

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

**Military tribunal tries
Guantánamo detainee**

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 72/NO. 31 AUGUST 4, 2008

Afghan war sharpens at border with Pakistan

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—A series of major battles in Afghanistan July 23–27 and another missile strike in Pakistan highlighted the increasing operations by U.S.-led NATO forces against the Taliban on both sides of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

The stepped-up combat tempo by the NATO forces, known as the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), has increased the number of Afghan civilian deaths—78 killed so far in July.

There were nearly 53,000 ISAF troops in Afghanistan as of June 10. These include about 23,500 U.S. troops. At least another 9,500 U.S. troops carry out operations in the country under a separate U.S. command.

Afghan authorities said up to 70 Taliban members were killed July 27 in a failed attempt to capture the center of the Spera district some nine miles from the Pakistani border. About 100 Taliban were surrounded by ISAF soldiers and police who then called in air strikes consisting of heavy machine

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Washington bails out mortgage companies

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—President George Bush signed a new housing bill July 30 that provides billions to bail out the mortgage industry. It will do little to help millions of working people facing loss of their homes due to high-interest subprime loans, layoffs, and falling home prices.

In a rare weekend session the Senate approved the American Housing Rescue and Foreclosure Prevention Act by a large bipartisan margin, 72 to 13. Earlier in the week the House approved the bill 272 to 152.

The act allows the Treasury Department to extend an unlimited line of credit to the mortgage companies Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, which are private but government-sponsored, and buy their stock.

A rapid sell-off of the mortgage companies' shares began July 10 after a former central banker commented that the companies might not be solvent. Since June Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac have lost \$11 billion due to loan foreclosures and borrowers who are behind in their

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Iowa marchers say 'No more raids!'

1,500 rally for immigrant workers' rights



Militant/Jorge Lertora

Some 1,500 demonstrators in Postville, Iowa, marched July 27 to protest a raid that rounded up nearly 400 workers at the nearby Agriprocessors meatpacking plant.

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

POSTVILLE, Iowa—Chanting “*Si se puede!* (Yes we can) No more raids!” about 1,500 people marched through the streets of this small farm town July 27 in support of workers arrested in the May 12 immigration raid of Agriprocessors, a kosher meatpacking plant.

The march was led by several workers wearing GPS tracking bracelets on their ankles. Forty-five of those arrested in the raid were given conditional release for “humanitarian” rea-

sons and required to wear the bracelets. They are not allowed to travel out of state or work pending upcoming court hearings.

Pedro, who worked at Agriprocessors for three years and did not want his last name used, said his wife was arrested in the raid and was given a five-month prison sentence. “This protest is very important, especially for the Agriprocessors workers in jail. It shows that there is support.”

The raid by as many as 500 cops
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Socialist Workers celebrate successful N.Y. petition drive



Militant/Eddie Beck

Martín Koppel, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress in New York's 15th District, campaigns on a street corner.

BY WILLIE COTTON

NEW YORK—Supporters of the Socialist Workers campaign celebrated July 27 after collecting 29,480 signatures—nearly double the requirement—to place Róger Calero, SWP candidate for U.S. president, and his

running mate Alyson Kennedy on the New York state ballot. Campaigning in Buffalo, Albany, and the greater New York City metropolitan area, the campaigners wrapped up the drive in two weeks.

Another 7,042 signatures were gathered for Martín Koppel, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress in New York's 15th District. This is double the state requirement of 3,500 signatures. Maura DeLuca, SWP candidate for Congress in the 16th District, announced July 27 that the campaign will now prepare the petitions for filing, and submit them for ballot status in Albany and New York City the week of August 12.

Iowa socialists began petitioning July 28 in Postville, the town where almost 400 workers at the Agriprocessors meatpacking plant were arrested by immigration cops May 12. The

socialists are also petitioning in Waterloo, Iowa City, the Quad-Cities area, and in Des Moines. Their goal is to collect more than 2,250 signatures for Calero and Kennedy and 450 for Frank Forrestal, the SWP
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Protests by Chinese migrant workers, farmers are on rise

BY SETH GALINSKY

Thousands of protests take place in China every year; most of them never make it into the news. But in the last couple of months a half dozen incidents in widely separated regions highlight what Beijing itself calls a “rising number of social discontent cases.”

In an attempt to quell the protests, the Chinese government announced new rules for local officials, offered compensation to relatives of earthquake victims, and set up a new agency for migrant workers. At the same time demonstrators continue to face arrest and beatings by the police.

Since 1992 millions of farmers have been pushed off their farms to work in factories, mines, and construction in eastern and southern China. There are now 150 million migrant workers—denied health-care, social security, and other benefits that “permanent” city residents receive—who find it difficult, if not impossible, to obtain even a temporary work permit.

More than 1 million of the 3.7 million natives of Bazhong, Sichuan now work in cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou. Many migrant workers are from Sichuan province.

Hundreds of migrant workers attacked a police station in China's eastern Zhejiang province July 10, according to the online version of the pro-Beijing *China Daily*. Three days of protest took place after Zhang Zhongfu, 34, a migrant worker from Sichuan province in the southwest, was attacked by police when he went to a government office to register for a temporary residence card.

