

the Socialist

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Editorial

Occupy Everything! Can the South Come North?

“Occupy everything! We demand nothing!” These are the battle cries increasingly heard on university campuses all over the world. As the global economic crisis filters into state and local budgets in the US, politicians and university bureaucrats are closing access to higher education at elite and public institutions. Students have risen to the challenge – seizing buildings, disrupting official meetings and making their non-demands – “we demanded nothing, but the obvious” – the center of media attention. At first, the disruptions were confined to elite East-coast universities such as NYU and the New School. Then, the University of California (UC) administration proposed a 32% tuition increase, and a larger student movement was summoned into existence.

UC protests went further than the initial lunch-room takeovers and dance parties on the East Coast. Local campus occupations spurred the movement forward, dismantling what occupiers described as “a wall of passivity through action.” Centralized administration meetings provided natural targets for a broad student movement built across the 10-campus system. A convergence onto UCLA produced spectacular scenes of civil disobedience as students put their bodies on the line to shut down meetings sure to produce negative outcomes. Students non-violently closed parking lots, harassed administrators entering buildings and carried out a mass die-in to resist the cuts. Occupying space has become central to the incipient movements on both coasts, raising tactical questions about what an occupation signifies and how the act relates to a desired end goal. Two traditions have guided occupations of the past, one born in North America the other from South America.



The Offspring of Savio

Occupations entered American student life as a primary tactic in the 1960s, as UC Berkley students moved to secure free speech on their campuses. These activists had learned hard lessons from Civil Rights protestors who risked life and limb to defeat Jim Crow laws that restricted access to space. On December 2, 1964, the Berkley movement’s leader, Mario Savio, delivered a hallmark speech that would come to define the notion of occupation as seizure. Employing a gears-and-machine metaphor, Savio exclaimed that “unless you’re free, the machine will be prevented from working at all.” This is precisely what happened all across the country as students sat-in and took over buildings to express opposition to the war in Vietnam.

Eventually, the occupation tactic migrated from the student movement back to the labor movement where it originated in the US. American workers had used occupations in the automotive industry during the 1930s’ “Sit-down Strikes” in places like Flint, Michigan, as the basis to form trade unions. The tactic returned in the 1970s as Black workers in the automotive factories of Detroit contested harsh working conditions and an unresponsive union through a series of wildcat strikes centered on plant occupations. Workplace militants marveled at how easily a

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Statement of Principles

THE SOCIALIST PARTY strives to establish a radical democracy that places people’s lives under their own control - a non-racist, classless, feminist socialist society... where working people own and control the means of production and distribution through democratically-controlled public agencies; where full employment is realized for everyone who wants to work; where workers have the right to form unions freely, and to strike and engage in other forms of job actions; and where the production of society is used for the benefit of all humanity, not for the private profit of a few. We believe socialism and democracy are one and indivisible. The working class is in a key and central position to fight back against the ruling capitalist class and its power. The working class is the major force worldwide that can lead the way to a socialist future - to a real radical democracy from below. The Socialist Party fights for progressive changes compatible with a socialist future. We support militant working class struggles and electoral action, independent of the capitalist controlled two-party system, to present socialist alternatives. We strive for democratic revolutions - radical and fundamental changes in the structure and quality of economic, political, and personal relations - to abolish the power now exercised by the few who control great wealth and the government. The Socialist Party is a democratic, multi-tendency organization, with structure and practices visible and accessible to all members.

The Quiet Victories of the American Anti-War Movement

By Kristin Schall

The heart of the American anti-war movement is still beating. Despite the lack of a strong grassroots political presence, there are a few quiet victories for war resisters to claim. 19 year-old Dustin Stevens joined the Army in December 2001, but five months later, when he was scheduled to graduate with the 82nd Airborne Division, he refused. Stevens was sent home with instructions to await discharge papers

that never arrived. Instead, eight years later, during a routine traffic stop, Stevens was arrested on an outstanding warrant and turned over to military police to face AWOL and desertion charges. After spending a year in custody

at Fort Bragg, in North Carolina, the charges against Stevens were dropped and he was discharged. Stevens is just one of a number of war resisters being supported by Courage to Resist, a San Francisco based grassroots organization that provides support to G.I. resisters.

While Stevens has been successful in his resistance, others are still struggling. Alexis Hutchinson is a 21 year-old single mother of a 11 month-old son; she was scheduled to deploy to Afghanistan in November 2009. Hutchinson was unable to arrange for care

of her son prior to her scheduled deployment and informed her commanding officer of the problem. She was told to report for deployment anyway, and that her child would be placed in foster care for the duration of her tour of duty. In response, Hutchinson went AWOL. She was taken into custody when she returned to the base the following day. She remains confined to her base and faces Court Martial



and up to one year in jail for her actions. Despite the fact that Hutchinson is not actually refusing to fight, Courage to Resist has taken up her case "because," according to organizer David Solnit, they believe, "that in order to

achieve deep change in our country our movements [have] to make common cause with the 2.5 million service members--and their family members-- who are getting a raw deal."

Rodney Watson understands the unfairness of the military's Stop-Loss policies, which reserve the right to redeploy soldiers after they have fulfilled their contractual requirements. Watson joined the Army to serve as a cook, instead he found himself in Iraq searching vehicles and Iraqi civilians for weapons. At the end of his

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Solidarity with the UC Student Protests; Education is our right!

by Stewart A. Alexander, SP-USA, California

Billy Wharton, SP-USA, National Co-Chair

The Socialist Party USA stands in solidarity with the University of California (UC) student protesters. Higher education should not be treated as a commodity, whose price is determined by supply and demand. Receiving an education is a social right. Insuring a free, quality and open national higher education system is far more important than any war or new weapon or bank bailout. An educated population makes for a more democratic society. Restricting access to the UC system through exorbitant tuition is an attack on democracy itself.

deep economic recession demonstrates that a university education is increasingly becoming a distant thought for many working families.

