger and frustration that is bringing young people out onto the streets of Kashmir," he claimed. He called for an end to the demonstrations, promising to take steps to give local Kashmiri police more responsibility for enforcing the law and to launch a program for jobs and economic development.

On August 15 Singh gave another speech, pledging to open talks to resolve Kashmiri grievances. He made it clear, however, that self-determination was not an option. "Kashmir is an integral part of India," he declared, adding that "within this framework, we are ready to move forward in any talks."

Pakistani foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi urged the government of India "to exercise restraint." Islamabad has consistently opposed the demand for Kashmiri independence.

Mark Toner, a deputy spokesman for the U.S. State Department, said, "We regret the loss of life in this incident. It is an internal Indian matter." Suggesting that protesters were themselves to blame for the deaths, Toner said, "We would just urge everyone to refrain from violence and conduct protest in a free and peaceful manner."

Millions displaced by flooding in Pakistan

BY CINDY JAQUITH

"They are throwing packets of food to us like we are dogs," said Kalu Mangiani. "They are making people fight for these packets."

Mangiani was one of hundreds of villagers who blocked a major highway in

Sukkur, Pakistan, August 16 to draw attention to the government's failure to get relief aid to the millions displaced by the worst flooding in the country's history. Demonstrators said officials were only giving out food when the media showed up.

Peasants in the provinces of Punjab and Sindh also held protests. Some said they had received no aid at all.

More than 20 million people have been affected by the flooding with one-fifth of Pakistan under water. At least 2,000 have died. Yet two weeks after the floods began, hundreds of thousands of people have yet to be reached by any aid workers.

The United Nations World Food Program says it has gotten food to less than 1 million people and tents to a mere 98,000. UN officials warned that 3.5 million children are at risk of contracting cholera or other diseases.

Most of those affected are peasants, many of whom grow just enough food to feed their families. The loss of farms, crops, and livestock will have a giant impact on the country as a whole, where farming is 23 percent of the gross domestic product.

For peasants in the Swat region in northern Pakistan, this is the second time in two years that they have been uprooted. In 2009, 2 million were forced to leave their villages when the Pakistani army launched an offensive

against Islamist rebels based there.

Despite the staggering scope of the social disaster, the UN has appealed for a mere \$459 million in international aid. Only a quarter of that has been delivered.

Washington has sent 19 helicopters and 1,000 marines. It pledged \$75 million in aid. Meanwhile, it has kept up its drone attacks on Pakistani targets suspected of harboring Islamist fighters. On August 14, a U.S. drone assault in South Waziristan killed at least 16 people.

The callous indifference of the imperialist powers to Pakistani working people is matched by Pakistani president Asif Ali Zardari, who took a trip to Europe after the floods began, later claiming he was raising international funds for relief.

Seeking to take advantage of the deep resentment of the Pakistani government's handling of the disaster, the Taliban and other Islamist forces are setting up their own aid programs for the millions desperate for food, water, and shelter.

"The government should not accept American aid," Azam Tariq, a spokesperson for the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, said. "We condemn American and other foreign aid and believe that it will lead to subjugation." He said the Taliban would provide \$20 million in relief if Islamabad turns down outside aid.

for further reading

New International no. 12

Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun

By Jack Barnes

Today's sharpening inter-imperialist conflicts are fueled by the opening stages of what will be decades of economic, financial, and

social convulsions and class battles. Class-struggle-minded working people must face this historic turning point and draw satisfaction from being "in their face" as we chart a revolutionary course to confront it. \$16

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How 1934 Minneapolis strikes advanced union fight

Printed below is an excerpt from The History of American Trotskyism, 1928–1938. The Spanish edition is one of the Books of the Month for August. It contains 12 talks given in 1942 by SWP leader James P. Cannon. He recounts the formative chapter of the effort to build a communist party in the United States—how Communist League members integrated themselves into union battles and social struggles that from the early 1930s on signaled stirrings of resistance by working people to the economic and social catastrophe of the Great Depression. The piece below discusses the significance of the strike wave in 1934, including the gains won in Minneapolis in the coal yards and trucking industry for union recognition, and how this helped pave the way for broader social struggles that created industrial unions. Copyright © 1944 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JAMES P. CANNON