“The government employees told me that I could not be registered with-
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U.S. government begins first military trial in Guantánamo

BY DOUG NELSON

Washington's first military tribunal since World War II opened July 21 at the U.S. naval base in Guantánamo, Cuba. The military court set up there by Congress in 2006 is one of the fronts in the government's chipping away at constitutional rights and protections under the pretext of its "war on terror."

On trial is Salim Ahmed Hamdan, a Yemeni who says he was a driver for Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan. The prosecution is seeking a life prison term for "conspiracy" and for providing material support to "terrorism." Hamdan has pled not guilty.

The Guantánamo tribunal judge and "jury" are military personnel appointed by the Pentagon. The prosecution can use hearsay and secret evidence. Statements obtained through beatings, threats, and some forms of torture are permissible. Defendants are also denied the right to see and challenge secret evidence used against them.

Hamdan's fate will be decided by a panel of six colonels and lieutenant colonels. Even if Hamdan is found innocent it would not change his status as an "illegal enemy combatant" or set him free.

In the opening days of the trial, jurors were provided secret evidence in red envelopes. An FBI agent testified that Guantánamo was the only place he was not required to tell those he interrogated that they had the right not to give self-incriminating statements. The identity of another witness who had interrogated Hamdan was concealed.

Hamdan was picked up by Afghan forces at a roadblock in southern Afghanistan in 2001 while driving a car that allegedly contained surface-to-air

missiles. He was turned over to the U.S. military authorities in Afghanistan, who transferred him to Guantánamo in early 2002.

In U.S. custody Hamdan says he was subject to beatings, sexual humiliation, long-term isolation, and sleep deprivation. His case has been at the center of legal controversies surrounding the establishment of the military tribunals.

He was first charged and brought before a military commission in August 2004. The trial was halted by decision of a U.S. federal court in Washington, D.C., which ruled the military commissions established by President George Bush in 2001 to be illegal. The case went to the Supreme Court, which in July 2006 upheld the decision.

Shortly following that Supreme Court decision, Congress enacted the Military Commissions Act, establishing the current military court system in Guantánamo. Hamdan legally challenged the new courts as unconstitutional, which the Supreme Court rejected.

In December 2007, Hamdan was declared an "unlawful enemy combatant" by the military judge, Navy Capt. Keith Allred, and was again brought before the military court. During pretrial hearings in April, the former chief prosecutor at Guantánamo, Col. Morris Davis, testified on Hamdan's behalf, criticizing the tribunal system for a relying on evidence extracted through torture.

The Supreme Court ruled June 12 that Guantánamo inmates have the constitutional right to challenge their detentions, which could force the Pentagon to provide some legal basis for the indefinite incarcerations. Hamdan was one of about 200 prisoners who have filed



Reuters

Courtroom sketch shows defendant Salim Hamdan, sitting with his defense at far left July 23, the third day of his military trial. The tribunal takes place at the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, where Hamdan has been held prisoner for the last six years.

habeas corpus petitions over the years. The decision opened the door for these to be heard in federal court.

The day the Hamdan trial opened, Attorney General Michael Mukasey announced the administration's intention to bring a proposal before Congress to review the Supreme Court's June 12 decision, which would stall the courts in

hearing the petitions. The proposal includes preventing the defendants from entering the United States to appear before a federal court in person.

Some 260 prisoners remain in Guantánamo, about 20 of whom have been charged and face trial by military commission. The Pentagon plans to try between 60 and 80.

Local cops and others drafted as 'terrorism' snoops in Colorado

BY SETH GALINSKY

There are 181 "Terrorism Liaison Officers" operating now in Colorado, according to the *Denver Post*, including cops, firefighters, utility workers, and supervisors on the railroad and at other businesses.

California, Arizona, Florida, Illinois, Tennessee, Wisconsin, and Washington, D.C., are also participating in the program, which is promoted and partially financed by the Department of Homeland Security.

Among the "suspicious activities" these officers report: taking photos "with no apparent aesthetic value"; drawing diagrams or taking notes on building plans; abandoning a vehicle in front of a government building, airport, or sports venue; purchasing a large amount of certain materials, such as pool chemicals or cell phones; and engaging in "pre-operational surveillance" such as using binoculars.

The information the snoops gather is turned over to 58 "fusion centers"

across the country. The command centers have been promoted by the Department of Homeland Security in close collaboration with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to put local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies under one roof to share "antiterrorism" intelligence.

On January 22, Las Vegas inaugurated its Southern Nevada Counter-Terrorism Center, as part of the program. The 24,000-square-foot office complex near McCarran International Airport already hosts 60 cops from nearly a dozen agencies.

A key component of the spy plan is to involve fire departments and emergency medical services agencies in the operation.

Jack Tomarchio, deputy undersecretary for intelligence and analysis, told Congress April 17 that the Department of Homeland Security is working to "develop relationships" with fusion centers in Australia and Japan to "share best practices."

THE MILITANT

Resist gov't attacks on workers rights!

The 'Militant' keeps it readers informed on the government's erosion of workers rights and legal protections defined in the U.S. Constitution. Working people need to fight to defend the political space to organize resistance to the bosses' attacks on our wages and working conditions.