The student protests have also been given the flavor of labor demonstrations, as students, adjuncts and full-time faculty members join the mobilizations. This has led to the opening of classes to the entire community through outdoor lectures and discussion sessions, and serious critiques of the university's labor practices, especially when it comes to the working conditions of adjuncts. Grad students have adopted the undergraduate demand to stop the tuition hikes and



Tens of thousands of students in the UC system have experienced a political awakening. Instead of giving the support necessary for students to excel, the UC Board of Regents is attempting to impose a 32% increase in tuition. Suddenly, the UC system has been transformed from a place of scientific discovery and intellectual inquiry into a site for politicians to dump California's enormous budget deficit. Thousands of students throughout the university system have responded by organizing demonstrations and building occupations. Arrests and police repression have not stopped the movement. It continues to grow in numbers and courage daily in defense of the right to receive an education.

This year's proposed 32% increase is not an isolated instance. Since 1999, tuitions at the 10 UC campuses have tripled. The cost for one year of tuition would now be \$10,300. This does not include expenses for text books, housing and food. Many students believe the tuition hikes will force them to drop out or attend community colleges. This, coupled with the

have added demands for fair labor practices and an end to the privatization of the university.

Socialist Party USA member and Peace and Freedom Party candidate for California Governor, Stewart Alexander, has linked the problems in California to the policies of the Democrats and Republicans. "The leaders of the two corporate parties," he writes, "have chosen to protect the interest of big capital over students' futures." Indeed, what is so brilliant about the UC protests is their complete unwillingness to accept what has been packaged as a "reasonable" "we all have to make sacrifices" policy. Let the rich pay for the budget crisis they created.

As democratic socialists, we stand in solidarity with the student protests. We encourage all students, especially those at publicly-funded universities, to draw inspiration from the UC protests. Democratic socialism advances our just demands that everything that make us human be guaranteed. Food, employment, healthcare, housing and education are our social rights. Now is the time to demand them.

REPRODUCE & REVOLT!

SP-USA Local Updates

Memphis Local Report

Recently, the Memphis Socialist Party has been branching out by becoming more service-oriented and active within the community. Though we are still few in number, we are consistently meeting and attracting new members. Several of us have started volunteering as tutors with an after-school program held inside empty apartments of a rent-subsidized apartment complex. We are also offering weekly art lessons to the kids, who absolutely love it, and we hope to expand our involvement.

In addition, we are planning a socialist holiday party in December, and in the New Year, we will be holding HIV testing-training classes that equip individuals with the knowledge and supplies necessary to do HIV testing within their communities.

The Memphis Socialist Party was proud to be able to send two delegates to the Socialist Party USA National Convention in October, and we hope to become a vital part of the national organization by continuing our growth and increasing our activity.

NYC Report

Healthcare, the economic crisis and anti-war work are on the agenda for the NYC Local of the Socialist Party USA this winter. Branching out to Brooklyn continued as we held a meeting called "Understanding Healthcare Reform" at a local library. Speakers from Healthcare NOW and the SPNYC described the Congressional plans calling them more a "corporate restructuring" of healthcare than a reform. We also held a screening of Rick Wolff's new documentary *Capitalism Hits the Fan*. Wolff himself turned up and took questions from the crowd for almost two hours. Finally, our local is participating in a mini-resurgence of the anti-war movement. Groups outside of the three big coalitions are in the initial stages of planning and carrying out anti-war actions. Let's hope the impulse to carry out actions without direction from above spreads. Keep your spirit lively and spread democratic socialism widely!

Northern NJ Report

The Northern New Jersey local has been active in the anti-war and healthcare movements. Local members regularly take part in two anti-war vigils, Wednesday at the Teaneck Armory with Military Families Speak Out and Veterans for

Peace, and on Friday in downtown Montclair with members of Peace Action and Veterans for Peace. The local is a member organization of Bergen Peace and Justice Coalition.

Local members have also been active in the fight for single-payer healthcare for all, taking part in the Nov. 21st March & Rally for Single-Payer at Jersey City's Journal Square. Speakers at the event included SPNJ member and 2009 gubernatorial candidate Greg Pason.

Speaking of elections, the Pason/Rozzo finished 9th out of 12 candidates in the 2009. The Gubernatorial elections produced some of the better results for SP candidates in recent years. Both candidates utilized opportunities to reach out to NJ residents at street fairs, on the radio and TV and promoted the Party platform.

The Northern NJ Local also hosted the 2009 Socialist Party USA National Convention.

Socialist Party of Central Virginia

The Socialist Party of Virginia has been spending most of its time organizing against the war in Afghanistan. We were honored to be included as a co-sponsor of a four day series of events about the war and occupation, kind of a "pre-emptive strike" from activists in the Charlottesville area. Our local played a critical part in the planning and publicity of the events inside of the "Coalition of Concerned Citizens and Organizations for an End to the Afghanistan War and Occupation." The local made 30 signs for a demonstration, and showed up to protest, though heavy rain dampened participation from the outside activist community. The coalition held a forum, which included Fahima Vorgetts of Women for Afghan Women, Ralph Lopez of Jobs for Afghans, and Raed Jarrar a noted journalist. Brandon Collins, secretary of the SP-CVA, was given a moment to address the group. Ralph and Fahima are both featured in the movie *Rethink Afghanistan*, which was screened as part of the series of events as well. The coalition also held an Afghan food and culture event. The consensus of the coalition was in support of the complete military and corporate withdrawal of the US.

The meeting was quite successful in terms of attendance for the events, and in fostering discussion, gathering petitions, and moving forward on the issue. The SP-CVA had its name plastered all over town and in the press as well. The coalition is planning to get Jobs for Afghans a chance to meet with members of congress, and will continue

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Remembering Harvey Milk

by: Jim Sanders



May 22, 1930 – November 27, 1978

November 2009 marked the 31st Anniversary of the assassination of Harvey Milk, who ran for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors three times as an openly gay man. In 1977, he was elected. He became the most prominent openly gay politician in the United States.

On November 27th, 1978, he was shot and killed, along with gay-friendly Mayor, George Moscone. The killer was Milk's former right-wing rival on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, Dan White. White entered City Hall through a window to avoid the metal detectors that would have been set off by the gun he was carrying. White shot Mayor Moscone several times, including additional rounds as the Mayor lay dead on the floor. He then reloaded his gun, crossed the hall to Harvey Milk's office, shot him several times, again firing additional rounds as he lay dead on the floor.