The year 1933, the fourth year of the great American crisis, marked the beginning of the greatest awakening of the American workers and their movement towards union organization on a scale never seen before in American history. That was the background of all the developments within the various political



Teamsters Local 574 leader announces settlement of May 1934 Minneapolis truck drivers strike. Workers pushed back attacks by police and special deputies, winning union recognition.

parties, groups, and tendencies. This movement of the American workers took the form of a tremendous drive to break out of their atomized state and to confront the employers with the organized force of unionism.

This great movement developed in waves. The first year of the Roosevelt administration saw the first strike wave of considerable magnitude yield but scanty results in the way of organization because it lacked sufficient drive and adequate leadership. In most cases the efforts of the workers were frustrated by governmental “mediation” on one side and brutal suppression on the other.

The second great wave of strikes and organization movements took place in 1934. This was followed by a still more powerful movement in 1936–37, of which the high points were the sit-down strikes in the auto and rubber factories and the tremendous upsurge of the CIO.

Our lecture tonight deals with the strike wave of 1934 as represented in the Minneapolis strikes. There, for the first time, the effective participation of a revolutionary Marxist group in actual strike organization and direction was demonstrated. The basis of these strike waves and organization movements was a partial industrial revival. . . .

Our comrades in Minneapolis began their work first in the coal yards, and later extended their organizing campaign

among the general drivers and helpers. That was not a preconceived plan worked out in the general staff of our movement. The drivers of Minneapolis were not by far the most decisive section of the American proletariat. We began our real activity in the labor movement in those places where the opportunity was open to us. It is not possible to select such occasions arbitrarily according to whim or preference. One must enter into the mass movement where a door is open. A chain of circumstances made Minneapolis the focal point of our first great endeavors and successes in the trade union field. We had in Minneapolis a group of old and tested Communists who were at the same time experienced trade unionists. They were well-known men, rooted in the locality. During the depression they worked together in the coal yards. When the opportunity opened up to organize the yards, they seized it and quickly demonstrated their capacities in the successful three-day strike. Then the extension of the organizing work to the trucking industry generally followed as a matter of course.

Minneapolis wasn’t the easiest nut to crack. In fact it was one of the hardest in the country; Minneapolis was a notorious open-shop town. For fifteen or twenty years the Citizens Alliance, an organization of hard-boiled employers, had ruled Minneapolis with an iron hand. Not a single strike of any conse-

quence had been successful in those years. Even the building trades, perhaps the most stable and effective of all the craft unions, were kept on the run in Minneapolis and driven off the most important construction jobs. It was a town of lost strikes, open shops, miserably low wages, murderous hours, and a weak and ineffectual craft union movement. . . .

The success of the coal strike uplifted the workers in the trucking industry. They were tinder for the spark; their wages were too low and their hours too long. Freed for so many years from any union restraints, the profit-hungry bosses had gone too far—the bosses always go too far—and the ground-down workers heard the union message gladly.

Our trade union work in Minneapolis, from beginning to end, was a politically directed campaign. The tactics were guided by the general policy, hammered home persistently by the *Militant*, which called on the revolutionists to enter into the mainstream of the labor movement represented by the American Federation of Labor. . . .

It wasn’t so easy for our people to enter the American Federation of Labor in Minneapolis. They were marked men who had been doubly expelled, doubly damned. In the course of their struggles they had been thrown not only out of the Communist Party, but also the American Federation of Labor. During the “Red Purge” of 1926–1927, at the height of the reaction in the American labor movement, practically all of our comrades who had been active in the trade unions in Minneapolis had been expelled. A year later, to make their isolation complete, they were expelled from the Communist Party.

But the pressure of the workers toward organization was stronger than the decrees of trade union bureaucrats. It had been demonstrated that our comrades had the confidence of the workers and had the plans whereby they could be organized. The pitiful weakness of the union movement in Minneapolis, and the feeling of the members of the craft unions that some new life was needed—all this worked in favor of our people making their way back into the American Federation of Labor through the Teamsters Union.