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AP/ Laura Rauch

A transit security guard checks the bag of a passenger in Boston in 2004.

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Socialist candidate meets with workers fighting deportations

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

POSTVILLE, Iowa—"We were very happy with the march. It showed we are not alone," said Roselia Ramírez, who was arrested in the May 12 immigration raid at the Agriprocessors meatpacking plant. Fifteen hundred people marched here July 27 to oppose the raid and support the nearly 400 workers arrested (see story on front page).

Ramírez, along with others who used to work for Agriprocessors, invited Róger Calero, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, to visit them the day after the march. Originally from Mexico, Ramírez is one of 45 workers arrested in the raid and later released on "humanitarian" grounds to care for her children. She is forced to wear an electronic monitoring ankle bracelet. Only three of the 45 workers have been given court dates, she said.

"We came here to work," said Ramírez. "It's what we have always done, and now the government doesn't let us work, and instead we are living on charity from the church and help from other people."

'A powerful example'

Calero, who marched in the July 27 protest, said the demonstration set a "powerful example of the kind of response needed to answer the attacks on workers rights and to press our demand for legalization of undocumented immigrants."

Immigrant and U.S.-born workers are going through experiences together in meatpacking plants in the region, using their unions to fight or organizing to get a union where there isn't one, he added. Calero said the fight at Agriprocessors is part of a broader resistance to the meatpacking bosses in the upper Midwest. The socialist candidate pointed to the successful fight at Dakota Premium Foods in South St. Paul, Minnesota, where workers organized in United Food and Commercial Workers Local 789 successfully fought off an attempt by the bosses to bust the union earlier this

year.

Several workers described the spontaneous walkout workers carried out at Agriprocessors in 2007 against the company's use of Social Security "no-match" letters. Adrian, who was working there at the time, said a good number of workers were interested in joining the union but many were intimidated by the threat of being fired.

Normally a two-shift operation, Agriprocessors is barely running one shift now. The plant employed 900 workers, the vast majority from Guatemala and Mexico. In the May 12 raid, Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents arrested almost the entire first shift of 400; most of the remaining Latino workers never returned.

As a result, many workers are finding it difficult to get jobs. With Agriprocessors the main employer in the region, some travel more than an hour by car to work in construction.

Bernardino, who was fired from Agriprocessors for allegedly not having the right documents after working there for several years, said local police have been harassing immigrant workers when they travel for jobs. "My cousin, who works in a nearby town, was picked up by the police. He's been in jail for 22 days now with no charges," he said.

Another worker, Jorge, told Calero he was fired the day before the raid for lack of proper work documents. His wife, who was working when the raid happened and was seven months pregnant at the time,

hid in the plant for 12 hours. More than a dozen other workers did the same. Several who hid in the freezer ended up with frostbite.

Calero passed out campaign literature and three workers picked up subscriptions to the *Militant* so they could follow the socialist campaign and developments in the fight for legalization.

Somali workers at plant

As you approach the Agriprocessors plant here, there are several "Hiring Now" signs. In a parking lot dozens of workers, the majority of them from Somalia, were waiting to be hired when Calero and a supporter stopped to talk. According to one Somali worker who just started working, there are about 200 Somalis now employed at Agriprocessors, many of them experienced meatpackers who previously worked in beef slaughterhouses in Kansas and Nebraska.

The Somali workers have rented a space in downtown Postville, which will serve as a community center and restaurant. Calero handed out campaign brochures and spoke to

about a dozen of the workers gathered there.

Some of them were from Minneapolis and had supported the fight by Omar Jamal, a Somali activist who was threatened with deportation in 2003, at the same time that Calero was fighting his own deportation case. Calero explained how his defense campaign gave support to Jamal and other Somalis threatened with deportation and government harassment.

Agriprocessors promised the Somali workers \$12-an-hour jobs and one month of free rent to work at the plant. As with other workers the company recruited, the Somalis are being paid considerably less than \$12 and are not happy about it. A few of them talked about their experiences at other plants, including when Somali workers walked out of the Swift plant in Grand Island, Nebraska, in 2007 to protest company denial of prayer breaks.

During the visit, the Somali workers got a subscription to the *Militant* for their center and picked up several Pathfinder titles. They invited the socialist candidate to come back.



Militant/Frank Forrestal

SWP presidential candidate Róger Calero meets with former Agriprocessors workers in Postville, Iowa, who participated in the July 27 demonstration protesting the immigration raid that happened there May 12.

Iowa marchers say: 'No more raids!'

Continued from front page

led by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents was the largest immigration raid of a single plant in U.S. history. Close to 400 workers were detained, with 302 charged with criminal offenses. The use of mass criminal charges represents a deepening assault on the rights of undocumented workers.

The march and rally was called by St. Bridget's Catholic Church in Postville and Jewish organizations in Chicago and St. Paul, Minnesota. Busloads of protesters came from Chicago, Minneapolis, and Madison, Wisconsin. Six vanloads drove up from Des Moines, Iowa, while many others came from other parts of the state.

