

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

How U.S. rulers eroded
abortion rights since *Roe v. Wade*
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 73/NO. 37 SEPTEMBER 28, 2009

‘Health reform’ plan aimed against workers



Reuter/Mario Anzuoni

Working people in Inglewood, California, wait in long line August 14 for free medical attention provided by Remote Area Medical Volunteer Corp. Some health-care “reform” proposals being hashed out in Congress would require that people buy insurance or face fines.

Socialist candidate: ‘guarantee health care for all’

BY CINDY JAQUITH

NEW YORK—The Socialist Workers candidates are campaigning for “guaranteed lifetime medical care for everyone,” said Maura DeLuca, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New York City public advocate, at a campaign rally here September 11.

While both Democratic and Republican party politicians in Washington want to exclude undocumented workers from receiving any medical care at government expense, and some even want to prevent them from buy-

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Help fund party dedicated to making U.S. revolution

BY LAURA GARZA

“We are appealing to the workers, farmers, and youth who are disgusted at what this capitalist system has created and who want to fight to change it. These are the people who will help fund the work of a party dedicated to making a revolution in this country,” said James Harris, speaking about the effort to raise \$95,000 for the Socialist Workers Party fall party-building fund.

The party needs the funds to continue joining in struggles to defend the rights of the working class. “The meetings being planned around the country to raise funds will explore the history of the working class in previous battles and some of the lessons from those fights for today,” said

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Measures target abortion rights, immigrants

BY SETH GALINSKY

While Congressional Democrats and Republicans have not succeeded in reaching a compromise to ensure passage of a health-care “reform” bill, there is bipartisan agreement that any new law should undermine both immigrant rights and women’s right to choose abortion.

In his September 10 speech to the U.S. Congress, President Barack Obama said that “illegal” immigrants should be denied coverage and “no federal dollars will be used to fund abortions.”

The twin attacks on undocumented workers and women’s rights will be included in the leading reform bill, drafted by Sen. Maxwell Baucus, the Democrat who heads the Senate Finance Committee. Five other members of the committee, including three Republicans, have been working with Baucus to come up with language both parties can accept.

Obama told Congress, “Under my plan, individuals will be required to carry basic health insurance—just as most states require you to carry auto insurance.” Republican Sen. Charles Grassley has said he wants to reconsider this approach. The Baucus proposal would fine a family without coverage up to \$3,800 a year.

The health-care system “is placing an unsustainable burden on taxpayers,” Obama said. His plan, he argued, would “slow the growth of health-care costs” and expand coverage for “Americans.”

If his plan is passed, he said, it would be against the law for insurance companies to deny coverage because of a pre-existing condition. Insurance companies would have to cover rou-

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U.S. gov’t imposes anti-China tariffs

BY SETH GALINSKY

The U.S. presidential administration of Barack Obama imposed a steep three-year tariff September 11 on the import of all car and light truck tires from China.

The move reflected the underlying tensions simmering as Washington and Beijing compete for markets—tensions that mark international trade as a whole in the midst of the opening stages of a world capitalist depression. The White House sought to portray the reactionary, protectionist sanction as a measure to defend U.S. workers’ jobs.

The U.S. government slapped a 35 percent tariff on the tires in the first year, 30 percent the second year, and 25 percent the third. President Obama said the measures were taken because of a “surge” in tire imports from China.

China tire imports tripled between 2004 and 2008. But China’s commerce ministry spokesman, Yao Jian, told reporters that in the first half of 2009 those sales dropped by more than 15 percent.

According to Yao, four U.S. companies have tire factories in China and account for two-thirds of the exports to the United States.

Over the last 15 years, as the Chi-

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Teach-ins to protest Troy Davis frame-up

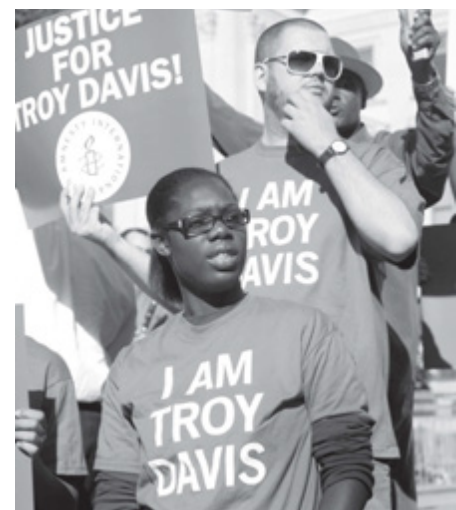
BY LISA POTASH

ATLANTA—Supporters of Troy Davis, framed up for killing a cop, are organizing teach-ins throughout the city and around the country September 21–27 to stop his execution.

Davis, who is Black, has been on death row since 1991 for the shooting of off-duty police officer Mark MacPhail in Savannah, Georgia. MacPhail was white.

There never was any physical evidence connecting Davis to MacPhail. Seven of the nine non-police witnesses who testified against Davis have since recanted or contradicted their original statements. Several say the

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Militant/Marla Puziss

Rally for Troy Davis in Atlanta May 19

Campaign for new readers of ‘Militant’ enters first week

BY CINDY JAQUITH

Sales of subscriptions to striking teachers and other unionists, immigrant rights activists, and young people looking for a class-struggle explanation of what is happening in world politics marked the first week-end in the *Militant*’s fall international circulation drive.

“We sold five subscriptions at a monthly protest vigil at the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma, Washington,” wrote in Edwin Fruit. “This is a private jail which houses workers who have been arrested by the immigration cops.” Among those buying subscriptions were workers visiting relatives detained there. They were glad to see a newspaper that takes the side of workers and is printed in both English and Spanish.

Two other subscriptions were sold to striking teachers in Kent, Washington.

Four subscriptions were sold in San Francisco at a protest to demand the release of the Cuban Five, who have

been unjustly jailed in the United States for 11 years. Two subscriptions were sold at a street corner in a workers’ district where socialists regularly distribute the paper, reports Carole Lesnick.

New York supporters of the Socialist Workers campaign of Dan Fein for mayor sold 18 subscriptions at the

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Leaders of 1983 Grenada coup released from jail

BY DOUG NELSON

Former Grenadian deputy prime minister Bernard Coard and six other organizers of the 1983 counterrevolutionary coup in Grenada were released from prison there September 5.

The seven were the last of the “Grenadian 17” to be released. They had been jailed for their roles in the assassination of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and five other revolutionary leaders—Fitzroy Bain, Norris Bain, Jacqueline Creft, Vincent Noel, and Unison Whiteman.

Bishop was a leader of the mass movement of the workers and farmers in Grenada and became the foremost leader of the New Jewel Movement (NJM), formed out of the struggle against imperialism and capitalist exploitation in 1973.

The NJM was inspired by the Black Power movement in the United States and anticolonial struggles in Africa. Before long its leading cadre sought to emulate the example of the Cuban Revolution and began to develop a Marxist perspective.

On March 13, 1979, the NJM led by Bishop overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Eric Gairy and ushered in a popular anti-imperialist democratic revolution. The new People’s Revolutionary Government expanded trade union rights, advanced women’s equality, instituted free medical care, established free public education and adult literacy programs, lowered the prices of necessities, and took measures to benefit small farmers and farm workers.

In the early 1970s, Coard, originally from Grenada, was a professor in Ja-

maica and worked closely with the Organization for Research, Education and Liberation, a student-based organization that was critical of the NJM. In 1976 he returned to Grenada and was brought into the leadership of the NJM as part of a fusion of the two organizations. From the beginning, however, he worked to consolidate a secret faction loyal to himself within party, the military officer corps, and government agencies.

Coard was trained in the political school of Stalinism. In their aims and methods the Coardites shared much in common with the privileged bureaucratic layer led by Joseph Stalin that organized a bloody counterrevolution in the Soviet Union some eight decades ago. Cuban president Fidel Castro correctly likened the Coard faction to the murderous Khmer Rouge led by Pol Pot in Cambodia.

