

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Colombian guerrillas call for talks to end fighting
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 74/NO. 34 SEPTEMBER 6, 2010

Controversy over mosque in New York heats up

BY TOM BAUMANN
AND DOUG NELSON

NEW YORK—A debate with street protests on both sides has broken out here in response to the planned building of an Islamic cultural center two blocks from the site of the former World Trade Center, which was destroyed by al-Qaeda terrorists on Sept. 11, 2001.

NO TO GOV'T INTERFERENCE!
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The two sides squared off on the morning of August 22 near the site in Lower Manhattan. Some 500 people against plans for the Islamic center marched from its proposed location to the site of the 2001 attack, now under construction. A couple of blocks away, a counterdemonstration of about 200 opposed any government restrictions on the center's location.

Anti-mosque protesters chanted: "Not here, not now, not ever" and "Obama must go." American flags were prominent and participants sang "God Bless America" and recited the

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Frame-up conviction of Troy Davis upheld

Judge ignores cops' coercion of witnesses



AP Photo/Stephen Morton

Virginia Davis (left foreground), mother of Troy Davis, attending his court hearing June 24 in Savannah, Georgia, where his defense presented witnesses who described how police pressured them to falsely accused him of murder. At right is Martina Correia, Troy's sister.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

A federal judge in Georgia upheld the conviction of death-row prisoner Troy Davis August 24 despite evidence clearly showing he was framed up by the police.

Davis is a 41-year-old Black man convicted in 1991 for the 1989 killing of Mark MacPhail, a white cop in

Savannah, Georgia. Davis has maintained his innocence throughout his 19 years on death row and fought for a new trial. No DNA or other physical evidence linking him to the killing was presented at the trial.

The state has tried to execute Davis three times. Due to an international campaign to defend him stays were won each time. Since the 1991 trial seven of nine witnesses recanted or changed their testimony.

Under the pressure of a worldwide outcry against the frame-up, the U.S. Supreme Court in August 2009 ordered a federal judge to hear new evi-

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U.S. gov't increases threats against Iran

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The Barack Obama administration is pushing more forcefully for Tehran to cease enrichment of uranium, a process that would bring the Iranian government technically closer to having the potential to develop nuclear weapons. The pressure is designed to deepen existing fissures within Iran's ruling class, forcing the government to forsake its enrichment program in exchange for lifting sanctions and providing other incentives.

Top U.S. officials have said recently that they are fully prepared to launch a military strike, while they believe there is still time to continue efforts to get Iranian compliance.

For much of 2009 the Obama administration sought to engage Tehran—which says its nuclear program is only for producing energy—in negotiations over obtaining enriched uranium from outside the country. Those talks broke down although the White House says it remains open to resuming them.

Speaking on "Meet the Press" August 1, Adm. Michael Mullen, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, said allowing Iran to have the capacity to develop a nuclear weapon is unacceptable. A military attack could have "unintended consequences that are difficult to predict in what is an incredibly unstable part of the world," he emphasized.

The space between the option of
Continued on page 3

Chicago socialist candidate opposes cuts in school funds

BY BETSY FARLEY

CHICAGO—Working people throughout Chicago need to oppose layoffs and cutbacks in public education, said Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate, at a hearing on the city school budget August 19 at Corliss High School on Chicago's South Side.

More than 100 people were present to address a budget that includes cutting some 2,000 teachers and other school workers jobs. About 1,200 already received layoff notices earlier this month.

Chicago Teachers Union members rejected the school board's demand they give up a 4 percent pay raise because there is "no guarantee that layoffs or class size increases would stop," said union president Karen Lewis.

"The Democratic and Republican party politicians try to convince us that there is a limited pool of money in the city and state budgets, and if this runs out, everyone has to be cut back," testified Kennedy. She explained that all the city's revenue comes from wealth

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Militant/Illona Gersh

Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Senate in Illinois, speaks at microphone against cuts in city school budget at August 19 meeting on Chicago's South Side.

Washington not preparing to end combat mission in Iraq

BY SETH GALINSKY

Newspapers headlines worldwide give the impression that Washington's combat mission in Iraq is drawing to a close. However, 50,000 U.S. troops are still in the country and it appears many will remain for years to come.

Washington's reduction of its forces in Iraq shows that it has made progress in cobbling together a somewhat stable regime to safeguard the interests of U.S. imperialism in the region. But the U.S. government still faces big challenges that could undermine its success.

While the White House has declared that the "combat mission in Iraq" has ended, *Army Times* ran an article August 19 titled "Combat brigades in Iraq under different name."

The article compared the Army's 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, which left Iraq August 19, with the 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team of

the 25th Infantry Division, which is staying.

The 50,000 troops in Iraq are now divided into seven "Advise and Assist" brigades, like the 2nd Stryker, equipped with robots, pilotless drones,
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Latino farmers organize antidiscrimination fight

BY STEVE WARSHELL

ROSENBERG, Texas—About 20 Latino farmers and their families met here August 15 to talk about the next stages of their fight against U.S. government discrimination.

In 1999 Latino farmers and ranchers launched a lawsuit now known as *Garcia v. Vilsack* against the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The suit documents discrimination by the USDA and other government farm agencies. The meeting here is part of a national tour to promote the case.

Among greater obstacles Latino farmers face compared to white farmers are: denial or delay of loans, restrictions on access to loan money, and being granted loans and then told there is no money available.

“It’s about a group of individuals who have solely been discriminated against because of their skin color, their last name, or their accent,” Rio Grande farmer David Cantu, who participated in the meeting, told the press.

Although the courts denied the farmers class action status, the judge granted a stay on the time limit that farmers have to sue the government, Stephen Hill, the lead attorney for farmers suing the U.S. government, told the *Militant*.

“We know that at any time the judge could remove that stay and then farmers would have just eight days to join *Garcia v. Vilsack* or file their own,” he said.

Hill and Cantu both noted that among those supporting their efforts is Timothy Pigford, a Black farmer who

spearheaded an earlier lawsuit fighting USDA racism and discrimination against farmers who are Black.

In May, the Barack Obama administration offered \$1.33 billion to settle the Latino farmers’ lawsuit and a similar one brought by women farmers. Many farmers say that is inadequate given the large number of those who have faced discrimination.

Farmer Modesta Salazar told the press at a July 9 protest in Las Cruces, New Mexico, “Right now, what they’re offering wouldn’t even buy me beans.”

Bosses hid safety incidents at West Virginia mine

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

New information about unsafe conditions at Massey Energy’s Upper Big Branch Mine in Montcoal, West Virginia, have been made public. Twenty-nine miners were killed in a massive explosion at the mine in early April, the worst mining disaster in the United States in 40 years.

Federal government officials have cited Massey for failing to report more than 20 safety violations at the Upper Big Branch Mine in the two years before the blast, according to documents released by the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) August 17.

Four of the violations directly involve the explosion. Others between January 2008 and early this year include “unreported roof collapses, assorted injuries, and two instances of miners exercising their right to move out of dusty areas of the mine because they’ve contracted



Militant/Amanda Ulman

Meeting in Rosenberg, Texas, August 15 on fight by Latino farmers against government discrimination. Speaking at front is lawyer Stephen Hill. Standing at far right is farmer David Cantu.

black lung disease,” reported Associated Press.

MSHA said it didn’t know about these violations and only discovered them while doing an audit on its investigation of the explosion.

“It comes as no surprise that Massey has been found not to have reported injuries and accidents,” United Mine Workers of America spokesperson Phil Smith told AP. “We’ve been hearing stories about this a long time.”

Massey is the fourth-largest U.S. coal company, and the largest mine operator in central Appalachia. Most workers employed at these mines are nonunion.