Roselina Ramírez, who was picked up in the raid and later released pending a deportation hearing, worked a knife job cutting out chicken breasts for three years. She said there were many injuries and abuses by the Agriprocessors bosses. She never made more than \$7.25 an hour. Many workers were trying to improve their conditions by union-

izing but the company intimidated workers by threatening to fire them, said Ramírez.

Juanita López, 20, has not talked to her mother, one of those arrested, since the day of the raid. "They make it very difficult for us to communicate with her on the phone," said López. Her mother is being held in Leavenworth, Kansas. López said a large group of minors worked in the plant. According to a fact book distributed by St. Bridget's to the press, at least 17 minors ranging from 14 to 17 years old were detained and later released.

Farm activist Randy Jasper, whose farm is about one hour from Postville, said this was the first time he had marched against deportations. "I was impressed by the number of people that came to the protest from nearby towns," said Jasper. Many of the bystanders waved in support, while others seemed neutral, he said.

Near St. Bridget's, where the protest began, more than 100 counter-protesters demonstrated in support of the ICE raid. While carrying signs

that read "Deport Illegals," "Secure U.S. Borders," and "American Workers in American Jobs," they chanted patriotic and anti-immigrant slogans such as "USA, USA, USA" and "More raids, more raids." The rightist protest was organized by the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), a national anti-immigrant outfit.

"Our aim is to demonstrate public support for vigorous prosecution of employers who, in addition to violating laws against hiring illegal aliens, engage in other sorts of reprehensible and criminal activities," said a July 24 FAIR press release. "Those who exploit illegal labor and impose burdens on American taxpayers should be sent to prison."

Jennifer Powell and her sister Lisa LaBrec, both in their early twenties, are U.S.-born workers who joined the protest. "I opposed the raids here when they happened. Immigrants should have the same rights as us," said Powell, whose husband is from Mexico. LaBrec added, "I am against raids wherever they take place, not just in Postville."

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

FLORIDA

Miami

The Class Struggle in Colombia Today: The Debate on Long-term Guerrilla Strategy, Hostages, and the Lessons of the Cuban Revolution. Speaker: Margaret Trowe, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress, Dist. 17. Fri., Aug. 8. Dinner, 7 p.m.; program, 8 p.m. Donation: \$5 dinner, \$5 program. 8365 NE 2nd Ave #206. Tel: (305) 756-4436.

CALENDAR

VIRGINIA

Alexandria

Rally to Support Florida Professor Sami al-Arian. Wed., Aug. 13. 8 a.m. *Albert V. Bryan Courthouse, 401 Courthouse Sq. For information on buses from Tampa, Florida, send e-mail to Imprice@yahoo.com.*

Obama takes distance from affirmative action

BY SETH GALINSKY

In recent speeches Democratic Party presidential candidate Barack Obama has distanced himself from affirmative action while calling for shifting more responsibility for social welfare from the government to individual Black families and to churches.

Obama said July 27 that he supports affirmative action “when properly structured” so that it is not just a quota system. Black children from wealthy homes should not be given greater consideration, he said, than “a poor white kid who has struggled more.”

“If you’ve got 50 percent of African-American or Latino kids dropping out of high school, it doesn’t really matter what you do in terms of affirmative action. Those kids are not getting into college,” Obama said.

The position that affirmative action is not key to addressing race discrimination and that it harms working people who are white is not a new stance for Obama. In his 2006 book *Audacity of Hope* he uses similar language and says that these programs must move beyond “race and test scores.”

Republican John McCain also spoke on affirmative action July 27, publicly backing an Arizona ballot initiative that would ban all affirmative action by the state government. At a press conference later in the day, Obama criticized McCain.

Two weeks earlier, Obama gave a Father’s Day speech at one of Chicago’s largest Black churches saying the biggest problem facing Blacks is the breakdown of the Black family not the capitalist economic crisis, institutionalized racism, or government inaction.

“Too many fathers are MIA, too many fathers are AWOL,” the Democratic contender said. “They have abandoned their responsibilities, acting like boys instead of men. And the foundations of our families are weaker because of it.” Obama told the audience to stop sitting “in the house watching SportsCenter” and instead help their children “with their homework.”

Mortgage company bailout

Continued from front page

payments. *USA Today* reported that Lehman Brothers analyst Bruce Harting wrote in a note to clients that any threat of a failure of the mortgage companies “could trigger a meltdown in credit markets that would make the movements in credit markets that we’ve seen over the last year look like a modest hiccup.”

Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac hold or back more than \$5 trillion of mortgage debts in the United States. Central banks around the world hold billions in the mortgage companies’ debt securities. “Needless to say, the impact of a dislocation of that order could cause serious harm to the global economy,” Harting wrote.

The housing law provides \$300 billion to the Federal Housing Administration to help banks and other lending institutions refinance an estimated

“Yes, we need more cops on the street. Yes, we need fewer guns in the hands of people who shouldn’t have them. Yes, we need more money for our schools,” he said. “But we also need families to raise our children” and the children of single women “need another parent . . . That’s what keeps the foundation of our country strong.”