Draping themselves in ultraleft demagoguery, the Coardites portrayed their efforts to maneuver against Bishop and his supporters as a fight by orthodox “Marxist-Leninists” led by Coard against a “petty-bourgeois” current. The opposite was the case.

In stark contrast to Bishop’s efforts to reach out and involve the broadest layers of the toiling majority in the work to advance the revolution, the Coard clique pressed for a course aimed at strangling the revolutionary energies and growing self-confidence of the Grenadian masses.

In the course of the 1979–83 revolution, the Coardites carried out a number of undemocratic repressive measures opposed by Bishop and others.



Prensa Latina

Maurice Bishop (right), leader of Grenadian revolution, in 1981, two years after the New Jewel Movement overthrew a U.S.-backed dictatorship, leading to the establishment of a workers and farmers government. Bishop was murdered by Stalinist faction in NJM in 1983.

In the name of “Leninist standards of discipline,” the Coard faction drove through exclusionary membership policies aimed at keeping the party and its proletarian element as small and weak as possible.

On more than one instance Coard used his position as acting head of state when Bishop was abroad to reverse government policies. On one such occasion beginning in late September 1983, the Coard faction began to organize the coup. Over the course of two weeks, they moved to disarm the popular militia and increased the salaries of the army.

On Oct. 13, 1983, five days after Bishop returned to Grenada, he was placed under house arrest. The Grenadian masses opposed the coup and began to organize. A popular uprising to restore the government shut down the country on October 19. As many as 30,000 people—out of a total population of 110,000—freed Bishop. The people and Bishop then marched to the army headquarters and took it over.

Heavily armed forces opened fire on the demonstrators, killing many, including revolutionary leader Vincent Noel. The army reoccupied the headquarters and murdered Bishop and the other four revolutionary leaders with him.

The coup overthrew the revolutionary government, but had not yet defeated the working class. Working people attempted to reconquer power and organized the largest revolutionary mobilization in Grenadian history. The people’s resistance was met with guns. The coup leaders then instituted a four-day shoot-to-kill curfew on the entire population, imposing hardship and hunger.

“No doctrine, no principle or position held up as revolutionary, and no internal division, justifies atrocious proceedings like the physical elimination of Bishop

and the outstanding group of honest and worthy leaders,” declared the Castro the next day. He warned that the coup would embolden Washington to invade Grenada and “subject it once again to neocolonial and imperial domination.”

The U.S. government invaded the country less than one week later. Rapidly taking over the island, Washington set up a puppet regime and arrested Coard and his supporters. The new reactionary U.S.-backed government, tried and convicted Coard and 16 of this supporters. Fourteen were originally sentenced to death, which was overturned in 2007 by an appeals court in London.

The prison abuse, denial of legal rights, and death sentences meted out against the Coard faction were aimed at further intimidating those who would stand up to imperialism. Castro said Washington and its puppet regime had “no right to keep that extremist group in prison or try them, because no invading force has the right to run the courts and enforce the laws.”

NEW INTERNATIONAL No.6
MAGAZINE OF MARXIST POLITICS AND THEORY
The Second Assassination of Maurice Bishop
by Steve Clark

Reviews the accomplishments of the 1979-83 Grenadian revolution and explains the roots of the 1983 coup that led to the murder of revolutionary leader Maurice Bishop, and to the destruction of the workers and farmers government. **\$16**

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Militant
Youth Tribunal at José Martí Anti-Imperialist Plaza in Havana, Cuba, May 12, 2009.

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

Juan Almeida: Cuban leader for 5 decades

BY BEN JOYCE

Historic leader of the Cuban Revolution Juan Almeida Bosque died September 11 at the age of 82. Almeida's five-plus decades of revolutionary leadership were celebrated throughout the island that weekend. Some 2 million Cubans turned out to pay tribute to his contributions in the following days, according to the Cuban daily *Granma*.

An Afro-Cuban from Havana, Almeida completed elementary school and got a job as a bricklayer at age 11. He became an opponent of the corruption and exploitation he witnessed under U.S.-dominated pre-revolutionary Cuba, and like Fidel Castro, joined the Orthodox Party.

Fulgencio Batista took power in a military coup on March 10, 1952. Almeida shared the indignation working people in Cuba felt toward the regime and became part of a group led by Castro that set out to organize an armed struggle and popular insurrection to overthrow the dictatorship.

Almeida was part of a rebel contingent in what became one of the opening battles of the Cuban Revolution—the July 26, 1953, attack on the Moncada military barracks in the city of Santiago de Cuba. En route to battle, one of the cars of his contingent got a flat tire and

he had to give up his space, preventing him from participating in the fighting. However, as the combatants retreated he was able to link up with them as they regrouped in the mountains. The combatants and Almeida were captured some days later, sent to prison, and released in 1955 following a national amnesty campaign.

Almeida was one of 82 revolutionaries who took part in the 1956 expedition of the *Granma*, when the July 26th Movement led by Castro launched a yacht from Mexico and landed on the shores of Cuba, opening up the guerrilla struggle against Batista's forces. "No one here gives up!" shouted Almeida during that assault to fellow revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara—a saying that became a famous motto of the revolution.

In February 1958, he was promoted to commander and led the Third Eastern Front until the taking of power on Jan. 1, 1959. Almeida was buried in Santiago September 15 at the mausoleum of the Third Eastern Front, joining 40 other combatants from that column.

Since 1959, Almeida had taken many major responsibilities leading the revolution, including head of the air force, vice minister of the Revolutionary Armed



Cuban vice president Juan Almeida Bosque, center, sits next to President Raúl Castro, left, and Vice President José Ramón Machado Feb. 24, 2008. AP Photo/Javier Galeano

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Iran: The Struggle for Democratic Rights—Working People Need to Demand “Imperialist Hands Off!” Meeting to benefit Socialist Workers Party party-building fund. Speaker: Ma'mud Shirvani. Sun., Sept. 27. Reception 3 p.m.; program 3:30 p.m. 2628 S Vermont Ave. #9. Tel: (323) 737-2191.

San Francisco

Iran: The Struggle for Democratic Rights; Working People in the U.S. Need to Demand “Imperialist Hands Off!” Meeting to benefit SWP party-building fund. Speaker: Ma'mud Shirvani. Sat., Sept. 26. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 5482 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

The Working Class in China and the Uighers' Fight against National Oppression. Speaker: Ben Joyce, Young Socialists, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Sept. 25. 8 p.m. 45 Academy St., Suite 309. Tel.: (973) 273-0075.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

U.S. and World Capitalism: The Crisis Deepens, the Wars Spread. Meeting to benefit SWP party building fund. Speaker: Sam Manuel, editor of *Militant*. Fri., Sept. 25. Dinner, 7 p.m.; program, 8 p.m. 307 W 36th St., 10th fl. (north elevators). Tel.: (212) 629-6649.

\$95,000 party-building fund

Continued from front page

Harris, a member of the SWP National Committee. Harris and National Committee member Laura Garza are the national co-chairs of the fund.

A meeting will be held in Newark, New Jersey, to raise funds on September 19, featuring Norton Sandler, an SWP National Committee member.

Sandler will address why no capitalist “recovery” is possible without massive destruction of capital, Washington's war in Afghanistan and Pakistan, why millions of workers oppose President Barack Obama's “health-care” plan, and why defending women's right to abortion is central to the class struggle.

Ma'mud Shirvani will address fund-raising meetings in San Francisco on September 26 and in Los Angeles September 27. He will speak to the challenge of growing unemployment and the importance of opposing Washington's threats against Iran and North Korea.

His presentation will also address the history of the SWP in defending the revolutionary upheaval that led to the 1979 overthrow of the U.S.-backed shah of Iran, and how the party opposed the bloody war launched by Iraq against Iran after that revolution, while giving no political support to the

Picket in Sweden: Free framed-up Cuban 5



Militant/Catharina Tirsén

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—Thirty people participated in a picket line here September 12 to demand the freedom of Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, and René González, five Cuban revolutionaries framed up and jailed in the United States. The action marked the 11th anniversary of their unjust imprisonment.