In another development, reports filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission for the second quarter of this year indicate the high number of safety violations and fines incurred by some of the largest coal companies.

An analysis of these files by SNL Energy, a business and corporate intelligence firm, reported that Massey was cited for more than \$4 million in proposed fines during this period. The company also racked up the most “significant and substantial” safety violations—1,075. Peabody Energy Corp. had 705 citations and CONSOL Energy, 546, the second and third highest.

More workers forego health care due to unemployment and costs

BY ANGEL LARISCY

In another sign of deteriorating conditions faced by the U.S. working class, more workers are foregoing doctor visits and surgery. One in four people put off needed medical appointments last year because they could not afford the expense, according to a recent Kaiser Family Foundation poll.

Visits to doctors have declined every month this year and were down 7.6 percent in May from May 2009. Admissions to hospitals fell in three of the first four months of this year compared to the same period in 2009.

As more people lose their jobs and health insurance, and as insurance companies demand higher co-payments and deductibles, workers are often forced to choose between basic necessities and medical care.

Many who do have insurance are buying high-deductible plans to get lower premiums. Under these plans individuals have to put out thousands of dollars a year before insurance coverage kicks in.

A Brown University study, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, details how patients with

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THE MILITANT

Behind China’s economic ‘miracle’

China’s economic growth, often referred to as a “miracle,” does not offer a road out of the world capitalist depression. Read more in the pages of the ‘Militant’ on China’s “market socialism” and struggles of the working class against its effects.



Shenzhen city, one of Special Economic Zones opened by Chinese government to attract foreign investment.

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The Militant

Vol. 74/No. 34

Closing news date: August 25, 2010

Editor: Paul Mailhot

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Published weekly except for one week in January and one week in July.

The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018. Telephone: (212) 244-4899

Fax: (212) 244-4947

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Website: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: United States: For one year send \$35 to above address.

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50,000 troops still in Iraq

Continued from front page

and dog teams, as well as standard combat gear and materiel. The paper points out that remaining U.S. forces will “retain their inherent capability to conduct offensive and defensive operations.”

“I don’t think anybody has declared the end of the war as far as I know,” Pentagon press secretary Geoff Morrell told MSNBC. “Counterterrorism will still be part of their mission.”

The Pentagon is not reducing the 4,500-strong U.S. Special Forces contingent in Iraq. At the same time the State Department is moving ahead with hiring up to 7,000 security contractors, who will make up “quick reaction forces” in Iraq.

According to the news agency Agence France-Presse, U.S. and Iraqi military officials are discussing keeping U.S. troops in the country long after Dec. 31, 2011—the date a previous accord had set for withdrawing all U.S. forces.

“We’re obviously open to that discussion,” U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates stated. “But that initiative will have to come from the Iraqis.”

Lt. Gen. Babakir Zebari, head of the Iraqi Army, told the London *Daily Telegraph*, “If I were asked about the withdrawal, I would say to politicians: the U.S. army must stay until the Iraqi army is fully ready in 2020.”

“The country is moving forward,” Gen. Raymond Odierno, head of U.S. forces in Iraq, told the media. “It’s moving forward a little bit economically. Its security forces are improving. Its diplomatic efforts are improving. Its government functions are improving.”

But Washington faces serious difficulties achieving the long-term stability it needs in Iraq. More than five months after the country’s parliamentary elections, competing bourgeois parties are still unable to reach agreement on a coalition government. No coalition has a majority in the 325-member body.

Competing Shiite coalitions won 159 seats, four short of a majority. The

Iraqiya coalition, backed by Sunni Arab capitalists and some Shiites, won 91 seats in the March election.

Iraqiya has been negotiating with the Shiite State of Law alliance, headed by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. Those negotiations broke down August 16. Al-Maliki’s party is also in a bloc with another Shiite capitalist grouping, the Iraqi National Alliance, which is closely allied to the Iranian government.

U.S. troops will continue to staff checkpoints separating Kurdish and Arab areas in northern Iraq. The Kurds, an oppressed nationality with a long history of struggle, won a measure of autonomy after the U.S. invasion and occupation of the country, but tensions remain high. The Kurdish regional government has its own armed forces, independent of the Iraqi Army.

In Mosul, Kurdish troops have prevented the Sunni Arab governor from traveling to Kurdish-controlled areas of the province. Arab and Kurdish forces are also in a dispute over who will control the oilfields around the city of Kirkuk.

Another unintended consequence of the U.S. war against Iraq was the open-



U.S. Army/Sgt. Kimberly Johnson

Army soldiers cross border into Kuwait August 16 as part of reduction of U.S. forces in Iraq. While Washington claims combat in Iraq has ended, 50,000 U.S. troops remain.

ing of political space for working people. In June thousands of demonstrators in Basra, Iraq’s second largest city, and in Nasiriya protested widespread shortages of electricity.

Wealthier neighborhoods in Basra have up to eight hours of electricity a day from the power grid. They can af-

ford to pay \$50 a month for power from a generator during blackouts. But working-class neighborhoods often have just one hour of electricity per day.

In the summer temperatures rise above 110 Fahrenheit. One banner at the Basra protest read, “Prison is more comfortable than our homes.”

Washington ratchets up pressure on Iran

Continued from front page

Iran getting a nuclear weapon and U.S. military action “is pretty narrow,” he said. “Military actions have been on the table and remain on the table.”

When asked by moderator David Gregory if the Pentagon has a plan to carry out this military operation, Mullen replied, “We do.”

Defense Secretary Robert Gates made the same point in an interview with FOX News June 20. “I don’t think we’re prepared to even talk about containing a nuclear Iran,” he said. “We do not accept the idea of Iran having nuclear weapons.”

The Obama administration has said it will take about a year before Tehran develops a nuclear weapon.

“American officials said the United States believed international inspectors would detect an Iranian move toward breakout within weeks,” stated the August 20 *New York Times*, “leaving a considerable amount of time for the United States and Israel to consider military strikes.”

Saying military steps must be taken sooner than later, *Investor’s Business Daily* in an August 18 editorial wrote, “A nuclear Iran is another ‘new kind of

menace’ for the 21st century. . . . Evil must be recognized and neutralized early, before it becomes empowered.”

While the military option is increasingly being discussed in ruling-class circles, the U.S. government is also ratcheting up economic pressure on Tehran. The Treasury Department released new regulations August 13 implementing its sanctions. They bar foreign banks or companies from doing business in dollars if they conduct transactions with any Iranian financial institution or individuals suspected of being involved in Iran’s nuclear energy program.

Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad belittled the latest round of sanctions. He said the Iranian government will turn these sanctions into an opportunity for economic boom and self-sufficiency, reported Iran’s PressTV. “I tell you that the Iranian nation can isolate a hundred like you,” he stated.

The Iranian government launched a new Qiam 1 surface-to-surface missile and unveiled a new long-range drone aircraft within days of each other, following the U.S. government’s latest announced sanction.

There are signs that debate is growing among Iranian capitalists in face of the imperialist military and economic pressures.

An article in the Tehran daily *Mehr News* reported that “an economic figure representing the private sector says affairs must not be handed over to those extremists who seek to isolate Iran, insisting that opportunities not be lost for dialogue.” It said Mohammad Nahavandian, chairman of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Mines, objected to government officials downplaying the sanctions, which he said will push prices up and increase unemployment. “Nahavandian noted that welcoming sanctions and inciting the enemies to mount pressure on the country are ‘not logical,’” said *Mehr*.

After more than three decades of delay, the Bushehr nuclear power plant on Iran’s southern coast is set to begin operations. Iranian and Russian tech-

nicians have begun loading low-enriched uranium fuel rods into the plant. It should start generating electricity by late November.