Controversy over Obama’s views drew national attention when comments by Jesse Jackson were picked up on a Fox News microphone that Jackson thought was turned off. “Barack’s been talking down to Black people,” Jackson said. Explaining his comments later, Jackson said that Obama should be highlighting unemployment, the mortgage crisis, and the number of Blacks in prison, and “deal with the collective moral responsibility of government, and the public policy which would be a corrective action for the lack of good choices.”

On July 1 Obama said he was in favor of government funding and promotion of “faith-based” organizations to provide charity and social services in place of government agencies. The program had its start under the William Clinton administration; it was expanded and became controversial under President George W. Bush. The main problem with Bush’s Faith-Based and Community Initiatives office, Obama said, was that it “never fulfilled its promise.” To do so he will give the office a cabinet-level seat and make the initiative the moral center of his administration.

He claimed that shifting money from government agencies and giving it to religious groups will not violate the constitutional separation of church and state because, unlike Bush, Obama will not allow those receiving funds to proselytize the people they help or discriminate in hiring.

Black conservative columnist Shelby Steele in a July 22 *Wall Street Journal* column complained that “Mr. Obama’s trick is to take politics off the table by moving so politically close to his opponent [McCain] that only culture is left to separate them.”

400,000 home loans at lower rates insured by the FHA.

This is a fraction of the loans that are in trouble. Nationwide, 739,714 homes received foreclosure-related notices in the second quarter, more than twice as many as in the same quarter last year. One of the bill’s main sponsors, Senator Christopher Dodd, cited statistics that 8,500 homes a day are foreclosed.

Last December the White House and major lending institutions announced a “Hope Now Alliance” to help homeowners trapped by high-interest subprime mortgages. In May the alliance refinanced 70,000 mortgages. RealtyTrac, a company that keeps data on mortgage defaults, said that during the same month there were 261,000 foreclosure notices filed. *Moodys Economy.com*’s chief economist, Mark Zandi, estimates that 5.5 million loans will default by the end of 2009 and half will go into foreclosure.

N.Y. socialists celebrate



Militant/Eddie Beck

SWP vice presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy speaks at July 19 New York campaign rally, halfway through ballot drive.

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candidate for U.S. Congress in the 3rd District.

In Vermont, campaigners are petitioning in Burlington and Montpelier August 2–3, shooting to gather 1,500 signatures for the SWP presidential ticket.

Petitioning will also take place later this month in Minnesota, and campaigners will shortly be filing for ballot status in Louisiana and Florida.

A highlight of the New York ballot drive was the participation of workers and youth who joined the campaign as it got under way.

Ramón Fernández, a construction worker, subscribed to the *Militant* newspaper at the May 1 demonstration for legalization of the undocumented. He decided to join the campaigning effort after attending a socialist campaign rally July 19.

“People were interested in the candidates,” he said of his experience campaigning in the Bronx. “They listened when I told them that Róger Calero and Alyson Kennedy were for the working class.”

Gezel Rodríguez, a student, met the socialists when they were first out petitioning. She volunteered to join the drive and the campaigning among her friends netted 31 signatures.

Alyson Kennedy and supporters campaigned in Queens July 27 with a sign that said “Workers need a labor party.” That caught the attention of Renee Richardson, a bus driver who is Black.

Richardson asked the socialists what they were doing. Kennedy told her about the campaign, and explained that she and Calero call for using union power to defend workers’ rights. Kennedy described an organizing drive she was part of at the Co-Op coal mine in Utah, and the leading role immigrant workers played

in that fight. Kennedy said the SWP campaign demands the immediate legalization of all undocumented workers.

Richardson said that she had just been part of an attempt to get a union where she works because “we needed better benefits, job security, and better health care.” She gladly signed the petition.

David Jones, a plumber from Brooklyn, was happy to see the socialists out of the streets. “Cuba is not as bad as they make it out to sound,” he said. “I know what Maurice Bishop and Fidel Castro did.”

Maurice Bishop led the 1979 revolution on the Caribbean island of Grenada that established a workers and farmers government. The SWP was a firm supporter of that revolution, as it is of the Cuban Revolution.

Get the Socialist Workers Campaign on the Ballot!

STATE	STATUS
NEW YORK	PETITIONING COMPLETED!
NEW JERSEY	✓ ON THE BALLOT!
WASHINGTON	✓ ON THE BALLOT!
VERMONT	CURRENTLY PETITIONING
MINNESOTA	COMING SOON
LOUISIANA	COMING SOON
FLORIDA	COMING SOON
DELAWARE	✓ ON THE BALLOT!
COLORADO	✓ ON THE BALLOT!
IOWA	CURRENTLY PETITIONING

ON THE PICKET LINE

Quebec hotel workers go on strike

MONTREAL—Hyatt Regency hotel workers here walked off the job July 20 protesting harassment of the chambermaids. The 280 workers are members of the Confederation of National Trade Unions and are among the 5,000 hotel workers who are fighting for a new three-year collective agreement. Lessening the workload for the chambermaids is one of the central demands.