Despite all of this, the lenient sentence that White ultimately received resulted in little more than five years of jail time for the cold-blooded killing of two men. Gays and Lesbians were blocked from serving on the jury. White's lawyers used the notorious "Twinkie defense," maintaining that White was incapacitated because he had eaten too much junk food. HE GOT AWAY WITH MURDER! The night the verdict was announced, the White Night Riots erupted in the streets. This was the largest public demonstra-

tion in response to injustice against Gays and Lesbians to that date. Gays and Lesbians would no longer remain passive as our lives were disregarded.

Harvey was about more than gay rights. He fought for the working people of San Francisco against the greedy developers exploiting the city. He impressed union stalwarts by getting Coors beer out of the gay bars in San Francisco as the national Coors boycott efforts struggled for support. His efforts secured jobs for openly gay drivers with the Teamsters. He fought against the election of politically powerful Diane Feinstein to the Presidency of the Board of Supervisors. Feinstein was the darling of both Gay-liberals and downtown developers. Milk shocked many with his politically risky, principled support of Chinese businessman Gordon Lau. Feinstein won the election. When a move was made to declare her election unanimous, Harvey refused, and stood with Lau.

It's worth noting that Harvey went through a great political transformation in his life. In the early 60s, he was a Goldwater Republican. By the 70s he was championing the rights of, and building coalitions between, Gays and Lesbians, People of Color, Women, Unionists, and Seniors.

In 1977, the meager rights that Gays and Lesbians had managed to win in various locales throughout the country were under attack. It started with a high-profile campaign led by Anita Bryant in Dade County, Florida, and moved on to Wichita, Kansas, Eugene, Oregon, and Saint Paul, Minnesota. Harvey was a co-chair of an organization fighting Proposition 6 (the Briggs' initiative). Proposition 6 was a state-wide referendum in California that would have outlawed Gays and Lesbians teaching in California schools. It also would have outlawed any teacher making any positive representation of Gays and Lesbians. This Proposition was so right-wing that even Ronald Reagan opposed it! Gays and Lesbians lost rights in referendums across the country. Yet, against all odds, because of a grass roots campaign that Harvey Milk led, supporters of gay and lesbian rights defeated Prop 6 with more than 58% of the vote total.

The passage of Proposition 8 in California, and Amendment 2 in Florida, the loss of Marriage Rights in Maine, and the narrow margin of victory in Washington State remind us that discrimination against Gays and Lesbians is sadly still with us.

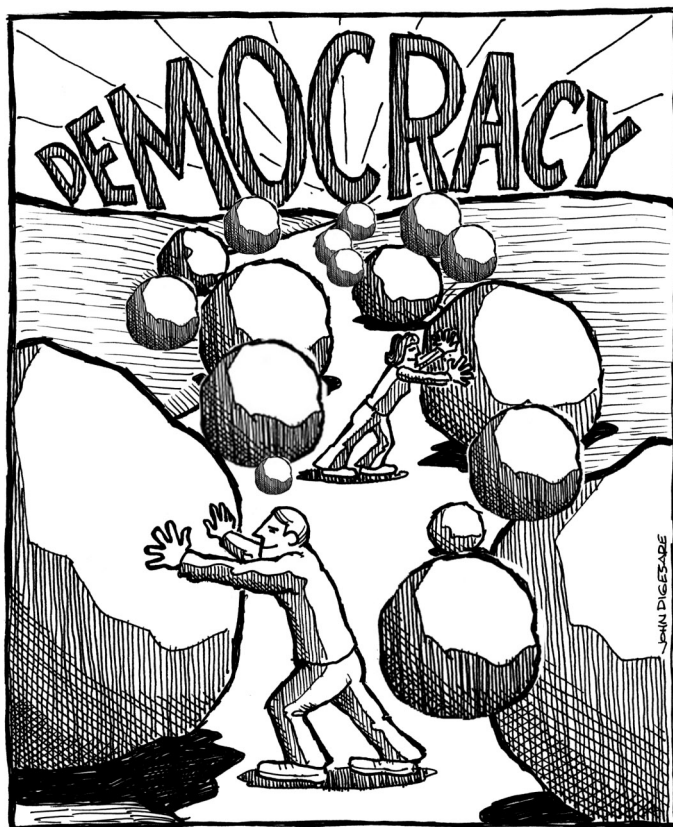
Milk made a tape recording on November 18th, 1978, only nine days before his assassination. He stipulated that the recording was to be played only in the event of his assassination. In this recording Harvey said: "If a bullet should enter my brain, let it destroy every closet door."

Extending Democracy to the Workplace by Zelig Stern

Each morning, when millions of Americans wake up to go to work, their democratic rights are put on hold. As soon as they arrive at the job, workers step out of democratic society and into a dictatorship. At work, they have no say in how their workplace operates. No part in the decision making process or even control over their own actions. All of the decisions are made by a boss, or board of directors or manager without consulting with those who keep the company running, the workers. The bosses or boards are not elected officials, they do not represent the will of the people, they represent only those who stand to make a profit, themselves and shareholders. Why do workers accept conditions in the workplace that they would not accept in any other part of their lives?

The bosses say that they are not infringing on anyone's democratic rights, that people are free to choose where they work. But, everyone who works for a living knows that this is not really true. Under capitalism, there are always more workers than there are jobs available, and this is especially true now that unemployment has reached over 10% of the population. Even if workers were truly able to choose to quit one job and take another, it would not change the conditions in the workplace. It would simply be an exchange of one undemocratic situation for another, one boss for another. Some bosses will argue that they treat their employees fairly, that they pay suitable wages, provide benefits, but a benevolent dictator, is still a dictator. In a country that values freedom and democracy, having a democratic workplace is the logical extension of democratic rights.