Plans for the power plant began under the shah. A German firm started building it in 1974, but backed out after the 1979 Iranian revolution. Moscow signed a deal to finish the project in 1992, and had been working on it since 1995.

Moscow said its technicians will jointly operate the plant for two to three years before ceding complete control to the Iranians. The Russian government will provide the uranium to be used in the Bushehr plant’s reactor, and spent fuel rods will be returned to Russia.

Troy Davis

Continued from front page

dence in the case. This was first time in 50 years that the high court had issued such a directive.

In response, a June 23–24 special hearing was held before U.S. District Judge William Moore. In testimony, four witnesses admitted they lied at the trial when they implicated Troy Davis and they did not know who shot MacPhail. Four witnesses implicated another man as the one who killed the cop, and three original state witnesses described police coercion during questioning, reported WSAV-TV in Savannah.

Two months later the judge issued his decision. “Executing an innocent person would violate the Eighth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution,” Moore stated. “However, Mr. Davis is not innocent.” The judge asserted that while the “new evidence casts some additional, minimal doubt on his conviction, it is largely smoke and mirrors.”

The court’s ruling sets the stage for the state of Georgia to schedule Davis’s execution. However, his lawyers have said they plan to appeal the district court’s decision either to the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals or directly to the U.S. Supreme Court.

“We will continue to fight,” Davis’s sister, Martina Correia, told the media.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

China’s ‘Economic Miracle’ and the World Capitalist Economic Crisis. Speaker: representative, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Sept. 3, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 4025 S. Western Ave. Tel.: (323) 295-2600.

San Francisco

The Debate Over Proposition 8: Why It Is in the Interests of All Working People to Oppose Discrimination against Gays. Speaker: Betsey Stone, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Sept. 3, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5, unemployed: \$1. 5482 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

NEW YORK

Manhattan


How Can the Labor Movement Fight for Jobs for All. Speaker: Michael Fitzsimmons, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Sept. 3, 8 p.m. Donation: \$5. 307 W. 36th St., 10th floor (use north elevators). Tel.: (212) 736-2540.

—CALENDAR—

NEW YORK

Manhattan

‘From My Altitude’—Paintings by Antonio Guerrero, One of the Cuban 5 Political Prisoners in U.S. Jails. Opening reception, Fri., Sept. 3, 6:30 p.m. *Clemente Soto Vélaz Cultural Center, 107 Suffolk St., off Delancey St. Gallery is open Monday through Friday from 4:30–9:30 p.m. The exhibit will run until October 1.*

	<p><i>Aida Bahr to speak on</i></p> <h3>Culture and the Cuban Revolution</h3>
<p><i>Aida Bahr is a prize-winning writer of fiction, a literary critic and a screenwriter from Cuba. A member of the National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba, she is one of the organizers of the annual Havana International Book Fair.</i></p>	
<p>Edinburgh Scotland Friday, Sept. 10 6:30 p.m. <i>University of Edinburgh Faculty Room South, David Hume Tower, George Square</i></p>	<p>London Saturday, Sept. 11 3:00 p.m. <i>Birkbeck College Room B36, Malet Street (nearest tubes Goodge Street & Warren Street)</i></p>

N.Y. prosecutor trying to convict man shot by cops

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

NEW YORK—In Manhattan Criminal Court August 16 prosecutors charged Angel Alvarez with three counts of weapons possession. They put on hold, for now, charging him with attempted murder.

However, at a hearing three days later in Manhattan, State Supreme Court Justice Bonnie Wittner backed the prosecutors' request to keep Alvarez in jail for the next six weeks while they work on getting a grand jury indictment. Under state law Alvarez would have been released August 20 since six days had gone by without an indictment on the more serious charges.

Having produced no evidence that Alvarez shot at the cops, city prosecutors are having a hard time securing such an indictment so far.

Alvarez, 23, was involved in a scuffle with Luis Soto, 21, at a block party in Harlem August 8. Four cops unleashed a fusillade of 46 bullets at the two, killing Soto, who was shot five times. Alvarez was severely wounded, shot 23 times. Three other bystanders were struck by bullets. Two cops were also hit by police gunfire.

After his release from Harlem Hospital Center August 14, the police at first charged Alvarez with attempted

murder and attempted first-degree assault, along with the weapons offenses. He was immediately incarcerated without bail.

The police "kicked him in the face and taunted him saying, 'you're going to die,'" Alvarez's attorney, Matthew Galluzzo, told NY1 TV. "Angel remembers vividly responding, 'No I'm not going to die.' Obviously he's been proven correct. He didn't die, remarkably. He's going to get justice for what happened."

At the August 16 hearing District Attorney Jon Veiga described Alvarez as a common criminal with a violent past and a history of anger toward the cops. At the August 19 hearing one cop tried to make a case that Alvarez fired at them. "Shouldn't there be a civilian witness?" Galluzzo responded. "There were 500 people on the block."

If convicted just on the weapons charges, Alvarez would face a mandatory minimum of seven years and as much as 15 years in prison.

Socialist files for ballot in Washington

BY SUSAN LAMONT

WASHINGTON—Omari Musa, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of the District of Columbia, filed nominating petitions August 17 at the Board of Elections to gain a place on the November 2 ballot. Supporters of the socialist candidate gathered 5,142 signatures—well over the 3,000 required—from working people throughout the city in late July.

The visit to the Board of Elections capped a busy week of campaigning by Musa, Paul Pederson, and Glova Scott. Pederson and Scott are the socialist candidates for D.C. City Council chair and D.C. Delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives, respectively. Along with supporters, they campaigned at a candidates' forum at St. Elizabeth's Hospital and participated in a picket line protesting the closure of an elementary school.

The candidates also joined a union rally of fired school employees and attended a community picnic held by the Reentry Network for Returning Citizens. The organizer of the picnic met Musa and Pederson at the candidates' forum earlier in the week and invited the socialists to set up a literature table at the picnic. Most of the 40 people present either had family members currently in prison or had been incarcerated themselves.

On August 18 Musa appeared on the WPFW radio's Latino Media Collective program, speaking on the case of the Cuban Five, who are unjustly jailed in U.S. prisons on frame-up charges. They were arrested in 1998 while in Florida monitoring the activities of right-wing Cuban groups that launch violent attacks on Cuba.

Seattle SWP candidate: Stop deportations



Militant/Cecelia Moriarity

SEATTLE—John Naubert, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate, addresses several hundred marchers here August 17 demanding that President Barack Obama stop deportations of immigrant workers. The president was in town for a Democratic Party fund-raiser. "My campaign stands in solidarity with the struggle for immigrant rights and calls for legalization for all undocumented workers," Naubert said.

—CECELIA MORIARITY

Chicago: Socialist candidate addresses budget

Continued from front page

created by working people, but the politicians' priority is to pay interest to wealthy bondholders, not to provide for what working people need.

Her comments received applause from many in attendance, mostly teachers, students, and parents.

"Workers should not have pay for the crisis through layoffs, increased work loads, speedup, worsening of safety conditions, and cutbacks in social services," said the socialist candidate.

Teachers speaking at the hearing described the deteriorating conditions in schools. "After the first layoff I went to volunteer at Langston Hughes Elementary School until they finally decided to hire me last December," said Ursula Whitfield, a special education assistant. "Then in June I was laid off again. Who is going to work with the special needs children I was responsible for? Nobody."

"As a teacher I can only request a maximum of 25 sheets of construction paper, but my class size is 31," said Mary Ellen Sanchez, an elemen-

tary school teacher. "Some classrooms have more students than desks. And to use the lavatories the students have to request individual sheets of toilet paper," she said.