August

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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La historia del trotskismo americano, 1928–38

(The History of American Trotskyism)

by James P. Cannon

In twelve talks given in 1942 Cannon recalls the efforts by communists in the United States to emulate the Bolsheviks, who led the October 1917 Russian Revolution, and build a new kind of proletarian party.

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8 The Militant August 30, 2010

Housing should be a right

The 30,000 workers who showed up in East Point, Georgia, August 11 to apply for Section 8 housing vouchers are testimony to the situation facing working people today. Hammered by layoffs, wage cuts, and loss of pensions, working people are finding it harder and harder to keep a roof over their heads.

In the first quarter of this year some 8 percent of U.S. mortgage holders were at least three months behind in their payments or already in foreclosure. RealtyTrac estimates that more than 1 million will lose their houses this year. And rents continue to rise, taking a bigger and bigger chunk out of workers' declining wages.

Access to inexpensive, attractive, quality housing is a right. But under capitalism it is a commodity produced to make a profit, not to provide shelter. Just as health care, education, and other social needs are turned into commodities instead of rights guaranteed to all.

Immediate measures are needed to protect the working class from the economic catastrophe we face. The labor movement should champion the fight for full unemployment insurance for as long as a worker is jobless; for a massive federal public works program to put millions to work at union-scale wages, building housing, schools, hospitals, and roads; for a raise in the minimum wage and automatic cost-of-living increases in wages and Social Security.

The only way to guarantee working people affordable, quality housing is to nationalize the land and housing stock so no landlord can evict them and no bank can foreclose on them. This would also prevent working farmers from losing their land.

The fight around these issues points in the direction of working people organizing to take state power, overturn capitalist rule, expropriate capitalist property, and establish state property. Then our class can use the wealth we create to meet the needs of the majority.

More file early for Social Security

Continued from front page

continued to climb up to 7.35 percent in July. Older workers on average are also unemployed longer; one-third have been out of work for at least a year and the average time without a job is now 35 weeks.

The increase in older workers drawing Social Security early is also due to "the move by employers to replace defined-benefit retirement plans with defined-contribution retirement plans, [commonly known as 401(k)] allowing employers to shift more responsibility for retirement income to the employee," states a March 2010 memo by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Due to the financial crisis, many of these savings accounts are worth a fraction of what workers anticipated for their retirement.

Older women face greater poverty

Today more than 70 percent of households with the lowest income—those in the bottom third—are considered "at risk" of not having enough resources to pay for basic expenses and uninsured health-care costs upon retirement. This fact illustrates the inadequacy of current Social Security benefits and how further cuts will fall more harshly on the lowest paid workers.

Social Security is the only source of income for 42 percent of women over 62, and the poverty rate for this group is 23 percent, compared to 5 percent for retired couples. The poverty rate climbs significantly for single women who are Black or Latina. The government defines poverty for an individual over 65 as less than \$9,669 annually.

Women earn one-third less on average of what men do over a lifetime, meaning their Social Security

checks are smaller. Women often take time off from work to care for children or older family members. Because they also live longer than men, they need more reserves. As a result, elderly women are the largest segment of the population living in poverty.

Social Security won through struggle

The bosses and government present Social Security as some kind of government handout—one that society can no longer afford. Workers have a different view. For workers it is getting back a small portion of the social wealth they've created over a lifetime of labor.

Social Security was won in the mid-1930s as part of rising labor battles. Workers also won unemployment compensation and other measures that helped to unify the working class in the face of economic devastation. When the rulers passed the legislation, they never expected to pay the majority of it because at the time the average life expectancy in the United States was below the 65-year retirement age.

A July study by the Center for Economic and Policy Research, entitled "The Impact of Social Security Cuts on Retiree Income," documents the impact on those in the lowest income brackets of several proposals being discussed.

The study points out that raising the retirement age to 70 in 2036, which some Democrats and Republicans are calling for, means hefty cuts in benefits over a worker's lifetime. Under current law the retirement age goes up to 67 years in 2022.