A democratic workplace would go further than the representative democracy of the American political system. Workplace democracy would mean that workers have direct control over all the ways in which goods and services are produced. This is not just a fantasy, but an implementable reality. In Argentina, after the 1999 – 2002 economic crisis, many capitalists went bankrupt and abandoned their factories, putting thousands out of work. Workers took over the abandoned factories and began running them as worker cooperatives - *fabricas sin patrons* (factories without bosses). By 2005, there were over 200 worker-run cooperatives, run democratically by all who work there. These factories are now operating more efficiently than they ever did when they were run by the capitalists. Similarly, in the Basque region of Spain, the Mondragon Cooperative Corporation operates as a massive worker cooperative that consists of 150 businesses, a central



bank, and an educational wing. It is the seventh largest company in Spain and is entirely run by the workers in a democratic manner. Recently, the United Steelworkers made a commitment to partnering with the Mondragon Cooperative to open cooperative branches of the Mondragon Cooperative in the United States and Canada. These cooperatives are proof that when democracy is extended to the workplace, it becomes a place of empowerment by giving workers the ability to exert control over their own lives. Further, the Mondragon has proven to be more resistant to capitalist economic cycles of booms and bust because much of the profits are re-invested instead of being siphoned off by CEO salaries.

These existing cooperatives provide a model for expanding democracy to more workplaces in the hope that eventually all workers will have the right to democracy at work. Socialism is a system where the workers, own and control all of the productive forces of society collectively. It does not simply mean a government "for the people, by the people," but an entire economic system "for the people, by the people." There are those who say workers are not smart enough to know how to run a business or that democracy is too inefficient to work in the economy. But Argentine and Spanish workers have already proved them wrong. Now is the time to bring workplace democracy to America and fully realize the promise of freedom and democracy.

Christianity and Socialism by Rev. John Tamilio III

The nonpartisan religious organization Sojourners, circulated a bumper sticker and hosted an on-line petition during the 2004 campaign under the mantra “God is not a Republican...or a Democrat.” That’s true. God may be a Socialist, though — at least Jesus of Nazareth was.

First of all, Jesus was an itinerant preacher who shunned earthly possessions and sought to establish a covenantal community (a *koinonia*) in which all people had equal access to food, shelter, and basic care — not to mention God’s grace! Jesus’ message was one that challenged the political and religious authorities of his era by bringing those from the margins to the center of the social order.

Second, read the opening chapters of the Book of Acts (the second part of Luke’s Gospel). After the Holy Spirit is bestowed upon the Church (giving birth to the body of Christ on earth) we are told that “All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need.”(1) Commenting on these verses, Robert W. Wall states that, “A fellowship of believers shares more than common beliefs and core values; they display a profound regard for one another’s spiritual and physical well-being as a community of friends.”(2) Are these not basic civil rights? Is this not a fundamental ethical aspect of communal living in which we are all embroiled, be it in the Church, or society at large, or both? Two chapters later, the apostolic record reiterates this point:

Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.(3)

Yet, for some reason, the two-party system that dominates American political discourse continually vies to incorporate God on “our” side; at least that is one of the objectives of conservative Republicanism. Pundits on the right (the political and religious) constantly claim that this is “a Christian nation.” Remember Dr. D. James Kennedy’s quest to “Reclaim America for Christ”? Although that movement is defunct, the desire is alive and well in the Republican



Party and the Evangelical community. Kennedy said it best in his book *Character & Destiny*: “The time has come, and it is long overdue, when Christians and conservatives and all men and women who believe in the birthright of freedom must rise up and reclaim America for Christ.”(4) Constitutionalists, who fail to read the first ten words of the First Amendment, claim religion is part of our national DNA. I recently saw this illustrated in a most offensive way in a Christian bookstore. In their “God and Country” section, they were selling small statues of Jesus being lowered from the cross wrapped in an American flag as opposed to the white shroud.

What does this all have to do with Socialism?

Obviously, I was being facetious in claiming that God is a Socialist. However, contemporary Christians (liberal and conservative alike) need to take stock of the fact that the fundamental tenets of modern day Socialism are found in the practices of the early

church. The first believers certainly weren't Republicans who supported huge tax cuts for big businesses or privatized medicine to make pharmaceutical companies and HMO shareholders wealthy off of those who are lucky enough to afford health insurance. Although the radical agenda found throughout the Gospels coincides with some parts of the Democratic platform, it mirrors the principles of Socialism more precisely.

Jesus was a pacifist. He taught about radical inclusivity as a defining characteristic of the realm of God. He sought the liberation of all oppressed people, as Latin American Liberation Theology, with its basis in socialist thought, purports. Jesus incorporated women and children, who had no social status in 30 CE, into his fellowship. He broke bread with and entered the homes of tax collectors, prostitutes, and sinners — the social pariahs of first-century Palestine. He advocated for the physical, mental, and spiritual well-being of all people. He strove for justice for everyone, especially those sequestered to lower or subservient classes. Jesus was a socialist, with a small "s." The Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles make this self-evident.

It is true that the majority of Americans claim allegiance to one form of Christianity or another. According to the CIA, 75.2% of Americans are either Protestant or Catholic. Mormons comprise 1.7% of the population and "Other Christians" account for 1.6% for a grand total of 78.5%. That obviously does not mean that the spirit of capitalism is equivalent to the spirit of Christianity, the later being rooted in love and justice and the former in profit and manifest destiny. Political scientist Benjamin R. Barber cautions us that "Social justice makes little headway against market ideology than national self-interest. Markets are by their nature unfair, and when confronted with state-generated public interest issues like justice, full employment, and environmental protection they seek above all to be left alone." (5) Abraham Lincoln once said, "my concern is not whether God is on our side; my greatest concern is to be on God's side." When we are genuinely concerned about the rights and welfare of all people — regardless of their race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, ability, or age — then, I believe, we are on God's side. Socialists fight for these rights. Is not the Church Universal called to do the same?

Notes

(1) Acts 2:44-45, NRSV.

(2) Robert W. Wall, "Acts" from *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 10 (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 71-72.

(3) Acts 4:32-35, NRSV.

(4) D. James Kennedy, with Jim Nelson Black, *Character & Destiny: A Nation in Search of Its Soul* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 80.