A few speakers posed funding for more charter schools as a solution. But Terry Wilford, who has taught in both public and charter schools said, "The truth is that education is unequal in Chicago. They're not interested in educating our children. For real education they should open up the schools to the community, the parents, both to understand their children's curriculum, but also to learn themselves.

"The economy is getting worse, working people are working harder, but we're not getting \$50,000 raises like some of the school administrators, we're getting laid off," Wilford said.

The austerity measures in Chicago schools are mirrored throughout Illinois. In March, Governor Patrick Quinn cut \$1 billion in funding to public school districts, threatening 17,000 teachers with layoff. The excuse for the education cuts, as well

as public hospital closings, furlough days, and layoffs of other state government workers, was a \$13 billion deficit in the 2011 state budget.

On August 10, the Education and Medicaid Act went into effect giving \$10 billion of federal funds to states to mitigate education cuts. The Chicago public schools are expected to receive \$100 million for the \$6.4 billion budget.

"We in the Chicago Teachers Union lobbied hard for the passage of that bill," said Xian Barrett, a four-year teacher at Julian High School. "On Wednesday the money came through, then on Thursday I got laid off."

"We have to stop relying on the twin capitalist parties to solve our problems. These parties always put the interests of the bankers, real estate developers, and industrialists first," Kennedy said.

"We need a labor party, a party based on a fighting union movement, that puts workers' interests first. This perspective is part of a course of the working class toward taking political power from the capitalists who exploit us."

The Working Class & the Transformation of Learning

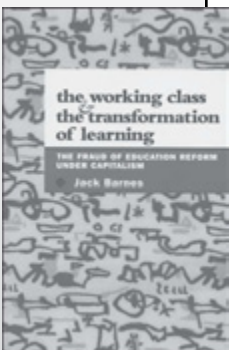
The fraud of education reform under capitalism

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."

\$3

Pathfinderpress.com



Workers forego health care

Continued from page 2

higher co-pays cut back on doctor visits. Elderly workers and people with hypertension and diabetes who cut back often end up requiring hospital care.

Bills for diabetes patients who have no health insurance can run from \$350 to \$900 a month. According to the Associated Press, doctors have seen a decline in regular appointments with diabetic patients.

Those who have diabetes and don't closely monitor their blood sugar levels and take their medicine risk amputations, loss of vision, strokes, and death.

Nationwide there is a trend of workers stopping medication or reducing it because of lack of funds. Three California cancer patients, for example, suffered relapses when they could not

afford to buy their medication.

To avoid doctor visits and prescription costs, an increasing number of workers are turning to over-the-counter medications, alternative medical treatments, and home remedies.

"This could go beyond the recession," Paul Ginsburg of the Center for Studying Health System Change told the *Wall Street Journal*. "Being a less aggressive consumer of health care is here to stay."

While 2.7 million people lost their private health insurance in 2009, U.S. health insurance companies posted profits 56 percent higher than in 2008.

Five of the seven largest health plans reported increased profits in the second quarter this year compared to the same period last year. The biggest gain was by Aetna—48 percent.

ON THE PICKET LINE

Iowa factory workers win union amid layoffs

DES MOINES, Iowa—Workers at Trinity Structural Towers in Newton, Iowa, voted to join the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers union (IBEW) August 13. In a close vote, 53 percent voted in favor of unionization. More than 130 workers are employed at the plant, which makes towers for electrical wind turbines.

According to an article on the IBEW's Web site, unsafe working conditions and forced overtime helped spur the unionization drive. "We had one employee lose his finger last month, an accident that shouldn't have happened," said Brian Heins, an IBEW district organizer. The IBEW also reported that the company forced some employees to work 14-hour days without prior notification.

Some Trinity workers contacted the IBEW in June, and within a week more than enough signatures were gathered to

file for a union election.

Trinity hired antiunion consultants to help fight the unionization drive, the IBEW reported. Heins said that the company organized "almost daily antiunion captive audience meetings" in the plant.

Newton, a town of 15,000 near Des Moines, has still not recovered from the closure of the giant Maytag plant there in 2007. The plant employed 4,000 workers. Great fanfare greeted the opening of Trinity in part of the old Maytag facility, and of TPI, another nearby plant that produces the giant turbine blades that sit atop the towers manufactured at Trinity. President Barack Obama traveled to the Trinity plant to give an address on Earth Day in 2009.

The combined workforce at Trinity and TPI is only a fraction of the former Maytag workforce. In May, TPI announced it was laying off more than half its workers, slashing its workforce to just over 230.

—David Rosenfeld

Schools make parents foot the bill for supplies

BY ANGEL LARISCY

Parents are used to having to purchase a myriad of school supplies for their children each fall. This year the list has grown to include cleaning wipes, garbage bags, paper towels, and copy paper.

An increasing number of school districts throughout the United States are forcing parents to foot the bill for basic items to run the schools. This hits hardest on a working class already hammered by record unemployment, declining wages, and benefit cuts.

According to the National Retail Federation, families will spend an average of about \$600 on back-to-school supplies and clothes this year—up 11 percent from 2009.

Major chains such as Staples, Office Depot, OfficeMax, and Walgreens now include janitorial and office supplies in their back-to-school specials.

While the shopping list grows, so do those workers seeking aid from free school supply giveaways across the country.

In Ft. Worth, Texas, 12,000 registered for an event offering free haircuts, eye exams, and school supplies for students—a 50 percent increase over last year. Some were refused entry because they hadn't preregistered and there was no more room.

Hundreds lined up hours before an event in Racine, Wisconsin, offering students free backpacks loaded with school supplies. After 1,000 people received the packages, another 500 were turned away empty handed.

"They are lucky if they get one outfit for school," Isabel Martínez of Racine said of her five children. Martínez came to the giveaway because she had just been laid off and didn't have money for all the supplies her children need.

When parents can't afford to buy school supplies, teachers often do. Ninety-four percent of teachers surveyed by the National School Supply and Equipment Association reported spending an average of \$395 of their own money on school supplies. Some spent more than \$1,000.

Denise Richardson, who teaches fifth grade in West Warwick, Rhode Island, told the *Providence Journal*, "It's not like you can make a list, go into the sup-

ply closet, and get what you need. Those days are gone." Richardson even had to buy fans to keep her classroom cool.

Public schools charge fees

Public schools are increasing fees as well. The South Carolina Rock Hill school board voted to charge a \$25 fee just to enroll a student. The Fairview Park school district in the Cleveland area, charges each child \$60 for art supplies and workbooks.

Many schools across the nation laid off teachers this spring. In most of the largest school districts there are no plans to rehire them, even with \$10 billion in federal "stimulus" money being doled out.

Los Angeles Unified, the second-largest school district in the country, laid off 682 teachers and counselors and 2,000 support workers this spring. There are no plans to rehire them because of a projected \$280 million budget shortfall next year. In New Jersey,



Militant/Baskaran Appu

Rally August 21 in Auckland, New Zealand, against antiunion law introduced into parliament.

Rallies in New Zealand oppose antiunion law

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Several hundred union supporters rallied here August 21 to oppose a new em-

ployment law that the government has introduced into parliament. Some 800 protested in Wellington, and 500 each in Christchurch and Dunedin. The actions were called by the Council of Trade Unions (CTU) as part of its Fairness at Work campaign.

The new legislation would extend provisions already in effect at workplaces of fewer than 20 employees. This would allow companies to arbitrarily fire a worker any time during the first 90 days of their employment, removing current legal rights workers have to appeal against unfair dismissals.

Speaking at the Auckland rally, Joanne Bartlett told of how she had worked at a fast food outlet for 89 days. She was then fired after she asked about her break times.