Known internationally as the Cuban Five, the men were convicted on charges ranging from acting as “unregistered foreign agents,” to conspiracy to commit espionage, and in one case, conspiracy to commit murder. Three of the five received life sentences. They had had been monitoring counterrevolutionary Cuban exile groups that had carried out armed attacks and bombings against Cuba with Washington's complicity.

Similar actions were scheduled in at least 18 other countries.

—CATHARINA TIRSÉN

Forces, and vice president of the Council of State and Council of Ministers. He served on the Central Committee and Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Cuba since 1965. He was one of three guerrilla combatants to have received the title of Commander of the Revolution.

Almeida was the president of the Association of Combatants of the Revolution from its founding until his death. The association is made up of more than 300,000 Cubans spanning several generations who have taken part in revolutionary struggles and internationalist missions. These include the revolutionary war in the 1950s, the fight against the U.S.-organized counterrevolutionary attacks that followed, the mobilization of volunteer combatants to aid

national liberation struggles in Angola and other countries in Africa and Latin America from the 1960s to the 1980s, and the teachers and medical personnel working in Venezuela, Haiti, and other countries today.

Almeida wrote about his experiences during the revolutionary war in two trilogies: *Prison, Exile, and The Landing* and *The Sierra, Along the Slopes of Mt. Turquino, and The Sierra Maestra and Beyond*. He was also a musician and composed songs about his experiences in the revolutionary movement.

Former Cuban president Fidel Castro said of Almeida in his Reflections column in the September 14 *Granma*, “I had the privilege of knowing him: a young black man, a worker, a combatant who, successively, was chief of his revolutionary cell, a Moncada combatant, a prison compañero, a platoon captain in the *Granma* landing, a Rebel Army officer . . . a compañero who shared the leadership of our force in the last victorious battles to overthrow the dictatorship. I was a privileged witness to his exemplary conduct for more than a half a century of heroic and victorious resistance.”

\$95,000 SWP Fund Drive September 12–November 10

Country	Quota
UNITED STATES	
Atlanta	\$7,500
Boston	\$2,800
Chicago	\$9,500
Des Moines, IA	\$2,400
Houston	\$2,800
Los Angeles	\$9,200
Miami	\$3,000
New York	\$16,000
Newark, NJ	\$3,000
Philadelphia	\$3,500
San Francisco	\$13,000
Seattle	\$7,000
Twin Cities	\$6,600
Washington, D.C.	\$5,500
Total	\$91,800
Should be	\$95,000

Contributions to the fund can be sent to 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018. Checks and money orders should be written out to the Socialist Workers Party.

D.C. protest opposes cops enforcing immigration law

BY PAUL PEDERSON

WASHINGTON—About 250 day laborers and their supporters marched to the White House September 12 to protest a law that grants local police the power to enforce federal immigration laws.

Many of the workers, who are hired on a casual basis by construction contractors and other small employers, were in Washington to attend a national conference.

The five-day gathering, organized by the National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON), drew together representatives of 41 organizations from 20 states and the District of Columbia.

“287(g) was one of the focuses of our discussion, not only here at the protest, but in our work sessions at the conference,” said Pablo Alvarado, executive director of NDLON. Passed in 1996 under the Clinton administration, 287(g) is a section of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act that allows federal immigration police to deputize local cops to arrest and hold people on charges of violating immigration law.

The use of this law has been expanded under both the Bush and Obama administrations.

Salvador Reza, of the Puente Movement, came to the conference from Arizona. Reza told the *Militant* about the ongoing campaign of police intimidation led by Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio aimed at the Latino community there.

“In Arizona under 287(g) Arpaio has been able to do sweeps in Latino/Mexicano neighborhoods,” Reza said.

Police and citizen posses conduct the sweeps. On February 28 thousands demonstrated in Phoenix after Arpaio marched 200 immigrants to prison through the streets of the city in chains and prison strips.

Reza said the sweeps and efforts to humiliate and intimidate workers have continued. The weekend before the conference, he said that Arpaio organized some 200 cops and local “posse” members—many of them members of right-wing anti-immigrant groups—to sweep through a local market arresting workers while purportedly looking for pirated CDs.



September 12 protest in Washington against deputization of cops as immigration agents

N.Y. socialist candidate debates opponents

BY WILLIE COTTON

NEW YORK—Maura DeLuca, Socialist Workers candidate for New York City public advocate, debated two of her opponents in an event at Hunter College September 10.

The Student Political Science Association hosted the meeting. Some 40 students and others came out to hear DeLuca, Norman Siegel, a past executive director of the New York Civil Liberties Union who is running in the Democratic primary, and Alex Zablocki, who is running as the Republican Party candidate. Professor Lina Newton moderated the debate.

Asked what is the role of the public advocate and how would you use its resources, DeLuca said when elected she would use the office “to support working-class struggles” and join in actions that “advance the working class in realizing its self-worth.” She said we live in “a class-divided society. We need to fight for what will

strengthen the working class.”

Siegel said as public advocate he would listen to people’s complaints to find out what the systemic problems are. He criticized the socialist campaign as being biased against the wealthy. “The office can’t discriminate based on wealth,” he argued. “That is antithetical to what public office is about.”

DeLuca, a garment worker, responded that under capitalism “discrimination is based on wealth. Those who own the giant corporations exploit the labor of those of us who work for them. We produce the wealth and they expropriate it for themselves.”

She noted this was the first debate the New York Socialist Workers candidates have been invited to, because the other debates have limited participation to candidates who have spent at least \$250,000 or more.

“What is the single greatest threat to the public interest in 2009?” all three candidates were asked.

Zablocki responded that the ailing economy and unemployment are the biggest threats. His solution was to fight “waste” in government and not raise taxes. “This country was built on capitalism,” he said.

“The world disorder of capitalism and

the counterrevolutionary assault on our living standards is the biggest threat,” said DeLuca. “We need to organize to make a revolution that can take power out of the hands of the propertied rulers.” She explained while fighting to take political power, workers should also fight for immediate demands, such as unemployment compensation for as long as you are out of work, no cuts in medical benefits for those who are laid off, and for a federal-funded, crash public works program to put people to work at union scale.

Asked what is the most important part of your experience, DeLuca said, “Joining the struggles of the working class.” She cited participating in solidarity activities for the recently concluded strike of Stella D’oro cookie workers, fighting for legalization for all undocumented workers, and her attendance at rallies in support of a woman’s right to choose abortion in New York and Nebraska.

Zablocki said that he was the “most experienced” candidate, explaining that he was a 26-year-old small business owner and licensed real estate agent. He said he had put a career on Wall Street “on the back burner” in order to run for public office. Siegel cited his training as a lawyer.

Teach-ins for Troy Davis

Continued from front page

cops coerced them into naming Davis as the killer.

The U.S. Supreme Court issued a highly unusual ruling in August ordering a federal judge in Georgia to review the case and decide whether new evidence exists that could prove Davis’s innocence.

An evidentiary hearing in the case will likely be held in November or December, according to Kathryn Hamoudah of Amnesty International in Atlanta.

Although Davis’s supporters are no longer organizing a Washington, D.C., rally September 26—which had been timed to coincide with the opening of the Supreme Court’s session—a fall schedule of stepped-up activity has begun. Several teach-ins on the Davis case will take place in the Atlanta area, including at Georgia State University and at Emory University School of Law. The latter is sponsored by the Criminal Law Club, Black Law Student Association, and others.

On its Web site, Amnesty Interna-

tional lists events on college campuses, high schools, and other venues in 23 states and the District of Columbia. For a complete list visit: www.amnestyusa.org/teachin/display.php.

A vanload of canvassers from Atlanta joins Davis supporters in Savannah, Georgia, every couple of weeks. They are now circulating a new petition asking the state of Georgia to grant clemency to Davis. Previously, Davis supporters garnered more than 11,000 signatures in Savannah on petitions asking the district attorney of Chatham County to grant Davis a new trial. The vans are organized by Amnesty International in Atlanta.