The proposal to decrease cost-of-living increases by 1 percent would have the cumulative effect of up to a 20 percent benefit reduction for workers who reach the age of 85 years.

What we mean by blood money

BY PAUL MAILHOT

Readers of the *Militant* often see feature items in the paper describing workers who have received production or safety bonus checks from their boss, which they contribute to the work of the communist movement. These types of blood money contributions are directed into the Capital Fund for long-term publishing projects.

Reader Alan Grady asks, since every cash remuneration by the bosses is essentially blood money to stave off struggles by the workers, is the *Militant* implying that those workers who don't donate are not so class conscious?

REPLY TO A READER

When the *Militant* writes about blood money we are describing a particular kind of bribe used by the bosses or their government against workers. We are not talking about the wages workers receive as compensation for the value of our labor power. Most of the wealth workers produce is stolen by the boss, so we are constantly fighting to recover as much of it as we can through higher wages.

Workers often have contracts imposed on us that include signing bonuses in lieu of wage increases. This means the next contract begins at the same pay level, not a higher pay rate that will be built upon from year to year. This type of bonus, which is made to appear good for the worker, enables the bosses to steal more surplus value from every hour we sell our labor power to them.

Similarly, bosses often dole out production or safety bonus checks. These so-called rewards are for accepting brutal increases in the pace of production or not reporting injuries.

What makes bosses' bonuses, "gifts," and back-wage "settlements" blood money is that they are aimed at tying the workers to the company, and away from any perspective of struggle to end the wages system. Workers are supposed to think there is no ongoing, permanent class struggle. Instead, what exists is a "personal" and "human" relationship.

It is these types of cash remunerations that members of the Socialist Workers Party and other class-conscious workers have proudly turned over to the communist movement. It is a way of saying to the boss class, "we don't accept your bribe, instead we'll take it and put it to work against you and your system." It is a good example that can be emulated.

New York transit

Continued from front page

information, and distributing maps. Nine hundred bus drivers, subway cleaners, and mechanics have already been laid off.

In June the MTA eliminated 38 bus routes and two subway lines. They also reduced service on 11 subway lines and 76 bus routes. The MTA says the cuts are necessary to close its budget gap.

"What the MTA is doing is dangerous and criminal," said Deo Bairon, who participated in the action. "They are replacing us with cameras." He said that 260 station agents were laid off on May 11 and their booths closed. In many subway stations the booths are being bricked over.

"The reduction in bus service not only means layoffs, but affects the riding public who now have to walk long distances," said Charles Jenkins, the union's director of organizing.

"Our union is organizing with the AFL-CIO and NAACP to march on Washington October 2 to demand a real jobs program to address unemployment. Unemployment benefits are running out," Jenkins said.

George Wayne, a construction worker at a nearby school, came to the protest before he started work. "We need to change the system, which only serves the rich," he said.

Dan Fein is the Socialist Workers Party candidate for New York governor.

LETTERS

Communist Manifesto

The Communist Manifesto by Karl Marx has been selected by the Indiana University South Bend campus for its 2010–2011 "One Book, One Campus" program. The title was selected by a campus vote from a list of five finalist titles.

In answer to the question, "Why This Book?" a page on the University's Web site explains: "Criteria for the final five were—the book be one which would challenge and inspire, be in print and reasonably priced, and have a wide crossover appeal, something which could be discussed in a variety of classes. A campus vote was held, and *The Communist Manifesto* was the winner."

Faculty are encouraged to work the title into classroom discus-

sions, crossing over subject areas.

*Jim Kendrick
Miami, Florida*

Blood money

The reference of any workers' cash remuneration by the bosses as "blood money" is correct. As long as we have capitalists in power, any contract settlement that allows workers any victory, cash or

otherwise, is "blood money." It is meant to stave off further struggle by the workers, to "buy them off" as it were. But what is the point of the "blood money" reference every time a worker gives a donation? Does it imply that anyone who doesn't donate their "blood money" is not so class conscious?

I think it deserves some thought.

*Allan Grady
By e-mail*

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.

'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

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