Under other provisions, union representatives would have to get an employer's consent before entering a workplace, and employers could demand doctor's certificates for workers taking even a single sick day.

"We have to support our working rights," David Te Iringa told the *Militant* at the rally. He was one of the workers involved in a hard-fought dispute at a dairy plant in Waharoa last year.

—Janet Roth

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



September 6, 1985

Labor Day is an important holiday. As we march in parades and join in rallies, it's a time for developing the unity that is so necessary in advancing the labor movement's goals. And Labor Day is a proper time for promoting solidarity. Solidarity among working people here at home, and solidarity with the struggles of working people in other countries.

This Labor Day, for sure, the focus of international solidarity should be South Africa and Central America.

South Africa, where the oppressed Black population is fighting to smash the hated apartheid system.

Central America, where the workers and farmers of El Salvador are fighting to end a U.S.-sponsored dictatorship and Nicaraguans are resisting a U.S.-organized military aggression.

And at home, solidarity is urgently needed by those striking unionists who are in the forefront of the fight against employer takebacks.



September 5, 1960

NEW YORK, Aug. 20—Farrell Dobbs, SWP presidential candidate, today made the following statement on the Cuban situation:

"The foreign ministers at the OAS conference in Costa Rica aimed at the wrong target. Instead of censuring Cuba, they should have condemned the U.S. for its attempts to embargo Cuba's economy and limit its sovereign powers as an independent nation.

"The Cuban government has the same right to reject the OAS dictates that it break relations with the Soviet Union and China as an embattled trade union has to ignore demands from an employers' association that it accept no outside aid.

"Those who profess to see virtues in Kennedy over Nixon should note his jingoistic speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars this week branding the Castro government as an enemy and a Soviet satellite plotting the downfall of the U.S."



September 7, 1935

Eight young men and women, organizers of the exploited agricultural workers of California, have been railroaded to the prison hells of San Quentin and Tehachapi for terms of up to fourteen years. In the terrorist, anti-labor atmosphere built up by the California bosses after the San Francisco general strike, a handpicked middle-class jury convicted these eight under the notorious Criminal Syndicalism law. These workers' sole "crime"—despite the legal terminology of this instrument of capitalist reaction—is that they courageously organized farm workers and led them in successful struggles for higher wages.

The Sacramento prisoners will be but the forerunners of a host of labor victims to this law, unless the Sacramento convictions are reversed.

The Sacramento convictions are a most important opportunity to rally the labor movement against the criminal syndicalism laws.

‘Market socialism’ creates new Chinese proletariat

(Last in a series)

BY DOUG NELSON

Three decades ago virtually all production and economic activity in China was conducted by state- or collectively-owned entities. But today market relations predominate in city and countryside and more than half of industry is conducted under various forms of private ownership, both foreign and domestic.

This shift in ownership of the means of production was accompanied by geographical shifts and dynamic social changes that have affected the lives of hundreds of millions of Chinese working people. One of the most significant consequence has been the accelerated development in China of the proletariat, the gravediggers of the capitalist system that the Chinese Communist Party government has sought to ape.

As state enterprises were shut down, downsized, or sold off and “restructured,” tens of millions were laid off in the traditional centers of industry. After losing their means of livelihood, many were denied wages owed to them and cut off from pensions, medical insurance, and other benefits tied to their employment in state firms, as well as turned down for government unemployment compensation.

In response, workers protested what they considered the denial of basic social rights by local governments and state enterprises. In some cases those who were employed in state industry wrested some concessions, but the restructuring continued unabated. One such fight, for example, culminated in protests involving 80,000 workers in two northeastern cities in March 2002. After dispensing some remuneration, two of the movement’s leaders were framed up, with backing of the government-controlled labor union, and jailed for seditious activity.

While many of the gains of the 1949 socialist revolution have been eroded, standards of living and social expectations of working people in China are still markedly higher than in India—a country of similar size, colonial history, and earlier level of development, but which had no such revolution. At

the same time, the increased confidence of the youngest group of proletarians in China is a product of recent developments, not the past. A layer has begun to gain some experience in class conflicts generated by the development of capitalist methods and social relations.

While state-owned industry declined in a number of major centers, whole cities sprang up elsewhere based on the influx of foreign capital and expanding exports. Shenzhen, a port city along China’s southeast coast is a prime example. One of the first Special Economic Zones set up in 1980 to attract foreign investment, it grew from a fishing village of 30,000 to a major industrial and commercial center of some 14 million people. At the same time much of the countryside remained undeveloped.

This growth has been concentrated along the coast. While economically the most developed, these areas are also the most susceptible to fluctuations in the world market for China’s exports. For example, Guangdong Province, a major center of this development and the country’s second most populous province, relies on exports for 80 percent of its gross domestic product.

Stark disparities

Although the last decades have brought a certain amount of economic development throughout China, the rate has been very uneven and regional disparities have widened. Differences in the “human development index,” limited as this gauge is, provides some picture of this. Combining factors such as per capita income, literacy, and life expectancy, index figures for 2003 put the city of Shanghai on China’s east coast on the same level as Portugal, and Guizhou Province in the southern interior on a par with Namibia.

The ballooning cities along the coast drew migrant labor from the countryside in search of higher incomes and modern benefits. Average income in the urban areas is about three times that of the rural today.

Under China’s longstanding *hukou* system—an internal passport of sorts set up to bureaucratically regulate population movement—migrant workers retained legal residency in the rural area of their origin. They keep certain rights as registered peasants, such as collective land rights and in some cases the ability to have more than one child without penalty. But they are denied benefits of legal residency in the city where they work, such as high school public education, welfare, public medical care, subsidized housing, and other social benefits. In some cities those who have bought property and can shell out enough money have been able to legally obtain new *hukou*, bestowing them with advantages of urban citizenship.

In similar fashion to how the most developed capitalist nations rely on exploitation of immigrant labor, Beijing has leveraged the second-class status of these internal immigrants to keep wages low and otherwise maximize the extraction of surplus value from the working class as a whole.

China’s urban population as a percentage of the total has grown from around 18 percent to 43 percent in the last three



Above: Strike at Honda parts plant in Foshan in May, where workers won wages raises and other gains. Honda was one of number of companies hit by strikes amid labor shortage this summer. Inset: Foxconn recruiter talks to prospective employees about new plant in central China’s Henan province, a largely rural area where many migrant workers returned after layoffs in industrial centers on east coast in 2008.

decades. Last year the number of migrant workers in the cities reached 211 million people, representing about 37 percent of the total urban population. In a number of cities like Shenzhen, they comprise a substantial majority.

The percent of the labor force involved in agriculture shifted from more than 60 percent throughout the 1980s to less than 40 percent today. Agriculture’s portion of the gross domestic product shrank from more than 25 percent to around 10 percent.

As a portion of world manufacture shifted to China, the proletariat there rapidly grew in size and weight. The nonagricultural workforce grew from 200 million in 1986 to 492 million in 2009. The number of industrial workers in China is the largest in the world, exceeding 220 million people—nearly triple the combined total of all countries in North, Central, and South America.

Migrant workers comprise a significant portion of this growing proletariat and are concentrated in the most dynamic industrial urban centers. Migrant worker protests against discrimination tend to break out periodically and carry a certain social weight as part of working-class resistance. In one well-known case, some 50,000 demonstrators burned police cars in Chongqing to protest the beating of a migrant worker in 2003.

Alongside this, the recent period has also seen a modest increase in resistance by oppressed nationalities, such as the Tibetans and Uighurs in the west.