Georgians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty have reinstituted “Tuesdays for Troy” in Atlanta, organizing petitioning teams in three Atlanta-area locations every second Tuesday.

Students and others interested in becoming part of the international defense campaign or in organizing teach-ins can download an “activist guide” on the case from Amnesty International’s Web site, Hamoudah explained.

'Militant' Subscription Drive Sept. 12–Nov. 10	
Country	Quota
UNITED STATES	
Atlanta	130
Boston	60
Chicago	110
Des Moines, IA	110
Houston	90
Los Angeles	100
Miami	110
New York	230
Newark, NJ	75
Philadelphia	75
San Francisco	150
Seattle	90
Twin Cities, MN	130
Washington, D.C.	100
Total U.S.	1560
UNITED KINGDOM	
Edinburgh	35
London	75
Total U.K.	110
Canada	100
New Zealand	65
Australia	50
Sweden	25
Total	1910

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Bay Area transit union accepts new contract

BY JOEL BRITTON

OAKLAND, California—A months-long contract dispute that pitted Bay Area Rapid Transit management against nearly 900 train operators and station agents ended in late August with a 466 to 112 vote in favor of a new contract.

At the high point of the conflict, Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 1555 members voted two to one against BART bosses' second contract offer and were poised to go on strike. The walkout would have shut down the four-county mass transit system that carries close to 350,000 passengers a day. The last strike by BART workers was in 1997.

BART bosses on August 13 imposed employment terms and conditions for ATU 1555 that effectively slashed workers' pay by 7 percent, eliminated payment into a pension plan, and imposed three unpaid furlough days. They also dictated "changes to wasteful work rules." These terms, BART management wrote, will "remain in effect until a new contract agreement is reached."

In response, the ATU set a strike deadline of 12:01 a.m., August 17. BART employees represented by the Service Employees International Union and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, who had earlier voted to ratify new contracts, pledged to honor ATU picket lines.

BART bosses, aided by editorial writers for the major newspapers in the Bay Area and others in the bourgeois media, whipped up a campaign to put pressure

on the workers and their union. The *San Francisco Chronicle* editorialized August 15 against the "holdout union" and wrote that the "workers' stubborn demand to preserve the deluxe features and inefficiencies in their contract suggest an obliviousness to the lives and paychecks of riders on the trains they operate.

"The union will gain no sympathy—and, we trust, no concessions from management—if its members choose to strike." A strike will create "havoc" and "chaos," the paper warned. It demanded that the ATU "call off its dangerous gamble."

Chronicle writer Carla Marinucci penned an article headlined "Public sentiment running high against labor action" in the same issue. Marinucci whipped up middle-class venom against members of the ATU at the prospect of a BART strike "in such dire economic



Passengers wait on train platform at BART station. Capitalist media portrayed transit union as "stubborn," and "oblivious to the lives and paychecks of riders."

times." She offered "a sampling of the anti-strike sentiment from readers." One urged BART riders to "confront the workers and tell them your opinion." Another threatened, "I think our soldiers in Iraq might be safer next week than picketing BART workers."

During the final hours of negotiations August 16, BART bosses backed

off their demand for six unpaid furlough days in the first two years of the contract.

Following the vote, management asserted that it had won changes in pay, benefits, and work rules that will save BART \$38 million over the next four years. Wages will remain frozen for at least three years.

Greek gov't shows class bias in fighting fires

BY GEORGES MEHRABIAN

ATHENS, Greece—Vast areas of forest land and olive groves were consumed in a raging fire in the northern suburbs of Athens in late August. The government dispatched resources to fight the fires to wealthiest areas, neglecting working-class and middle-class neighborhoods.

Stuart Gall, a systems engineer living in the town of Marathon, said that about seven fire-fighting planes flew past his neighborhood and dropped their loads of water on the north side of the mountain where the posh neighborhoods Dionysos, Ekali, and Politia are located.

"We kept expecting water to be dropped on the approaching fire. But night time came, the flights were suspended until sunrise, and not one water drop for us!" Gall said. The fire forced Gall and other families to evacuate.

Gall explained that throughout the following day residents extinguished small fires that reignited. Initially they used buckets of water drawn from water mains, until they failed. "Then we

used fire extinguishers, bottled water, and shoveled earth over the flames," Gall said.

Gall said that later in the day a local farmer showed up who had strapped a large water tank to the back of his tractor and connected a hose to it.

Across the street from the luxury villas in Pendeli suburb is a working-class community of more than 100 Iraqi Kurdish refugees living in a camp of containers with no running water or electricity. Makwan Haourami, who lives in the camp, told the *Militant* that the Kurds helped put out the fire threatening the expensive homes.

The entire Kurdish camp, however, was reduced to ashes. "We asked the fire department to give us one hose to put out the fire but they stood by and did nothing," he said.

Since the fire Haourami said some of the residents in the wealthy area across the street are collecting signatures on a petition to oust the Kurds, saying that they present a danger to the community. "We are not going anywhere. The government should give us political asylum

so we can live like human beings," said Haourami. He added that a couple of neighbors and a citizens' rights group in the area donated large tents in which the Kurds are now staying.

Neas Pitulis, a young unemployed chemist, along with his neighbors, fought off a fire with hoses and branches. He said a big difference was made when some construction workers brought a couple of bulldozers from a nearby site. "We were able to build mounds to block the spread of the fire. It was not until much later that the fire department showed up," Pitulis told the *Militant*.

Commenting on the extensive damage caused to the forestland around northern Athens, Pitulis said, "It is clear that the decision was made by the authorities to protect real estate property. That is where the fire-fighting force was concentrated. The forests were pretty much abandoned. Society should be able to do both."

Bobbis Misailides and Natasha Terlexis contributed to this article.

Is it a good time to strike?

The following letter appeared in the August 15 San Francisco Chronicle under the heading "Is it a good time to strike?"

I am one of 42 part-time train operators working at BART. I am very proud of my brothers and sisters in the Amalgamated Transit Union who stood up and said, "No concessions, no givebacks!" to the BART bosses.

The system couldn't operate without train operators and station agents but could run very easily without the top-heavy layer of bosses and bureaucrats in downtown Oakland. To those who echo BART management's claims of poverty and bad economic times, my response is twofold:

One, open the books. Let a committee of union members and the public look through BART's real financial record of bloated executive salaries, monies for anti-union lawyers and boondoggle projects.

Two, if the economy being in a depression is a bad time to strike, then when is a good time? If long-shoremen in San Francisco, auto workers in Toledo and Teamsters in Minneapolis had been afraid to organize general strikes in 1934, during the heart of the Great Depression, we might all be minimum-wage workers with no union protections today.

BILL KALMAN
Richmond

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



September 28, 1984

The enemies of the right to abortion are using the presidential elections to accelerate their ideological campaign against women's right to control their own bodies.

Capitalist politicians and church officials, as well as the big business media, portray abortion as a complex "moral" and "religious" question.

This is false. The abortion issue has to do with one and only one thing: Does a woman have the right to decide for herself whether to bear a child? Or should this decision be dictated to her by politicians, priests, doctors, or family?

Millions of working women and men affirm that a woman must have the right to control her own body. The right to control her own body is a prerequisite for controlling her own destiny—the ability to hold a job, to get an education, to participate actively in her union.



September 28, 1959

Moving in with the new antilabor club shaped by Congress, Secretary of Labor [James] Mitchell announced September 18 that he had sent a telegram to Teamsters Union President James Hoffa instructing him to provide the names of any officers convicted of felonies and to report what action was being taken to remove such officials.

The Labor Secretary chose the national AFL-CIO convention for the announcement. He also said his department already had the wheels in motion for investigating other unions that Congressional hearings had indicated "are infiltrated with known Communists or felons."

The section of the new addition to the Taft-Hartley law, which Mitchell has seized hold of so quickly, was part of the original Kennedy bill passed by the Senate last spring.



September 29, 1934

Once again the unemployed relief structure of the city of New York broke down, throwing thousands of desperate workers to the mercies of conniving politicians and banks demanding their pound of flesh. But poorly fed, badly clothed, destitute human beings are not to be trifled with. The capitalists and their flunkies know that jobs or relief must be forthcoming or the jobless will take matters in their own hands—individually or collectively.