(5) Benjamin R. Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld: Terrorism's Challenge to Democracy* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2001), 28.

Quiet Victories continued from p3

tour he was informed that he was being "stop-loss" and would have to serve another tour. Instead of reporting to his base, Watson fled to Canada. He cites racist actions of fellow soldiers toward Iraqi civilians and the realization of the dishonest reasons for going to war as his motivations for defecting. Over the last three years, Watson has started a new life in Canada living with his Canadian partner and infant son. In September 2009, facing extradition on desertion charges, Watson made the decision to seek asylum in a Vancouver church. For the last several months, after publicly declaring sanctuary, Watson has been living at the church hoping to return home to his partner and child.

While the broad anti-war movement seems to be in a slumber, stories of war resistance continue to come from those with the most at stake, the soldiers themselves. Those who resist deployment and those who speak out once they return inject a life into the anti-war movement by highlighting the human costs and immorality of war. Small victories of refusal have been won through the actions of these brave men and women who have struck a blow to the American war machine.

As the Obama administration prepares to send 30,000 more troops to Afghanistan, many more soldiers will be faced with dilemmas similar to those faced by Dustin Stevens, Alexis Hutchinson and countless others. The call for more troops will force the military to rely more heavily on the stop-loss policies implemented by the Bush administration and continued by Obama. This means more troops with the prospect of multiple deployments, shorter times between deployments and increased hardship on the families these troops leave behind. As public sentiment opposition to the wars increases, the space for dissent will grow. Non-military sections of the anti-war movement can draw strength from these acts and contribute the political support and economic resources necessary to protect our brave resisters. Such small victories are hard fought, but necessary.

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complex workplace could be brought to a halt by the tactical seizure of a control room and how rapidly fellow workers could be rallied to the cause.

Both the Free Speech Movement and the Black wildcat strikers represent the best of the American radical tradition. They demonstrate the willingness to identify and shut down the sources of social oppression; an understanding of the linkages between their small acts and the larger system; and a fulfillment of the recklessly brave requirement that radicals put their bodies on the line. Yet, something was missing from these actions. Radicals in North America could shut things down, but wondered if they might open them back up.

Occupy-Expropriate-Produce

While North Americans were perfecting occupation as seizure, Latin American workers were coupling their occupations with expropriation. They viewed seizures as a means to create self-management. Worker militants built on a longer tradition that stretched back to the role of Anarchists in the Spanish Civil War. Early 20th century militancy in countries such as Mexico and Argentina led to the creation of expropriation laws that would eventually benefit early 21st century occupiers. Abandoned or mismanaged enterprises could now be productively brought into self-management.

The massive currency devaluation in Argentina in 1999 provided the backdrop for a new wave of worker militancy. Occupations ensued and grew into expropriations as workers pressed demands to operate seized factories autonomous from their previous owners. Decades of tax-breaks and direct state investments, they argued, made these enterprises, such as the ceramic tile maker Zanon, into public property. As the crisis deepened, the seizures spread. More workers gained not only the willingness to seize the factories, but to operate them “sin patron” (without a boss). Today, there is an entire sector of enterprises operating through self-management, producing everyday items such as shoes, suits, balloons and tiles. These experiments are built on the notion that seizure is not enough. Radical action must open up something new and produce, as much as it should stop the machine. It must create new spaces for self-activity.

The South Comes North

The recent student occupations in the US should be applauded by socialists everywhere. Sure, they have yet to fulfill their claims to break down “the time barricades” or open “the vortex,” but they mark a distinct political resurgence. Direct actions that target oppressive institutions should be carried out whenever possible. No need to wait until final outcomes become

attainable. The act of seizure and occupation creates a positive political dynamic all on its own.

Nevertheless, a critical eye should be focused on what makes these institutions oppressive. Is it a case where they should be shut down or opened up? Occupied or expropriated? Annihilated or self-managed? Where ever possible, the south should come north. Direct actions should be made in the service of making what is private, distinct and exclusive open to all. In the process, radicals might promote the inclusion of all. The experience of self-management, of determining for one’s self seemingly simple things such as what I will learn, or what I will eat or how fast I will work, may be more revolutionary than all the proper theoretical formulations imaginable. Occupy, expropriate, produce – worthy slogans for a society based on exclusion and exploitation.

Local Updates continued from p5

to work to end the war and occupation.

The Central Virginia local put out the call to get “Everyone on the Phone” December 2nd as a response to Obama’s announcement of troop increases. We got Senators Webb and Warner, and House representatives’ phone numbers out to as many people as possible. We estimate that at least 40 people called in as a result of our call for phone calls, and perhaps up to 100 people may have called Congress. While not the most revolutionary of actions, we managed to make a dent in the war machine.

The Central Virginia local is moving ahead with planning for the SP-USA National Committee meeting in Charlottesville, January 23rd and 24th, and setting our sights on the March 20 demonstration in Washington, DC. We continue our work with Workers And Students United (for a living wage at UVA), planning for more coalition work in the spring centered around the completion of an immigrant detention center that we originally protested in March 2009. We are pondering how to best use our “minimum legislative agenda” for Virginia, and how to strengthen our local.

WHY WAIT TWO MONTHS?