Dismantling social wage

During the first decade of this economic expansion, material conditions for many working people improved. But as the market gears turned, basic conditions of life and work for a large portion of rural and urban toilers began to decline.

During the last three decades much of the social wage was dismantled. Medical care is unavailable to hundreds of millions as many workers without state or private employer insurance must pay completely out of pocket and up front. In 2006 government spending on health care was less than 1 percent of gross domestic product, one of the lowest in the world. Government funds account for

about 18 percent of total medical costs in the country. Last year Beijing announced it would increase health-care spending in coming years in response to growing discontent.

The quality of public education has also been eroded and an increasingly higher share of the costs have been imposed on households. Some 30 million were added to the country’s illiterate population between 2000 and 2005, according to one top education official.

Life has become more precarious as a result of the commodification of labor and dismantling of the social wage. One result has been increased savings by working people. China has one of the highest household savings rates in the world.

At the same time, over the last three decades the working class has become more independent and footloose, its outlook has broadened, and its expectations have risen.

Millions of migrant workers were laid off and returned to the countryside as exports declined under the impact world economic conditions in 2008. Since then, the government has buoyed the economy with similar methods used to “stimulate” in major capitalist countries, paving the way for deeper crises down the road.

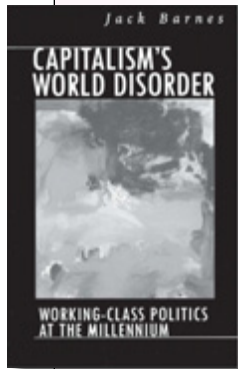
As exports began to rebound at the end of 2009 and hiring picked up, many migrants chose not to return to the factories. With increased development in many rural areas, the risks and difficulties involved with migrating for work appeared to outweigh potential benefits for many. In combination with other factors, including the consequences of China’s longstanding one-child policy, this has created a labor shortage in key geographic centers of industry.

The recent labor shortage has coincided with government efforts to expand its domestic market, creating an opening for workers to wrest better conditions and substantial wage raises. In turn, this development has also begun to bring more industry closer in the interior—a new trend made possible by improvements in transportation infrastructure.

And so, in this manner, the Chinese proletariat develops and steps onto the world stage as a weighty factor.

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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Colombian guerrillas call for talks to end fighting

BY CINDY JAQUITH

The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), which has carried out a guerrilla struggle since the 1960s, has called for talks to find a peaceful settlement of the conflict. The July 30 statement by FARC leader Alfonso Cano said, "Between all of us, we have to find common ground and, with the input of a majority of Colombians, we have to . . . create perspectives and a way out of the armed conflict."

The door to talks is not locked, newly elected Colombian president Juan Manuel Santos said August 17. "But until we see clear, irrefutable proof that the conditions we have given are adhered to, there is no possibility for dialogue." The conditions he listed were that the FARC give up "weapons, kidnapping, and drug trafficking."

Santos had been defense minister in the previous administration of Alvaro Uribe and an architect of the U.S.-backed war against the FARC. He directed the attack in 2008 on a FARC base in Ecuador in which the guerrilla group's second in command, Raúl Reyes, was killed. Santos was elected president in June.

Tens of thousands of Colombians have been killed in the armed struggle, which has raged in Colombia for decades. Bogotá mobilized 14,000 paramilitaries, in addition to the army, to terrorize the population, disappearing and assassinating peasants and trade unionists as well as other opponents of the regime.

The U.S. government offered troops, equipment, and funds to help the government combat "drug trafficking" and "terrorism." In a program begun under the William Clinton administration, Washington stations up to 800 troops and 600 "contractors" in Colombia.

The guerrilla struggle was initiated by Manuel Marulanda, a peasant, in response to the massacres of peasants by Colombian oligarchs in the 1960s. He joined the Colombian Communist Party, which looked to Moscow for political guidance, and left that party in 1993, taking over the leadership of the guerrilla group. Marulanda died in 2008.

Blows dealt to FARC

At one point the FARC numbered well over 10,000 fighters and controlled significant territory. The group also took government soldiers, police, and civil-

ians hostage, and still hold some. With U.S. aid, the Colombian government has dealt blows to the FARC. The number of FARC combatants is about half what they were at their peak, and the amount of territory they hold has declined.

In 2008 the Colombian military freed 15 hostages held by the FARC, including Ingrid Betancourt, who had been campaigning for president when the guerrillas kidnapped her six years earlier.

Cuban leader Fidel Castro took the occasion to write two articles on lessons learned in the revolutionary armed struggle in Cuba and their relevance for the struggle in Colombia.

Castro said, "The civilians should have never been kidnapped, nor should the soldiers have been kept as prisoners in jungle conditions. These were objectively cruel actions." The Cuban leader urged the FARC to release all its remaining hostages and prisoners.

Unlike the revolutionary leadership in Cuba, which sought to lead the workers and peasants to power as rapidly as possible and did so in two years, Castro said, "The Colombian Communist Party never planned to conquer power through the armed struggle. The *guerrilla* was a resistance front and not the essential instrument for conquering revolutionary power."

Point of contention with Venezuela

The FARC's guerrilla operations and the Colombian army's war against them were a point of contention between Colombian president Alvaro Uribe and Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez.

In July 2009 the Venezuelan government froze much of the country's trade with Colombia to protest accusations by Uribe that Caracas was supplying the FARC with weapons. Chávez was also opposed to a treaty signed by Uribe that increased Washington's access to Colombian military bases. Trade with



U.S. Marine Corps/Sgt. Samuel Beyers

U.S. marines, at right, train troops at Colombian naval infantry base August 13 in Covenas, Colombia. Washington has up to 800 troops and 600 "contractors" based in the country aiding Bogotá's soldiers in combating armed groups challenging government.

Venezuela, Colombia's second largest trading partner, dropped by more than 70 percent in the first five months of this year compared to the same period in 2009.

In mid-July this year, Colombia's ambassador to the Organization of American States (OAS) gave a presentation to OAS delegates in which he said the Venezuelan government was harboring FARC guerrillas. He called for an international investigation on Venezuelan territory of sites he claimed were guerrilla camps. Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez broke diplomatic relations with Colombia, saying that Bogotá's charges were a pretext for a U.S.-backed invasion of Venezuela that would start a "100-year war."

But with Uribe on the way out, the heightened tensions dissipated.

In early August, Chávez took up the question of peace talks. "The Colombian guerrillas do not have a future through the armed struggle," the Venezuelan president said. "Just as one proposes that Colombia's government seek the path to peace, the guerrillas must also do it."

On August 10 Chávez met with Santos and the two restored full diplomatic

and trade relations.

Colombia's foreign minister and ministers of defense and commerce flew to Caracas August 19 to meet with their counterparts and Chávez to discuss advancing cooperation. Venezuelan foreign minister Nicolas Maduro announced that Venezuela will immediately begin paying back Colombian exporters millions they are owed over the last year.

A Colombian court suspended the U.S.-Colombia military base treaty August 17, saying the pact must first be ratified by the Colombian Congress. Santos said the court ruling "will not affect at all" joint U.S.-Colombia military operations. "The fight against terrorism has no truce and this court's decision in no way affects what we've been receiving from the United States," he said. U.S. troops retain their access to other Colombian bases they already use.

Bogotá could use the delay in opening up the bases as a bargaining chip to get Washington to approve a free-trade pact with Colombia that has been stalled in the U.S. Congress since 2006.

London deports hundreds to eastern Europe

BY PAUL DAVIES

LONDON—As part of its campaign to scapegoat immigrants for unemployment and the economic and social crisis, local government councils in England have begun deporting immigrants from eastern Europe on the pretext that they are homeless.