After a bitter fight the city administration adopted a three-point program to raise fifty million dollars.

The Chamber of Commerce and other business organizations are up in arms. They propose a 2-cent levy on subway and other fares. They want to pass the burden of maintaining the jobless on to the workers. In the meantime the unemployed are organizing for the fight.

Exhibit explores ‘third Chinatown’ of New York

BY TOM BAUMANN

NEW YORK—The exhibit “Living and Learning: Chinese Immigration, Restriction & Community in Brooklyn, 1850 to present” was on view at the Brooklyn Historical Society May 8–August 30. It documents the unique history of Chinese immigration to Brooklyn and their battle against discrimination.

Sometimes considered New York’s third Chinatown—following lower Manhattan and the Flushing neighborhood of Queens—Sunset Park in Brooklyn is estimated to have the fourth larg-

IN REVIEW

est Chinese community in the United States, according to the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*.

Many Chinese immigrants who ended up in Brooklyn arrived first on the West Coast where they built transcontinental railroads, not migrating east until the 1870s. With the railroads completed, the U.S. rulers no longer deemed “coolie” labor necessary and began a propaganda campaign to stop Chinese entry into the United States, labeling Chinese as drug users, disease-ridden, and “American jobs” stealers.

Early Chinese in Brooklyn made a living running or working in laundries and restaurants, or as servants, seamen, or merchants.

One display in the exhibit featured an article from the Sept. 1, 1876, *Brooklyn Eagle*, entitled “Mongols: Brooklyn Invaded by the Celestials.” It described the opening of a Chinese laundry, and the threat of a vigilante committee to “seize the Chinamen by their pig tails” and drive them out of town.

On the pretext that many workers arriving from East Asia were convicts, in 1875 Congress passed the Page Act, under which an American consul had to approve all immigration from the “Orient.” Female applicants were often labeled “prostitutes,” preventing many husbands from reuniting with their wives.

Under the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the Chinese were prohibited from entering the United States altogether, with the exception of select students and merchants. It was not until 1965, following on the heels of the proletarian battles of the 1950s and 1960s that smashed Jim Crow segregation, that the United States took national origin quotas and racial re-

strictions off the books.

The exhibit also featured examples of how Chinese resistance to institutionalized racism helped establish legal precedents. One of the more notable cases was the attempt by customs officials in 1895 to deport Wong Kim Ark, a U.S.-born Chinese worker, upon returning to San Francisco from China. Unwilling to accept deportation and challenging it up to the Supreme Court, *United States v. Wong Kim Ark* established in 1898 that anyone born on U.S. soil is a citizen.

Another example was that of Augustus “Ahing” Frederick, a resident of the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood in Brooklyn and a native of Trinidad, who applied for citizenship in 1930. After listing his father as Philip Ahing, a man of possible Chinese ancestry, his request was denied until his mother, still living in Trinidad, sent sworn testimony that she “never cohabited with any Chinese.”

One of the final panels notes the con-

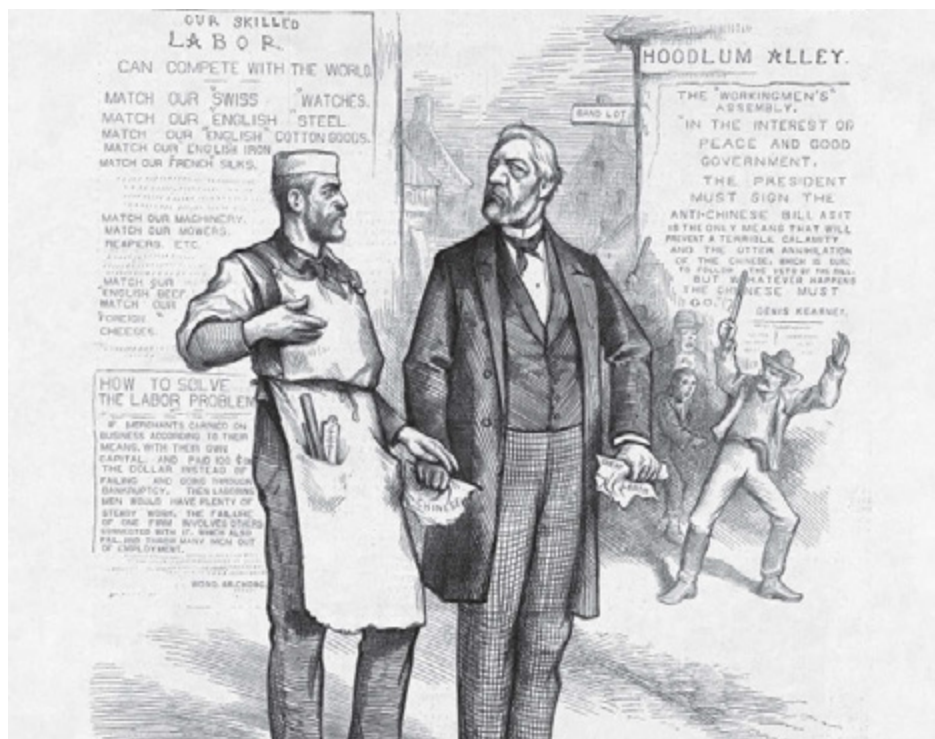


Illustration appeared on front page of New York *Harper's Weekly* March 22, 1879, with caption “Protect White Labor.” Chinese immigration to East Coast, as well as anti-Chinese racism, picked up in 1870s after decline in demand for their labor in west following completion of railroads.

ditions Chinese workers face today in Brooklyn. For example, many new immigrants who work in the Sunset Park garment district often work as many as 17 hours in one day and earn less than minimum wage.

The curator of the exhibit was Andy

Urban. Interviews with Chinese immigrants, done in collaboration with the Museum of Chinese in America and P.S. 94 in Sunset Park, are available at brooklynhistory.org.

Willie Cotton contributed to this article.

Behind Malay insurgency in Thailand

BY DOUG NELSON

Fighting between government forces and Malay insurgents in southern Thailand is intensifying, fueled by decades of oppression against the Malay nationality there.

Thailand’s population is roughly 75 percent Thai, 14 percent Chinese, and 5 percent Malay. The Malay religion is Islam, while nearly 95 percent of Thailand’s population is Buddhist.

The fighting is taking place in the southernmost provinces where Malays comprise about 80 percent of the nearly 2 million people.

The south is among the less-developed areas of the country. Nearly 23 percent of the population in the southern province of Pattani lived below the official poverty level of 1,100 baht per month (US\$32), more than twice the national average, according to 2004 UN figures. Infant mortality in Narathiwat, another southern province, is the highest in the country.

The majority of Malays in the south are small farmers, subsisting on cultivation of rice, fruits, and rubber as well as coastal fishing.

The tin mines, plantations, and other large businesses are almost exclusively owned by Thai or Chinese. While the Thai are a minority in the region, they make up the vast majority of govern-

ment employees and officials.

More than 3,500 people have reportedly been killed in an upsurge in violence that began in early 2004. More than 330 have died in 2009 as of September 5, up from 285 in the same period last year.

Civilians have become a major target of both sides in the south, fomenting divisions and mistrust between the two populations. Since 2004 the Thai Buddhist population in the region has declined from about 300,000 to 230,000.

The government has increasingly been arming Thais, as well as a small number of Malays, in the south to aid the government’s counterinsurgency war. In June unknown gunmen opened fire on a mosque during prayer, killing 12 people. Malay residents believe it was carried out by government forces or Thai militia.

The combined force of police, military, and government-backed militia forces now number more than 60,000—double what it was just two years ago.

‘Thaization’ campaign

Following a military coup in 1932, the government placed the southern provinces under the direct control of the Ministry of the Interior and began a sustained policy of forced assimilation, imposing Thai names, Buddhist law, and use of the Thai language. In the 1960s Bangkok launched a “Thaization” campaign, granting land to some 160,000 Buddhist Thais that agreed to move to the area.