Workers from as many as 40 hotels throughout Quebec are part of this fight, which also includes demands for salary increases and an end to hotel contracts with agencies where workers are paid less and have no union protection. There have been ongoing work stoppages and rallies to back their demands. Workers at the Queen Elizabeth hotel in downtown Montreal stopped work one Friday to host a rally in the lobby that gathered 800 workers from hotels in the area.

Lise Ouellet, a chef at the Hyatt Regency, told the *Militant* that tensions were high, so when management “intimidated the young women who clean the rooms, the union charged harassment and coworkers were happy to walk out in support.” Myriam Romero, a member of the negotiating committee,

Three arrested in beating death of immigrant in Pennsylvania

BY JANET POST

PHILADELPHIA—Three teenage youths have been arrested and charged with the fatal beating of Luis Ramírez, a 25-year-old worker originally from Mexico. Ramírez died from severe head injuries July 14 after he was attacked in the town of Shenandoah, Pennsylvania, two days earlier.

Two of the suspects, ages 16 and 17, were charged as adults with homicide, the third with aggravated assault. All three face charges of ethnic intimidation.

Ramírez lived in the United States for six years and worked in a dehydrated potato products factory and in the fields picking strawberries and cherries.

Crystal Dillman, the 24-year-old fiancée of Ramírez, told the *Militant* that the youths shouted racist slurs during the attack. Ramírez called friends for help. When the cops arrived they handcuffed one of his friends and searched another, said Dillman.

Shenandoah is located in the anthracite coal region 17 miles south of Hazleton, where an anti-immigrant ordinance was passed in 2006 by the city council and declared unconstitutional in 2007. The Shenandoah borough council passed an ordinance in 2006 making English the official language.

was part of the rally at the Queen Elizabeth hotel. “They [management] didn’t expect it. They didn’t see it coming and it was very good!” she told the *Militant*.

Workers at several of the major hotels in Toronto are fighting for new contracts and are waging short strikes around similar demands.

—Annette Kouri

Poultry workers in Ohio walk out over low wages

Poultry workers at Case Farms in Winesburg, Ohio, struck the plant July 18 after rejecting a company offer of a measly 15-cent raise. The vote was 294–12.

The workers average about \$8.10 an hour, according to their union, Local 880 of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW). Chicken plants nearby pay \$2 to \$3 more an hour.



UNITE HERE Canada

Hotel workers rallying for better working conditions and higher wages in Toronto

In contract negotiations the union was demanding raises of up to \$2.50 an hour. Case Farms fired two of the union negotiators, which helped precipitate

the strike.

The workers voted to be represented by the UFCW in May 2007.

—Cindy Jaquith

Canada government issues apology for schools designed to ‘drive the Indian out of the child’

BY ANNETTE KOURI AND JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL—From the 1870s to 1996, the federal government of Canada forced Native children to attend “Indian residential schools” designed to strip them of their national identity and their dignity.

This past June, 12 years after the hated institutions had been shut down, Prime Minister Stephen Harper finally issued a historic apology for the policy.

During the period of the residential schools more than 150,000 Native children were forcibly taken from their homes and placed in schools operated in collaboration with the Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, and United churches. Harper acknowledged that the institutions were openly designed to “kill the Indian in the child.”

The schools gave religious, agricultural, and domestic instruction. Students were forbidden to speak their maternal languages. Thousands died from tuberculosis due to overcrowding, poor sanitation, and a lack of medical care; many ended up in unmarked graves. Thousands more suffered sexual and other abuse at the hands of school staff.

The formal apology is part of a pack-

age that includes a \$2 billion class-action settlement with survivors that went into effect last September and an Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission launched June 1 that will travel throughout the country over the next five years.

The backdrop to Ottawa’s apology is the increased resistance by Native people to the conditions imposed on them by Canada’s capitalist rulers, and the long-term trend toward increased integration of Native people into the working class.

At almost 1.2 million, according to the 2006 census, Native people comprise 3.7 percent of Canada’s total population. About 958,000 are North American Indian, 266,000 are Métis (mixed French and Native ancestry), and 51,000 are Inuit who live in the far north.

Twenty-two percent of Native people live on reservations administered by the Department of Indian Affairs. Unemployment among Native people on many reservations is 50 percent. Overall Native unemployment is about 19 percent, compared to 7.4 percent for other Canada residents. More than 50 percent of aboriginal peoples live in urban areas.

The percentage of Native people who

work in construction—8.2 percent—is higher than that for construction workers in the whole population, which stands at 5.6 percent. The same holds for mining where 2.3 percent of Natives work, compared to 1.1 percent of other workers.

The median income for Native people is \$14,000 compared to \$23,000 for others. One in four Native children live in poverty; the figure is one in six for the rest of the population.

The day after the apology the editors of the *Globe and Mail*, Canada’s major English-language national daily, expressed concern over “raised expectations.” While paying lip service to the need to eliminate “Third World living conditions” and “the settlement of unresolved land claims,” the *Globe* editors called on Native people to avoid “provocations such as illegal occupations and roadblocks”—a reference to a series of actions by Native people across the country demanding action on more than 800 outstanding land claims.