Workers born in the United Kingdom can get access to hostels for the homeless. Immigrants from the 10 eastern European countries that joined the European Union (EU) in 2004 and 2007 have no right to welfare payments, such as housing benefits, unless they have worked for a year.

The national government funds a scheme through which charities "assist" homeless people from eastern Europe to return to their native country. Homeless charity Thames Reach says it has organized the departure of 350 of them from the United Kingdom in the past year.

The UK Border Agency has also begun deporting homeless east Europeans. In Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, the City Council has funded trips of 41 homeless people back to Poland, Latvia, Estonia, and Ukraine. The UK Border

Agency forcibly repatriated an additional five from the area, and has threatened to deport others.

With rising unemployment many immigrant workers are finding it harder to get jobs. Workers from Romania and Bulgaria congregate every morning on Seven Sisters Road in north London waiting for construction contractors. Some only get two days' work a week. Vladi Mitkov, a 27-year-old from Bulgaria, told the *Militant* that they are often harassed by the police.

A worker from Romania, who did not wish to give his name, said that some have been threatened with prosecution if they return to the spot to wait for work. Another described how the daily wage had dropped from £70 a day (US\$108) to £40 (US\$62).

Unlike workers from east European countries that joined the EU in 2004, workers from Bulgaria and Romania are not allowed to work freely in the United Kingdom. A restricted number are limited to certain types of work, such as picking fruit.

Meanwhile, in France cops have destroyed 51 camps where Roma immigrants live, and plan to do the same to

300 others. After destroying their accommodations, the government pays each Roma 300 euros (US\$384), and 100 euros (US\$128) for each child returning to Romania. French foreign ministry spokesperson Bernard Valero told the news agency Agence France-Presse that an EU directive "allows for restrictions on the right to move freely for reasons of public order, public security, and public health."

Using a similar justification, the UK Border Agency defended its deportations, claiming it is tackling "anti-social behavior." Like the French foreign ministry, it also cited national chauvinist guidelines that allow EU member states to remove those from other European nations who are not "working, studying or self-sufficient."

The *Financial Times* interviewed one Roma family deported from France as they got off the plane in Bucharest, Romania. "Of course we are thinking about going back," said 26-year-old Ionut Balasz. "Life is better there than in Romania, even when you are illegal."

Rose Knight and Hugo Wils contributed to this article.

THEIR TRANSFORMATION AND OURS



Socialist Workers Party Draft Resolution in *New International* no. 12

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How Cuba treated Bay of Pigs prisoners in 1961–62

Below is an excerpt from Nothing Can Stop the Course of History, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for September. The book contains an extensive interview with Fidel Castro done in 1985 by Professor Jeffrey Elliot and Congressman Mervyn Dymally. Among the topics covered are Cuba's relations with Africa and the effects of the U.S. economic embargo. In the piece below Castro takes up the question of political prisoners in Cuba. He discusses the treatment of U.S.-backed mercenaries captured by Cuba's revolutionary militia and armed forces in the April 1961 invasion of Bay of Pigs/ Playa Girón. The attack was defeated in less than 72 hours. Copyright © 1986 by Jeffrey M. Elliot and Mervyn M. Dymally. Reprinted by permission of Pathfinder.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

JEFFREY M. ELLIOT: The U.S. press has reported, on numerous occasions, that Cuba's prisons are filled with a large number of political prisoners—men and women who dared to criticize your regime. And many in the U.S. believe this to be true. Do you deny this charge?

FIDEL CASTRO: There was a time, naturally, when there were a lot of counterrevolutionary prisoners. But there



Bohemia
Members of 134th Militia Battalion in Cuba celebrate victory over U.S.-organized invasion near Bay of Pigs, April 1961. Cuban forces captured more than 1,200 invaders. They were returned to the United States, said Castro, none beaten, tortured, or ill-treated.

were reasons for that. During the first few years after the triumph of the revolution, when U.S. hostility against our country began—when the CIA began infiltrating weapons, explosives, saboteurs, and established armed gangs in all provinces and dozens of counterrevolutionary organizations, giving them not only material aid but also political and moral support—how could we help having a lot of prisoners? For instance, we captured over 1,200 invaders immediately after the Playa Girón mercenary invasion. Ask those invaders—whom we later returned to the United States in a ship loaded with “heroes”—if any of them were beaten, if any of them were tortured, if any of them were ill-treated.

I'd like to ask a U.S. citizen: What would you have done if 100, 200, 1,000, or—since the United States, at that time, had thirty times as many inhabitants as Cuba—30,000 U.S. citizens had traveled to Cuba and placed themselves under Cuba's orders? What if we'd organized an expedition against the U.S., and they'd gone back to their country with weapons and bombed, killed, destroyed, and fought in the service of a foreign power? Would you like to tell me what sentence would have been passed on them in the United States? What would they have been called? They would have

been called “traitors.” Certainly, they would not have been compared to the “founding fathers” or to Lafayette's volunteers. They surely would have been sent to prison, if not shot, as were several U.S. citizens charged with un-American activities soon after the end of the war. They would probably have been sentenced to life imprisonment.

Yet, there you have the mercenaries. How many mercenaries were sent here from the United States? How many were infiltrated? How many were recruited to engage in sabotage, murder, and assassination attempts against the leaders of the revolution? Where are they now? After being imprisoned in Cuba, almost all of them were released before serving their full sentences and are now in the United States.

During the first few years of the revolution, there were indeed many counterrevolutionary prisoners who were later released. The vast majority didn't serve their full sentences. Not only did we set them free, but we also let them go to live in the United States. If they were in the service of the United States, it was only logical that they should live in the United States and be supported by the United States government. . . .

Our courts hand down verdicts based on laws to punish counterrevolutionary

actions. The idea that anyone is punished in our country for professing a belief other than those of the revolution is absolutely ridiculous. There are tens of thousands of people whose political and religious concepts and beliefs differ from those of the revolution. They have full legal guarantees. The idea that anybody is in prison for having ideas that differ from those of the revolution is simply nonsense. No one in our country has ever been punished because he was a dissident or had opinions different from those of the revolution. Our penal code precisely defines those acts for which a citizen may be punished. Some of these laws were adopted prior to the triumph of the revolution, in the liberated territory of the Sierra Maestra, and were applied to punish torturers and other criminals. . . .

Every so often I see dogs and policemen in action in the United States. I see prostrate people being violently and humiliatingly stepped upon. Something else: I frequently see demonstrations being broken up everywhere. How strange that this revolution has never used a policeman or a soldier or tear gas or a dog against the people! Why not? Because the people support it; the people defend it. All the people are soldiers; all the people are policemen. All the people defend the revolution.

Injustice, violence, torture, disappearance, and murder—those things happen in countries whose governments are against the people, whose governments have to defend themselves against the people—in Argentina under the military dictatorship, in Chile, El Salvador, and elsewhere—with repressive forces and death squads trained by the United States. You see, they need those procedures to defend themselves against the people. When the people themselves are the revolution, when it is the people who resolutely defend the revolution, you may rest assured there'll be no need for violence or injustice to defend it. Ours is the only government in this hemisphere—I can state this proudly—that has never used a policeman or a soldier against the people, never inflicted any bodily harm upon an individual, and never resorted to political assassination or disappearances.

September

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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No to gov't interference with mosque

Class-conscious workers should denounce calls for the government to intervene and block plans for the building of an Islamic cultural center in downtown Manhattan. Such a move would set a dangerous precedent for government circumvention of fundamental rights that serve to protect working people from the capitalists' state power.

Despite claims of the center's sponsors that they are building near the World Trade Center to promote interfaith reconciliation, the resulting controversy was inevitable and easily foreseen. While some Democratic and Republican politicians refuse to acknowledge this fact, others seize upon it to whip up patriotic appeals for state intervention.