The fighting was at a low point in the late 1990s, but began to pick up again in response to a repressive clampdown following the election of populist Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra in 2001.

The government imposed martial law in January 2004 following an insurgent raid on an army camp. In October of that year, the military fired on a peaceful demonstration of about 1,500 outside a police station in Narathiwat protesting the arrest of Malay militia members accused of handing over their government-issued weapons to insurgent forces. Some 1,300 protesters were arrested and

stacked up to six layers deep in trucks for at least five hours, causing 78 to die from asphyxiation and injuring many others. Officers responsible for the action were acquitted in court.

The government that came to power following a pro-monarchy military coup in 2006 made overtures to remedy national grievances in the south. Economic development has increased, but little else changed.

‘Hearts and minds’

The government has announced a \$1.6 billion stimulus plan for the region to win “hearts and minds,” while stepping up the counterinsurgency war and maintaining martial law as well as an emergency decree that grants broad powers and immunity to the police and military forces. The vast majority of Malays oppose the massive military presence.

“Corrupt officials will keep the money for themselves. This is a useless idea,” Malay villager Arware told the *World Bulletin* in June, referring to the stimulus. “The emergency laws let them arrest innocent people, jail them for a month, and sometimes they torture them—how can this win hearts and minds?”

While the root of the conflict is clear—the systematic oppression of the Malay Muslims—no group claims responsibility for the insurgent attacks and terrorist bombings.

There are several Malay organizations fighting for independence or autonomy, which have worked with each other to varying degrees in recent years. Some call for an Islamic state and one is led by veterans of the U.S.-backed rightist Islamist forces that fought the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s.

One of the main organizations, the Pattani Liberation Organization, recently outlined demands including the establishment of Islamic law, recognition of the Malay as a distinct nationality, teaching of the Malay language, autonomous status in the south, and the organization of a referendum on independence.

For further reading



Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution

How Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, and Moisés Sío Wong—three young rebels of Chinese-Cuban ancestry—threw themselves into the great proletarian battle that defined their generation. They became combatants in the clandestine struggle and 1956–58 revolutionary war that brought down a U.S.-backed dictatorship and opened the door to the socialist revolution

in the Americas. Each became a general in Cuba’s Revolutionary Armed Forces. —\$20

Available online and at distributors listed on page 8

www.pathfinderpress.com

How U.S. rulers eroded abortion rights after 1973

BY BEN JOYCE

Second of two-part series

The 1973 Supreme Court decision known as *Roe v. Wade* was a historic advance for women's liberation in the United States, granting women the right to choose abortion in the first two trimesters of pregnancy.

Almost immediately after the ruling came down, however, opponents of women's rights began a drive to overturn it. Women having the ability to control their own bodies strikes at the very heart of their oppression. Without that right they cannot participate as equals in the workforce, in their unions, in politics, or in society as a whole.

Unable to outright reverse *Roe v. Wade* because of the substantial support for legal abortion, the ruling class has chipped away at different aspects of this right for three and a half decades. The assault has been part of a broader capitalist attack on working people, aimed at the more vulnerable sections of the population, in this case working-class women, especially Blacks and Latinas, and young women.

Antiabortion Hyde Amendment

One of the biggest blows to the right to choose abortion came in the fall of 1976. Congress approved, with bipartisan support, legislation known as the Hyde Amendment. The measure prohibits the use of federal Medicaid funds to obtain an abortion, except in cases of rape, incest, or a life-threat-

ening pregnancy.

The larger groups in the women's rights movement, the National Organization for Women (NOW) in particular, failed to sound the alarm before or after the Hyde Amendment was adopted. Many NOW leaders worried that raising abortion was too controversial and could undermine support for Democratic candidates they backed in the elections.

No large mobilizations of supporters of abortion rights were organized to protest the Hyde Amendment. The antiabortion forces won a victory without a battle.

Today only 17 states provide some funding for abortions beyond the special cases the Hyde Amendment allows. South Dakota bans Medicaid funding for abortion even in the case of rape or incest.

The Hyde Amendment has had a major impact on whether or not working-class women have access to abortion, illustrating the differentiated effect of antiabortion legislation on women of different social classes. According to the Guttmacher Institute, Medicaid-eligible women in states that exclude abortion coverage have abortion rates of about half that of those in states that provide coverage.

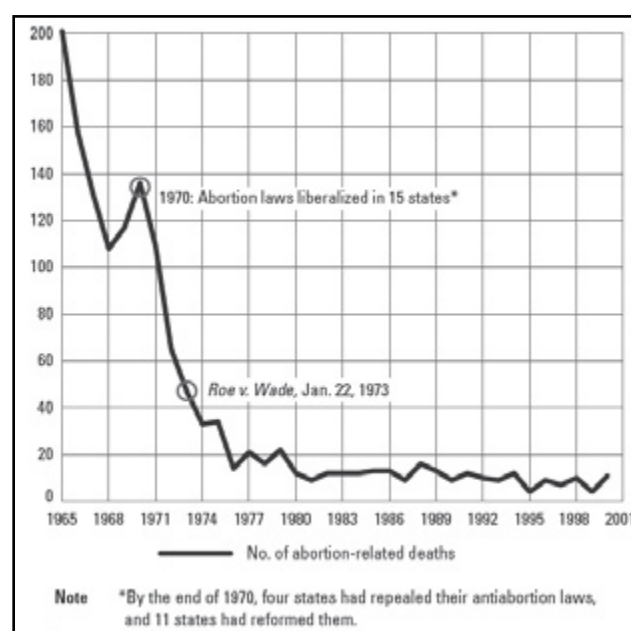
As a result of the Hyde Amendment and other funding restrictions, many women are forced to seek cheaper, riskier abortion procedures. Rosie Jiménez became the first known victim of the Hyde Amend-

ment when she sought an illegal abortion because she couldn't pay for the procedure at a clinic. She contracted an infection that killed her in October 1977 at the age of 27.

Further ground lost

Additional measures have been taken in a number of U.S. states limiting the right to choose abortion. Thirty-five states now require that women under a certain age, in most cases 18, either notify or get permission from their parents before they can obtain an abortion. In these cases, many young women are forced to carry through pregnancies unwillingly because the decision is put in the hands of their parents. The American Medical Association has noted that "the desire to maintain secrecy has been one of the leading reasons for illegal abortion deaths since ... 1973."

Over the past couple of decades there has been a sharp decline in the number of facilities that provide abortions. The number of hospitals performing abortions went from about 1,500 in 1980 to around 600 in 2004. As of 2005, 87 percent of U.S. counties had no abortion provider. In non-metropolitan areas, this figure was 97



Graph illustrates a substantial decline in abortion-related deaths after procedure is decriminalized.

percent. The recent killing of Dr. George Tiller, an abortion provider in Wichita, Kansas, by an antiabortion rightist resulted in the closing of his clinic. Tiller's facility was the only place to get an abortion in the Wichita area and one of three clinics in the country that provided late-term abortions.

The scarcity of abortion providers in the United States means that more women are forced to travel long distances to obtain an abortion. In addition, 24 states have mandatory waiting periods, which require women to wait a certain amount of time, in most cases 24 hours, between requesting the procedure and obtaining it. These barriers disproportionately affect working-class women who find it harder to miss work and pay for travel expenses.

The rate of women getting abortions has steadily declined since 1980, now about two-thirds of what it was then.

The progress rightists and capitalist politicians are making in rolling back abortion rights illustrates the urgent need to rebuild a movement that can defend and extend a woman's right to choose.

For further reading

Communist Continuity & the Fight for Women's Liberation

Documents of Socialist Workers Party 1971-86

How did the oppression of women begin? What social forces have the power to end the second-class status of women? Why is a woman's

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Dominican Republic: antiabortion laws protested

BY SETH GALINSKY

Hundreds demonstrated in Santo Domingo September 8 against a proposed amendment to the constitution of the Dominican Republic that states "the right to life is inviolable from conception until death." Known as Article 30 it is aimed at further restricting women's right to choose abortion.