On June 10, federal cops shot and killed 21-year old Chase McKay Standingready on the White Bear First Nation reserve in Saskatchewan after intervening in what they said was a domestic dispute.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



August 5, 1983

PITTSBURGH—“The reason we called this meeting is we don’t want another war like Vietnam, we want jobs.” This was how Ron Weisen opened a July 22 “Labor/Community Speak-out, Jobs Not War! No U.S. Intervention in Central America!”

The close to 200 people who packed the meeting greeted his statement with sustained applause. Weisen, president of United Steelworkers (USWA) Local 1397 at U.S. Steel’s Homestead Works, chaired the important labor meeting which attracted steelworkers, coal miners, and electrical workers, as well as officials of some local unions like the postal workers and shipbuilders.



August 4, 1958

NEW YORK—The petition drive to place the United Independent Socialist Ticket on the ballot for the New York State elections in November began yesterday.

A petition workers’ rally held at Adelphi Hall on July 24 kicked off the signature drive. Henry Abrams chaired the gathering of approximately 175 people. He voiced the opinion of everyone present when he said that “Ours will be the only ticket to express the growing sentiment for peace in the coming election.”

Richard Garza, in charge of the “up-state” campaign, reported that “The response from the people in the up-state counties has been heartwarming.”



August 4, 1933

TORONTO—No action on the part of workers in Canada since the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919 carries such tremendous significance as the mass parade and demonstration against Fascism which took place in Toronto on July 11th. For the first time in 15 years working class solidarity found expression in a monster parade involving about 10,000 workers belonging to trade unions and political organizations.

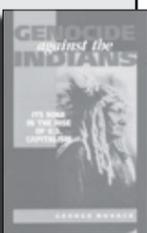
When 3 o’clock came workers were pouring into the park by the hundreds, whole factories marching down together or hurrying to the assembly point by street-car. In the front ranks were the workers of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, some 1,400, followed by the ILGWU, the Industrial unions and other unions affiliated.

Genocide Against the Indians

by George Novack

How was the campaign of genocide against the Indians rooted in the expansion of capitalism?

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Capitalist politicians debate 'Don't ask, don't tell'

BY BEN JOYCE

Growing numbers in the U.S. ruling class are considering repeal of the "Don't ask, don't tell" policy, which prohibits people who are openly gay from serving in the military. A House Armed Services subcommittee held a hearing July 23 where this question was taken up by opponents and supporters of the policy.

The debate over "Don't ask, don't tell" among capitalist politicians is not about whether the policy discriminates against homosexuals, but rather what best serves the needs of the U.S. military. In February 2007, a bill titled "Military Readiness Enhancement Act" was introduced into Congress, providing for the repeal of "Don't ask, don't tell."

President William Clinton approved "Don't ask, don't tell" in 1993, putting it forward as an advance for gay rights. Prior to that, there was a blanket ban on homosexuals in the military. Under "Don't ask, don't tell," gays may serve in the armed forces but they are not allowed to discuss their homosexuality, nor are their peers or officers allowed to inquire. Soldiers face discharge if they in any way engage in homosexual "conduct," which includes identifying oneself as a homosexual. Since the policy went into effect, some 12,000 people have been discharged from the military for violating it.

Democratic candidate Barack Obama has expressed support for the repeal of "Don't ask, don't tell." In an interview with the *Advocate* he said, "There's increasing recognition in the armed forces

that this is a counterproductive strategy—ya know, we're spending large sums of money to kick highly qualified gays or lesbians out of our military, some of whom possess specialties like Arab-language capabilities that we desperately need. That doesn't make us more safe, and what I want are members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who are making decisions based on what strengthens our military and what is going to make us safer, not ideology."

"Obviously we listen to our commanders on the ground," Republican candidate John McCain said in an interview with *Newsweek*. "They say that 'Don't ask, don't tell' is working, so unless they recommend otherwise I'm

certainly going to support their recommendations."

Harvard University president Drew Faust voiced opposition to the policy at this year's commissioning ceremony for Harvard students in the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC). Prior to the June 4 event, she had announced she would criticize "Don't ask, don't tell" in the course of her speech. After conservatives attacked her intentions, she confined herself to a veiled reference.

Faust praised the new officers as "part of a glorious and long tradition of military service at Harvard."

"I wish that there were more of you," she said. "I believe that every Harvard student should have the opportunity to

serve in the military."

Faust pointed out that Harvard was one of the first campuses to offer an ROTC program, going back to when it was first established during World War I under the Woodrow Wilson administration's National Defense Act.

ROTC was banned at Harvard and many other colleges in the 1960s during the Vietnam War, when massive antiwar mobilizations drove them off campus. Harvard students who join today are not allowed to train at the school, but instead travel to nearby MIT. In 1995 the Harvard faculty voted to continue the ban and cut all university funding for ROTC, in a protest of the "Don't ask, don't tell" policy.

Imprisoned Palestinian faces another trial

BY MAGGIE TROWE

MIAMI—Supporters of jailed Florida professor Sami al-Arian will rally August 13 in front of the Alexandria, Virginia, courthouse where al-Arian's latest trial will begin. Although a judge ordered his release on bail while awaiting trial, immigration authorities moved him from Alexandria to the Pamunkey Regional Jail, 90 miles from his family and attorney, and are holding him in solitary confinement on 23-hour lockdown.