The working class should oppose any government moves to decide if or where a mosque, church, or synagogue can be established. The question goes beyond religious freedom. What about a "controversial" communist party headquarters? Or a militant union?

The implications of such a precedent are broad and can reach into the right of workers to have a union hall or a place to hold organizing meetings. At stake are basic rights such as freedom of assembly, religion, speech, press, and association.

This probe against the lawful building of an Is-

lamic center takes place in the context of deepening attacks on the rights of working people in the name of "fighting terrorism." These attacks dovetail with moves by the U.S. rulers to make working people pay for their unfolding economic crisis, while their imperialist wars abroad drag on with no end in sight.

Federal, state, and local governments and police, under the umbrella of the Justice Department and Homeland Security, are moving on a number of fronts to chip away at protections codified in the Bill of Rights and other amendments to the Constitution. The big majority of workers and farmers in the United States do not yet directly feel or see that these moves are aimed above all at tying the hands of working people and derailing any struggles that begin to challenge the prerogatives and power of the ruling rich.

These are protections *against the capitalist state*, at all levels, that working people have wrested from the propertied classes over decades of struggle.

The working class is the only social force capable of defending these rights and protections, which we need to carry out struggles for our economic and political demands. This point is not lost on the propertied rulers, who also sense and are preparing for class battles ahead.

Controversy over mosque heats up

Continued from front page

Pledge of Allegiance. The main sign printed in quantity simply had the word "sharia" (Islamic law) in bright red letters imitating dripping blood.

Other signs included calls on mosque builders to move the new center further away and outright expressions of anti-Muslim bigotry, such as "everything I ever needed to know about Islam I learned on 9/11."

Noticeable in the crowd were a number identifying themselves as firefighters, construction workers, or U.S. marines.

By the afternoon, the counterprotest called to oppose the anti-mosque demonstration had largely ended, but around a dozen people were still present. "I am here to defend the principles of religious freedom and the Constitution," said Victoria Stong, a self-described community activist. Those opposed to these rights are "playing the emotional card" to get support, she said, adding that she lost a cousin in the September 11 attack.

The main public figure behind the \$100 million 13-story center is Imam Faisal Abdul Rauf, who heads the Masjid al-Farah, a 28-year-old mosque located 12 blocks away from the former World Trade Center. Abdul Rauf is also chairman of the Cordoba Initiative, which he co-founded with John Bennett, former mayor of Aspen, Colorado. Its stated purpose is to "heal conflict between Islamic and Western communities" and engage "Islamic legal scholars in addressing the implications of contemporary Islamic governance."

Adbul Rauf has regularly worked with the Council on Foreign Relations, including serving on a commission on "U.S. Policy Toward Reform in the Arab World," chaired by former secretary of state Madeleine Albright. Currently he is on a U.S. State Department-sponsored tour in Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates to help strengthen U.S. relations with religious and ruling-class figures there.

New York mayor Michael Bloomberg has been a vocal proponent of building the mosque, going so far as to say that there wouldn't have been any opposition if it were a church or synagogue being built there.

A number of public figures have been pressing for government intervention to block the building plans on the grounds of its controversial nature. In their arguments many have pointed to the contradiction between Abdul Rauf's stated intentions to further interfaith reconciliation by building the mosque, and the actual results.

Two outspoken prominent New York politicians, former mayor Rudy Giuliani and Gov. David Paterson, are pressuring mosque builders to move the site on the grounds of its "insensitivity."

Another in this camp is William Kristol, editor of

the *Weekly Standard*. He points out that many Muslims do not favor building an Islamic center at the proposed location. Kristol cites an opinion piece by Abdul Rahman al-Rahid, editor of *Asharq-Al-Awsat*, a major Arabic newspaper. "I cannot imagine that Muslims want a mosque on this particular site, because it will be turned into an arena for promoters of hatred, and a symbol of those who committed the crime," al-Rahid wrote.

Ultrarightists such as Patrick Buchanan have used the opportunity to openly argue that constitutional rights are subordinate to defending a nation born as "an extension of Christendom" and based on "Western" values.

The controversy in New York has fueled contention over the building of mosques in several other states.

President Barack Obama first spoke publicly about the mosque at an August 13 White House dinner celebrating the beginning of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. "Muslims have the same right to practice their religion as everyone else in this country," he said. "And that includes the right to build a place of worship and a community center on private property in Lower Manhattan. . . . This is America, and our commitment to religious freedom must be unshakable."

The next day, he modified his tone saying, "I will not comment on the wisdom of making the decision to put a mosque there."

Former vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin, an outspoken opponent of the mosque site, taunted Obama following his remarks. "We all know that they have the right to do it, but should they? This is not above your pay grade," she stated.

More protests by both sides are expected on September 11, the anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon.



Militant/Doug Nelson

Protest at former World Trade Center site August 22 calls on government to prevent building of Islamic center nearby.

Gov't program aims to intimidate immigrants

BY SETH GALINSKY

Just-released figures from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement confirm that a government program to target alleged "criminal" immigrants is essentially just a cover for intimidating and deporting undocumented workers.

The Secure Communities program, was launched in March 2008 to check prisoners' fingerprints against FBI and Department of Homeland Security databases. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) said they would target for deportation the "worst of the worst" undocumented immigrants who have allegedly committed serious crimes.

A look at government figures, however, shows that close to 80 percent of immigrants deported as a result of the program have been accused mostly of low level offenses. More than one-quarter are charged and deported solely on immigration violations.

The Center for Constitutional Rights, one of three groups that sued ICE to obtain the information, said the figures "reveal a pattern of dishonesty" about the operations of Secure Communities.

Under the Barack Obama administration, the program has been expanded to 552 cities and counties in 29 states. The goal is to check the fingerprints of every prisoner in federal, state, and local jails in the United States by 2013.

According to ICE, only 21 percent of the 50,972 people who were deported under the program from Oct. 27, 2008, through July 2010 were accused or convicted of the most serious charges, defined as "level 1" crimes. These offenses range from resisting an officer and hit-and-run traffic accidents, to homicide and sexual assault.

Nearly 53 percent faced less serious "level 2" or "level 3" charges that include offenses such as burglary, violating open container laws, and nonpayment of alimony.

Brittney Nystrom, a spokesperson for the National Immigration Forum, pointed out cops can make arrests just so immigrants can be "hailed into the police station in the first place" to see if they lack papers and can be deported.

Since Obama took office ICE has shifted the way it enforces anti-immigrant laws. In the first nine months of this year, 765 undocumented workers were arrested in raids on the job, compared to 5,100 in all of 2008. The raids are unpopular among many working people who frequently help their undocumented coworkers hide during the operations. Many raids were met by angry public protests.

Instead of factory raids ICE now emphasizes "sweeps" directed at working-class neighborhoods to go after so-called criminal aliens and gang members, part of government efforts to scapegoat immigrants for crime and undercut solidarity among working people for those without papers. ICE, along with other cop agencies, carried out three such sweeps: in Madison, Wisconsin; Las Vegas; and Arizona since August 9.

In addition, government programs like E-verify make it harder for workers without papers to get jobs; a six-fold increase in immigration audits under the Obama administration has forced mass firings.

In an interview and call-in program on C-Span August 8, ICE director John Morton responded to a question from an undocumented worker who said he has lived in the United States since 1995 when he was four years old.

"We aren't going to ignore the law," Morton said. "We don't turn a blind eye."

Correction

The article "Communists in Sweden launch election campaign" in the August 30 *Militant* stated the wrong date for the upcoming Swedish parliamentary elections. They take place September 19.