While technically illegal under the criminal code, "therapeutic" abortions when a woman's life is in danger are openly performed in hospitals in the Dominican Republic.

In other cases, thousands of women go to back-alley abortionists or attempt to self-induce abortions, said Miriam Mejia, deputy director of Alianza Dominicana, a social services center in

New York's Dominican community. "Women in the Dominican Republic get abortions under horrendous conditions," Mejia told the *Militant*. "This article would make the situation even worse."

Mejia helped circulate a petition signed by 100 Dominicans who live in New York protesting the proposed constitutional change.

Anywhere from 80,000 to 100,000 abortions are carried out every year in the Dominican Republic, an island nation of less than 10 million people. No doctor or women has ever been prosecuted under the criminal code.

The Maternity Hospital Altagracia in Santo Domingo reported it performed 6,300 abortions last year, more than 80 percent on teenagers. Many of these were the result of complications from home use of Misoprostol, a medicine used to induce abortions, which can cause severe hemorrhaging. Like most non-narcotic medicines in the Dominican Republic, it can be purchased without a doctor's prescription.

Aldrian Almonte, president of the Dominican Gynecology and Obstetrics Society in Santo Domingo, told Inter Press News Agency (IPS) that the high maternal death rate there—132 per 100,000 births—is largely because of unsafe abortions.

If Article 30 is passed "what are we going to do before the presence of a woman with severe preeclampsia or eclampsia, convulsing in any emergency

room around the country?" Almonte asked. "See her die to protect ourselves from the repercussions that Article 30 stipulates?" Eclampsia is a life threatening condition of convulsions that can occur in a pregnant woman with high blood pressure, which often leads to coma.

"We are proposing decriminalizing abortion in case of danger to a woman's life, incest, or rape," Graciela de la Cruz, from the Solidarity Center for Women's Development, said in a phone interview from Santo Domingo. She was part of the September 8 march, which began at the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo and marched to the Congress.

A coalition of dozens of organizations, including women's groups, medical associations, and trade unions, have formed a coalition to oppose Article 30, she said.

The amendment passed a first reading in a joint session of the Dominican Senate and House of Representatives with 167 votes in favor and 32 against, de la Cruz said. It won't become law unless it passes a second reading.

Article 30 was proposed by President Leonel Fernández, from the Dominican Liberation Party and has the backing of the Dominican Revolutionary Party, a social-democratic party that is the main opposition group in the legislature. The Catholic Church and some evangelical churches have been actively campaigning for the antiabortion amendment.

"A recent Gallup-Hoy poll shows that 80 percent of our people are for the right to abortion when the woman's life is in danger," de la Cruz said. "We can win this fight."



Lorena Espinoza Peña

September 8 demonstration in Dominican Republic

U.S. rulers impeded entry of Jewish refugees in 1930s

Printed below is an excerpt from Socialists and the Fight against Anti-Semitism, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for September. This booklet examines the real record of the fight to open Washington's doors to refugees fleeing Hitler's fascist regime in the 1930s and to oppose the growth of fascist movements in the United States. U.S. immigration quotas, backed by the liberal Franklin Roosevelt administration, barred millions of persecuted Jewish refugees from Germany and other European countries from entering the United States. Copyright © 1973 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY PETER SEIDMAN

In the wake of this mounting Nazi repression, refuge in other countries became a matter of life and death for hundreds of thousands of Jews and other fighters against fascism as well. By May 1939, for example, there were enough applications for U.S. entry visas on file in the U.S. consular offices in Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia to fill the existing U.S. immigration quotas for the next five years!

The Roosevelt administration, the



Picket line at German consulate in New York City, November 1938, demanding U.S. government admit European refugees fleeing Nazi terror.

upholder of the "liberal democratic values" so beloved by the B'nai B'rith [a prominent Jewish organization that supported the creation of Israel], followed a consistent policy of barring entry to this country for these refugees, thereby condemning many of them to death. This policy of the U.S. government showed that any serious effort to save the victims of European anti-Semitism would require a fight *against* Roosevelt's administration, and not reliance *on* it.

The *Socialist Appeal*, a predecessor of the *Militant*, in an editorial that appeared on July 9, 1938, explained the reason why: "Capitalism in its death agony can no more solve the refugee problem than any of the other social problems clamoring for solution. The existence of these refugee hordes is in itself a symptom of its social decay and political reaction. . . .

"Revolutionary socialists must everywhere fight for unrestricted immigration into their countries, and especially for the right of asylum for all victims of reaction."

New Deal and refugees

Following Hitler's march into Austria in March 1938, President Roosevelt announced plans for an international conference to aid refugees from Germany and Austria to be held at Evian, France. Roosevelt launched this

conference with a statement about how the U.S. has always been a haven for the oppressed and a land of the free.

But in motivating the conference, he explained that no country that attended would be expected to raise its immigration quotas to solve the refugee crisis, that the U.S. would not raise its quota, and that all funds for projects of the conference would be raised from private agencies.

This general approach of the New Deal to the refugee crisis was first conceived in the State Department, where Cordell Hull, then secretary of state, circulated a memorandum in response to growing public outcries over the events in Europe. Hull said it would be better for the State Department to "get out in front and attempt to guide the pressure, *primarily with a view toward forestalling attempts to have the immigration laws liberalized.*" (Emphasis added.)

With this kind of purpose discreetly buried behind a lot of government hoopla about "America's concern for the refugees" it is not at all surprising that the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees that finally emerged from the Evian Conference was a farce. By August 1939, this committee, which was supposed to represent the relief efforts of thirty-two nations, had a bank balance of \$9,672! . . .

The outcome of all these artificial

barriers to immigration was that even the existing quotas were not filled. Between 1933 and 1943, more than 400,000 more people could have legally entered the U.S. from countries under Nazi domination than were actually permitted. Between 1938, the year of "*Kristallnacht*," and 1941, the year the involvement of the U.S. in the second world war made transportation from Europe almost totally unavailable to refugees—a period of time when the acute plight of the refugees was at the height of public attention—there were still some 60,000 unfilled places in the U.S. immigration quota.

More revealing than this, of course, is the fact that quotas existed at all. At a time when so many lives were threatened, the U.S. insisted on maintaining an immigration quota system based on restrictive legislation aimed at cutting off the flow of immigrants into the country.

In 1944, John Pehle, at the request of U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, issued a study of State Department refugee policy since 1938, which he entitled: "Report to the Secretary on the Acquiescence of This Government in the Murder of the Jews." Any honest estimate of the Roosevelt administration's policies would confirm these findings.

Zionist opposition to lifting quotas

In 1942, Rabbi Stephen Wise, the leading Zionist spokesman in the U.S., complained to his friend Felix Frankfurter, "I don't know whether I'm getting to be the J of Jude, but I find that a good part of my work is to explain to my fellow Jews why our government cannot do all the things asked or expected of it."

As was pointed out above, the Roosevelt administration, far from aiding the masses of European refugees from Nazi terror, had in fact stood quietly by while hundreds of thousands of Jews and others were being murdered. Estimates as to the total number of refugees that were permitted to enter the U.S. between 1933 and 1945 vary from about 150,000 to a high of about 250,000. A very small number indeed compared to the millions of victims of fascism.

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September

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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by Peter Seidman

Responding to slanders against socialists, this booklet examines the real record of the fight to open Washington's doors to refugees from Hitler's fascist regime in the 1930s.

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The Militant September 28, 2009

Labor and anti-China tariff

The steep U.S. tariffs imposed on tires made in China should be repudiated by the entire labor movement. All tariffs and other barriers on products coming into the United States should be lifted. These have devastating consequences for the workers and farmers of the semicolonial world.

The White House and some union officials have said the tire sanctions protect “American” jobs.

The working class cannot buy into the lie that there is any such thing as an “American” job. Do fellow workers in China need jobs any less than workers in the United States? Or workers in France, Mexico, Britain, or Africa?

Jobs are being cut around the world, not because China is flooding the market with unneeded goods, but because capitalism is in a deep crisis. There is competition for shrinking markets. Bosses shut down factories that make things working people need, because it is not profitable for them.