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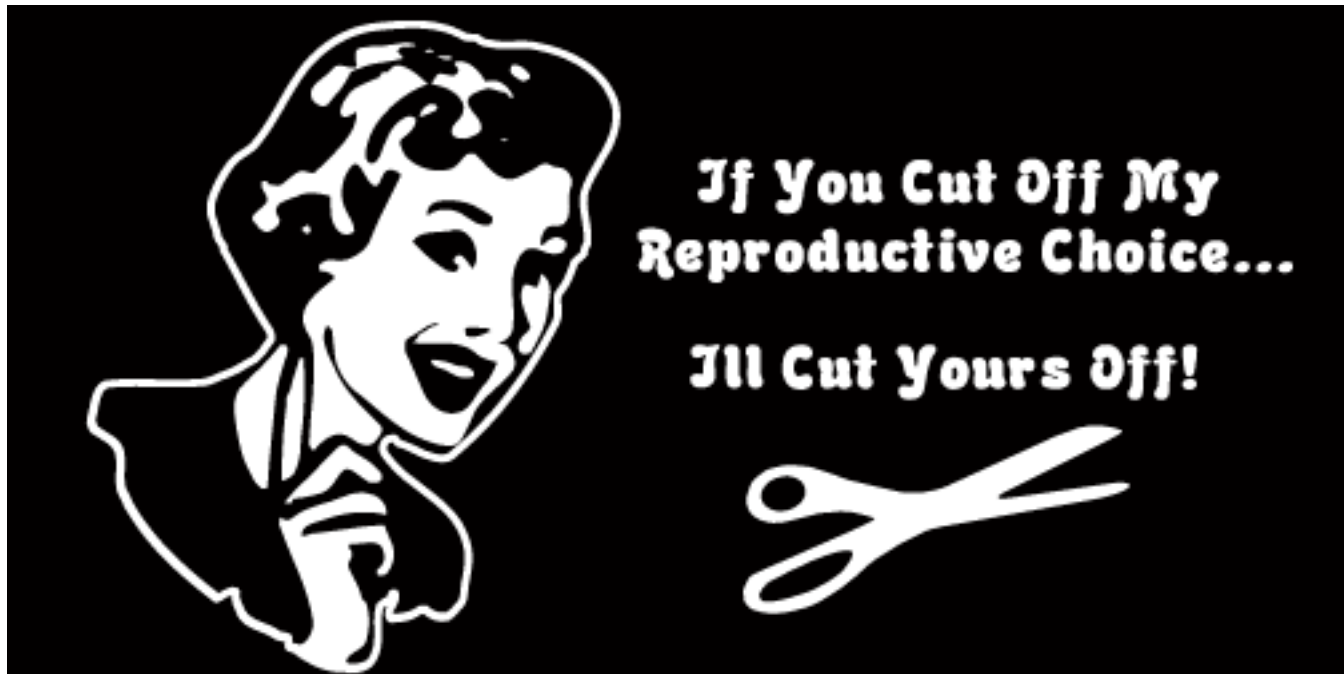
The Hyde Amendment and Obama's Health Care Bill: Two Wrongs Make a Disaster for Abortion Rights

A major provision of the health care bill being put forward by the Obama administration—and opportunistically maneuvered through the House of Representatives, and next the Senate, by the Democratic leadership—shows just how disregarding the US government continues to be when it comes to abortion rights.

1973. After political jockeying by Republicans and Democrats, the bill passed in September 1976,

After court challenges to its constitutionality were rejected, the Hyde Amendment went into effect in August 1977. It was both a response to, and encouragement for, agitation and violence by such virulent anti-abortion groups as Operation Rescue and Army of God.

Since 1976, the Hyde Amendment has been inserted each year into the HHS budget, often without debate. That is, it has been kept on the books for



This provision would expand the scope of the Hyde Amendment—that nasty piece of national legislation that since 1976 has prohibited the use of federal funds for abortion—to include private health insurance plans partially subsidized by the federal government. This means that additional millions of women would be denied abortion as one of their health care options. Its inclusion in the health care bill is an outrageous capitulation by the Obama administration to the Catholic Church, religious fundamentalists, and Congressional conservatives and hypocrites of both the Democratic and Republican parties. We must fight back: No national health care system that denies the right to abortion on demand! Repeal the Hyde Amendment!

Here is some background on the Hyde Amendment. Named for its sponsor, Representative Henry Hyde (R-III), this law began wending its way through Congress in June 1976, as an amendment to the Health, Education, and Welfare (now the Health and Human Services) budget. Designed to exclude women on Medicaid from full reproductive health services by prohibiting federal funding for abortions, it was the first direct attack on the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision of

over 30 years thanks to Democratic and Republican Congress-people and Presidents, alike. In the 1980's, Congress widened its scope to include federal employees and their dependents, Native Americans, military personnel and their dependents, federal prisoners, and low-income residents of the District of Columbia.

Now Congress is at it again, this time using the motivation and arguments underlying the Hyde Amendment to deny even more women abortion access. Clearly, immediate actions are called for—not only to block the anti-abortion provision of the Obama health care bill, but also to demand the repeal of the Hyde Amendment.

So join us to get the word out about the Hyde Amendment and the Obama health care bill. Let's make sure that the public is aware of how Obama and the Democratic leadership are curtailing women's rights in the guise of health care reform. Let it be widely known that the Democratic Party has given up all pretence of being pro-choice.

The radical Left needs to offer an alternative to the liberal, mainstream organizations such as NARAL and NOW, whose placating strategies make them

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Remembering Clarence Kailin

By Matty O’Dea



Clarence Kailin, one of the last surviving members of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, has died at the age of 95. Kailin was one of the 2,800 American volunteers who fought against the fascists during the Spanish Civil War in defense of the Spanish Republic, “There wasn’t any choice.” he once said, “If you were against fascism and you were against injustice, you had to care about what was happening in Spain. So Spain was where I knew I needed to be.” Kailin never wanted to be just another old soldier telling stories of distant battles. He remained politically active until the end of his life.

Active for many years with the American Communist Party and then with the Socialist Party, he founded Madison’s monthly “Socialist Potluck.” Kailin was a classic down-to-earth radical who demanded that the United States make real its promise of “liberty and justice for all.” Quick-witted and passionate, he often joked with friends at the notion that a centrist Democrat from Chicago named Barack Obama was somehow turning the United States hard to the left. “If only Obama was a socialist!” he said. “But, you know, real change never comes from the top. It comes when people get organized and decide

that they’re going to make the change happen -- no matter who the leaders are.” After Spain, he organized workers into unions, marched to integrate schools and housing and put pressure on the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction to add African-American historical and cultural texts to the curriculum.

Kailin was also an ardent peace activist and was active in the struggles against the Vietnam War and U.S. interventions in Central America. He remained active in the lead up to the Iraq war and after the invasion, was instrumental in the successful effort to have Madison city government go on record in favor of immediate withdrawal from the conflict. In recognition of his lifetime of work, the Madison chapter of Veterans for Peace is named after him.

Though Kailin faced FBI harassment for his political activities, in 1999 hundreds cheered him as he dedicated a monument in James Madison Park honoring the Wisconsinites who fought and died in Spain. It is in this way that Kailin should be remembered, as a lasting figure of the American left.

Endorsed by the Socialist Party of South Central Wisconsin

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complicit in the ongoing assaults on abortion rights. From our position outside the Democratic Party, we can and must present the much-needed voice of socialist feminism—one that places abortion access in the context of socialized health care, human rights, social and economic justice, and independent political action.

More travesties like the Hyde Amendment and the anti-abortion provision of the Obama health care bill will be perpetrated unless we continue to demand an end to restrictive state and federal laws, to the wholly inadequate number of abortion facilities and providers, and to health care discrimination levelled against young, low-income, and immigrant women, and women of color.

Only our persistent and militant grassroots efforts will bring about the repeal of the Hyde Amendment and the defeat of the Obama health care bill. Through collective action, we can achieve our fundamental objective: a comprehensive system of socialized health care within a society that guarantees the right to reproductive freedom and health care justice and equity, and that ends all forms of violence against women.

*The Women’s Commission of the Socialist Party USA
November 2009*

IN THE NEWS

Cookies and Chavismo?

Venezuela's President, Hugo Chavez, almost saved the cookies. The *NYC Independent* reports that Chavez met with a group of union workers who had been on strike against the Stella D'Oro cookie factory in the Bronx, NY. The workers implored Chavez to help them and he attempted to oblige by directing the Venezuelan gas station subsidiary CITGO to make a buyout bid for the factory. CITGO officials attempted to contact the plants owners but were rebuked. The CITGO plan would have saved 136 union jobs, converted the cookie maker into a worker-directed cooperative and distributed the cookies through the network of CITGO stations.

Civil Rights Activist Gets Her Due

A new book corrects a long-time slight in the history of the Civil Rights movement. Claudette Colvin was an early Jim Crow resister arrested while attempting to integrate a Montgomery, AL bus in March 1955, some nine months before Rosa Parks. Colvin contacted activists such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to initiate a larger protest. However, as a young and unpredictable teenager, she didn't fit the desired cultural norms of the new movement. Enter Rosa Parks. Colvin receives some long-deserved credit in a book for young people entitled, *Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice*.

African-Americans Suffer in Recession

Statistics indicate that African-American communities have been hit hard by the recent economic recession. Joblessness among African-American male youth, 16 to 24 years old, has skyrocketed to 34.5%. This is more than three times the rate for the US population and near Great Depression era highs. Community impoverishment, subpar schools and overall racial discrimination are cited as causes for inordinate unemployment. Princeton anthropologist, Devah Pager, told the *Washington Post*, "Black men with a clean record fare no better than white men just released from prison."

US War Resister Seeks German Asylum

Canada is not the only safe haven sought out by US war resisters. Iraq veteran, Andre Shepherd, is making his case in Germany. Shepherd fled to Berlin after serving six months in Iraq repairing Apache helicopters that were, he said, then used to kill civilians. Shepherd escaped after the first of his two tours ended and his

platoon returned to a US base in Germany. An asylum claim has been filed and Human Rights lawyers view the terms of the case as solid. More significant doubts lie in the German government's desire to appease the US and avoid an influx of other resisters.

Union Rights Know no Borders

When workers at the Stockholm, Sweden branch of the American-based company Urban Outfitters faced a union-busting campaign, an international call for solidarity went out. The Socialist Party USA answered. In less than 24 hours, members in NYC set up a picket in front of the East Village outlet of the store and encouraged shoppers "Don't Buy the Oppression." Shoppers turned away from the store in support of the campaign. The next day, however, news arrived that 33 of the store's 38 workers had accepted the offer to be employed by a temp agency and abandoned the union drive. Still, some international links of solidarity were built and we saw a small example of how the left can work when it works well.

Healthcare Movement Alive in New Jersey

On Saturday November 21st, members of the Northern New Jersey local joined with about 50 other healthcare activist at a rally for single-payer healthcare at Journal Sq. in Jersey City, New Jersey. Greg Pason spoke for the Party at the event and the activists marched through the streets in support of single-payer healthcare for all.

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Automation Socialism by Roy Fischler

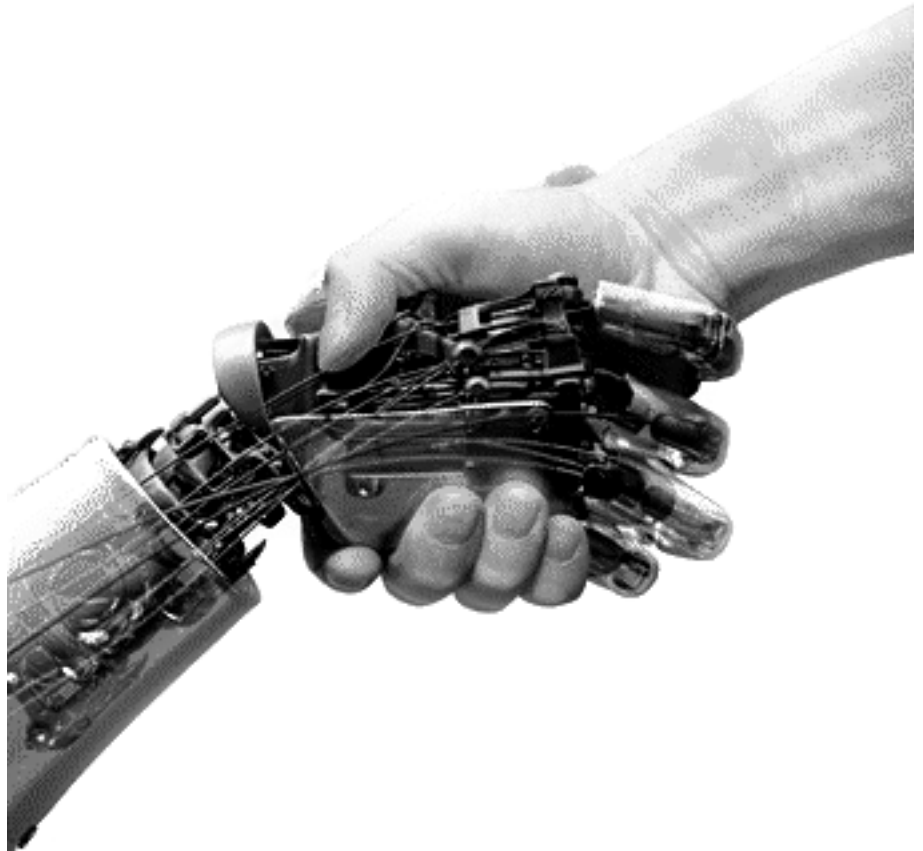
Probably the most common criticism of socialism is that if people are given equal wealth whether they work or not, few people will do the necessary work without economic incentive, so everyone will wind up equally poor. The dysfunctional economies of countries such as the Soviet Union and Cuba are supposedly proof that socialism doesn't work, and that maximizing disparities of wealth works best. Never mind that the hybrid capitalist-socialist Scandinavian countries have the highest standards of living on earth.