The U.S. rulers, the strongest of the imperialist powers, want to protect *their* factories, businesses, and profits, by imposing tariffs and other barriers at the expense of weaker competitors. These measures wreak havoc on fellow workers and farmers

today and they pose a grave danger for the future. Such trade conflicts can escalate into trade wars, and from there into shooting wars.

“We’ve got into a situation now where everyone’s afraid to tick off our banker,” said United Steelworkers union president Leo Gerard, referring to China’s large holdings of U.S. treasury bonds. “If our government had the guts to retaliate, [China] is going to be on the losing end.”

This reactionary nationalist rhetoric has no place in the trade union movement. It can only divert attention away from the real enemy—the capitalist system and the bosses who profit from it. No wonder that among those hailing the anti-China tariff is ultrarightist Patrick Buchanan.

What the labor movement should be doing is building unions that fight for the entire working class, that organize the unorganized; unions that put forward a struggle for jobs for all, for immediate unconditional legalization of all undocumented workers, and against all imperialist wars. Such a fighting labor movement would extend the hand of solidarity to workers and farmers around the world.

U.S. gov’t imposes anti-China tariffs

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nese government has expanded exports and opened up more of the country to capitalist investment, the Chinese and U.S. economies have become more interconnected.

U.S. exports to China mushroomed from about \$13 billion in 1999 to \$70 billion in 2008. Chinese exports to the United States grew from \$82 billion to \$338 billion.

“Exports to the United States, at 6 percent of China’s entire economic output, account for 13 times as large a share of the Chinese economy as exports to China represent for the United States economy,” noted the *New York Times*.

Although China has 1.3 billion people compared to 307 million in the United States, the per capita gross domestic product in the United States is almost eight times higher than in China.

Beijing is the largest single holder of U.S. treasures, with \$700 billion worth. Chinese premier Wen Jiabao has pressed Washington to take measures to keep the U.S. dollar from continuing to weaken against the Chinese yuan in order to protect the value of Chinese investments.

But Beijing “has relatively few secure places to park its huge foreign-exchange reserves other than U.S. Treasury bonds and government-backed U.S. mortgage securities,” said the *Washington Post*.

While the Chinese government has protested the U.S. sanctions, it has not so far imposed new sanctions of its own on U.S. goods.

Instead, it has launched an antidumping and antisubsidy probe of U.S. exports of chicken and auto products to China. It also filed a formal complaint with the World Trade Organization (WTO) over the tariff hike.

The United Steelworkers (USW) union claims 5,000 tire workers in the United States lost their jobs due to the Chinese imports.

“For the first time in 20 years, we have a president who stood up to enforce the laws that have been robbing workers of their jobs,” Leo Gerard, USW president told cheering delegates to the AFL-CIO convention in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

The Steelworkers officials helped lay the basis for the higher tariffs by filing a case against the Chinese imports with the U.S. International Trade Commission in April.

Health bills attack abortion, immigrants

Continued from front page

tine checkups and preventive care.

Under the guise of eliminating “waste and fraud,” and “unwarranted subsidies” to insurance companies, Obama wants to eliminate “Medicare Advantage,” which would cut as much as \$177 billion. Enacted in 2003 it allows some 10.2 million senior citizens to use Medicare funds to buy private insurance plans. This would be an opening wedge for more attacks on Medicare and Medicaid.

The day after Obama’s speech to Congress, White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs said that the president planned to take anti-immigrant measures that are even more restrictive than those demanded by some conservatives. Obama will oppose letting undocumented immigrants buy health insurance through government “purchasing exchanges” set up to lower insurance costs—even from private companies.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau there are more than 46 million people without health insurance in the United States. But Obama in his speech referred only to “more than 30 million American citizens who cannot get coverage,” leaving out both undocumented immigrants and those who are permanent residents or have work permits.

In a recent editorial the *New York Times*, while backing exclusion of the undocumented from government subsidized benefits, opposed attempts to prevent them

from purchasing insurance through the exchange.

But the *Times* did not base its position on concern for the health and well-being of undocumented workers. Instead it asked, “In the case of an epidemic, like swine flu, should illegal immigrants go untreated so they can infect legal residents and American citizens?”

Ruling out abortion funding

On September 13 U.S. health secretary Kathleen Sebelius was interviewed by ABC news correspondent George Stephanopoulos. He asked if Obama “will go beyond what we have seen in the House and explicitly rule out any public funding for abortion?”

“That’s exactly what the president said and that’s what he intends that the bill he signs will do,” Sebelius replied.

Obama has also said that federal conscience laws will remain in place. These give doctors and other health care providers the “right” to refuse requests for medical treatment, such as prescribing contraception or performing abortions.

In spite of claims by rightist opponents of the bill that it would promote socialized medicine in the United States, Obama has made it clear that what he wants to do is reinforce the capitalist market in health care.

“I have no interest in putting insurance companies out of business,” he said in Congress.

Socialist candidate

Continued from front page

ing it, “we demand the best quality medical care for every single person in this country, U.S.- or foreign-born, with or without papers,” said DeLuca. “And we oppose any restrictions on how much care or what type of treatment you can have.”

President Barack Obama has made it clear he will not include government funding for any abortion services in his plan, DeLuca noted. “The Socialist Workers candidates say no to *any* restrictions on women’s right to abortion—no to requirements that women receive ‘counseling’ prior to an abortion, that they view pictures of the fetus, that they wait a day to have the procedure, or that they obtain parental approval if they are not adults,” she said.

The capitalist rulers are using the health-care debate to divide workers and break down class solidarity, she said. “They claim undocumented workers are getting health care at the expense of U.S.-born ‘taxpayers.’ They pit Medicaid patients against privately insured patients. Our campaign rejects this.

“We also reject the idea that those of us who don’t have insurance because we can’t afford it are ‘irresponsible.’ I am one of those workers, a garment worker who can’t pay the insurance premiums,” DeLuca said. “I am not ‘irresponsible.’ The capitalist rulers in their contempt for working people are now demanding that we all buy insurance, one more way we are being forced to pay for their social and economic crisis.”

The socialist candidate took up ex-Alaska governor Sarah Palin’s charge that Obama’s health-care plan envisions “death panels” that would deny the elderly or disabled care. “But there is nothing new in this,” said DeLuca. “The elderly, as soon as they can no longer be exploited by some employer for a profit, are useless to the capitalist system. They are already being denied care they need and will be denied more as the Democrats and Republicans cut billions out of Medicare, which Obama’s plan calls for.”

DeLuca said it is not true that the bills currently in Congress are a cover for socialism, as some conservatives claim. A socialist system, she said, would be one where workers and farmers held political power and used that power to meet the needs of the vast majority, not guarantee the profits of a tiny handful of wealthy families. “That can only come about under an entirely different social and economic system,” DeLuca stressed, “not one based on health care as a commodity, nor on collecting insurance premiums, but on guaranteeing health care.”

It’s not a question of coming up with a better “plan” for health care today, but of building a movement that can “carry out a revolution that throws the capitalists out of power,” said DeLuca. The Cuban Revolution sets a good example of what can be accomplished when the working class takes power, she said, pointing to the volunteer doctors the Cuban government sends around the world and the medical school it operates that welcomes working-class students who want to return to practice medicine in their home regions.

Joining DeLuca at the campaign rally were SWP mayoral candidate Dan Fein, who spoke about why the economic depression is not ending but just beginning, and Tom Baumann, SWP candidate for borough of Manhattan president, who spoke out against Washington’s wars in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq, and its parallel wars on the rights and living standards of workers in the United States. Participants contributed more than \$700 to the New York socialist campaign.

Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?

by Mary-Alice Waters

Revolutionary struggles by working people are inevitable. They will be initiated not by the toilers, but will be forced upon us by the crisis-driven assaults by the propertied classes on our conditions of life and labor. In growing solidarity and the emergence of a fighting vanguard of working people, the outlines of these coming class battles can be seen. —\$7

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