Socialists typically blame the poor economies of Cuba and other countries on the US economic blockade and other efforts by the capitalists to sabotage attempts at socialism. While sabotage is surely part of the problem, I don't believe those countries' economies would do very well even if left alone.

The bad news is that those critics of socialism are probably correct. People probably wouldn't do much necessary work without economic incentive. The good news is that we could have socialism anyway, as long as enough work is automated away, so that we could find enough people to do the remaining work voluntarily.

In a technologically advanced country such as the US, enough work has already been automated away that the economy would function best if there were a high degree of economic equality. We don't tend to be aware of just how much work has already been automated away because capitalism, especially in the extreme over-competitive form, generates enormous amounts of make-work, which produces nothing that people need or want. It generates economic "arms races" that can create endless amounts of make-work, limited only by the limited supply of workers. The more that automation frees up workers from producing more than people actually use, the more workers there are to perpetuate those arms races.

As automation increases, that optimum point of too much economic equality and too much inequality must shift in the direction of greater equality. Consumers will always spend more and spur more economic activity when there is greater equality. As



the amount of work decreases, there is less need for inequality to spur workers to do the dwindling remaining work. The most onerous jobs, such as janitor and garbage collector, should be automated away first, of course. These could already be automated away, but we don't because our draconian policies create a plentiful supply of desperate-enough low-paid workers. Not only would automation make socialism easier to achieve, but greater equality would in turn spur automation, by denying the capitalists a supply of cheap workers.

At the point when all work that people wouldn't do voluntarily is automated away, the economy would function best with complete equality. People will also probably tend to be less worried about grabbing all they can at the expense of the next person when there is the almost unimaginable abundance that complete automation would bring. Technology probably isn't up to the point yet that the most advanced economies would function best with complete equality - at least, not unless people would be willing to settle for a considerably lower standard of living. Most people would not. That's why we need to continue automating.

Automation and socialism go together like yin and yang. Tell people you are a socialist, and they ask how workers will have enough incentive to work. The answer is automation, so there is less work to be done.

Tell people you are for automation to give people more leisure and abundance, and they ask how workers will survive when they are thrown out of work. The answer is socialism, so they are paid anyway, and so work hours are decreased to spread the remaining work around.

I get the impression that most socialists respond to critics by insisting that people will do the necessary work voluntarily, especially if it is made as pleasant and rewarding as possible under socialism. If people don't tend to work, that's why we need automation to achieve a functional socialism. If people tend to work, that makes socialism all the more easy to achieve.

Most socialists also tend to take technological advance for granted. They focus mostly on changing society, and not on the fact that automation is necessary for socialism to function well. Marxists expect an intermediate socialist stage between capitalism and communism for sociological reasons, because society cannot change all at once. For technological reasons, we cannot advance to full communism until automation reaches the point that all work that people don't want to do disappears.

Many on the left are in the anti-technology wing of the environmental movement. There are primitivist anti-technology socialists who advocate going back to an agrarian, or maybe even pre-agrarian, past, which they imagine to have been idyllic, when in fact it was horrific. These people see all the ways that capitalists misuse technology in order to enrich themselves rather than benefit all of humanity, from warfare to technological unemployment to environmental destruction, and for some strange reason blame technology as well as capitalism. They want to get rid of technology along with capitalism, and ignore how technology can free people from the slavery of involuntary work and from scarcity.

The best way we could improve working people's lives would be to free them from involuntary work altogether. "Workers of the world unite," Marx said. Slackers of the world unite, I say!

Connecticut Socialists Oppose War

by Jim Marra and Tiffani McCoy

The Socialist Party of Connecticut (SPCT) joined with other organizations to protest the Obama Administration's announcement of troop increases in Afghanistan. Two lively demonstrations were held in the state drawing participants from the core of the anti-war movement in Connecticut.

The demonstration in Hartford was held out-

side the Ribicoff Court House on Main Street. Approximately 30 activists loudly chanted their demands and kept warm marching in an oval in front of the courthouse. A positive and determined mood characterized the event where new connections were made among participating groups and plans were being made for future action. Jim Marra of the SPCT demanded an immediate end to wasteful government spending for military adventures, bailouts for corporations, and a redirection of that money to job creation and social needs. The demonstration was a success. It received coverage from Channel 3 WSFB TV news and the *Hartford Courant*, and drew many "honks for peace" from passing drivers.



In New Haven, SPCT comrade Tiffani McCoy joined with fifteen other demonstrators on the corner of Church Street. This group marched around the New Haven Green, and later joined another, larger group of forty protesters at the Federal Courthouse. Demonstrators were vocal and passionate, standing in front of the courthouse for an hour displaying signs and chanting demands. Individuals spoke freely into the bullhorn expressing their demand for an end to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Much promotion was given to the January 30th End the War Council. The event was featured in media reports by the *New Haven Register* and the *Yale Daily News*.



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