In 2003 al-Arian, a tenured University of South Florida professor and a supporter of the Palestinian national liberation struggle, was charged with supporting terrorism. In spite of the gov-

ernment's efforts to prevent the defense from viewing much of the classified evidence against him, in 2005 a jury found al-Arian not guilty of the main charges. In a plea agreement he pled guilty to "conspiracy to provide services" to Palestinian Islamic Jihad in return for immunity from further prosecution and an agreement that he be deported after serving what remained of a 57-month sentence.

In the latest government attack, al-Arian is charged with criminal contempt for refusing to cooperate with a grand jury investigating Muslim organizations in Virginia. Al-Arian has been in prison for more than five years, during which

time he has been put in the "hole"—solitary confinement—on numerous occasions. He has carried out three hunger strikes.

He completed serving all his time in April. At a pretrial hearing for the contempt charges, Judge Leonie Brinkema granted al-Arian bail. However, he is now being held in detention by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) pending deportation. In a catch-22 move, however, the government is stalling on deportation proceedings, maintaining that no country will accept al-Arian, in spite of the fact that his attorney submitted travel documents issued by the Egyptian government before the latest indictment.

In the pretrial hearing Brinkema said she was getting "strange signals" from the prosecution, and that the government should not be found to have obstructed efforts of another government to accept al-Arian. She also reminded the state that the plea agreement requiring expeditious deportation remains in effect.

A film about the case, *USA vs al-Arian*, is being shown around the country. To schedule a screening, contact Mel Underbakke, (813) 215-3403 or send an e-mail to melvau@earthlink.net.

The August 13 courthouse protest will take place at 8:00 a.m. in front of the Albert V. Bryan Courthouse, 401 Courthouse Square, Alexandria, Virginia.

Chinese migrant workers, farmers protest

Continued from front page

out my identification card. I quarreled with them and they hit me on the head," Zhang said. He returned to the office the next day. When cops came to arrest him, residents surrounded them. Three police were injured and 23 migrant workers arrested during the melee.

Hundreds returned the next two days to protest in front of the police station in Kanmen, demanding the release of those arrested.

In mid-July the Chinese government announced the formation of the Department of Migrant Workers' Affairs to "achieve social harmony" and arrange for "large-scale flow of laborers."

Earthquake protests

Parents and relatives of children killed during the May 12 earthquake continue

to press the government to admit the deaths were caused by shoddy school construction. Riot police dispersed a crowd of hundreds July 15 in Mianzhu in Sichuan province. Eight schools in Mianzhu collapsed during the quake. In some towns, local officials offered \$8,800 to parents who agreed to keep quiet in the future.

More than a hundred people battled police in south China's Guangdong province July 17 after a motorcycle driver died from injuries cops say were sustained in a traffic accident, but relatives say were the result of a beating by security guards.

Rubber farmers demonstrate

On July 15, 500 people stopped police from arresting several people involved in a dispute between rubber

farmers and the management at a rubber plant in Menglian county, Yunnan province, which borders Laos, Vietnam, and Myanmar. Two farmers were killed when cops fired on the demonstration.

There are 334,000 acres of rubber trees in Yunnan, producing about 43 percent of China's natural rubber. China is now the top tire maker and exporter in the world. Puer City official Ji Youngjin told a press conference the dispute arose over distribution of profits, access to forested land, and ownership of the plantation. Rubber prices have almost tripled over the last decade to about \$2,800 per ton.

Local government officials accepted half of the eight demands raised by the farmers, including agreeing to adjust profit distribution.

In Central Hubei province, a woman protesting forced evacuations to make way for the Three Gorges Dam, which sits astride the Yangtze River, was dragged from the rising water by police in late July while protesting. The project has displaced 1.4 million people so far as the level of the water in the reservoir rises. The government admits that 320,000 of those displaced live in "abject poverty."

The Communist Party of China (CPC) issued two new rules July 24 because of "the top leadership's growing concern over social unrest," reports *China Daily*. The rules say local government and CPC officials can be removed from their posts or expelled from the party for "poor handling of public grievances" or "heavy-handed tactics."



Reuters

Some 40 Chinese migrant workers protest outside a job site in Wuhan, Hubei province, May 8 to demand their back wages be paid.

For further reading...

Leon Trotsky on China

The articles and letters in this collection record Leon Trotsky's fight to reverse the disastrous course of Joseph Stalin in subordinating the Chinese Communist Party to the Kuomintang during the 1925-27 revolutionary upsurge, leading to a bloody defeat.

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N.Y. meeting celebrates 55 years of Cuba's revolutionary struggle

BY TOM BAUMANN

NEW YORK—Nearly 150 people attended a July 26 event here to celebrate the 55th anniversary of the July 26, 1953, attack on the Moncada garrison in Santiago de Cuba led by Fidel Castro. That action marked the opening of the revolutionary struggle by workers and peasants in Cuba that led to the overthrow of the U.S.-backed dictatorship less than six years later, opening the door to the first socialist revolution in the Americas.

The program here was chaired by Ben Ramos of the Popular Education Project to Free the Cuban Five and Marianna Lamberti of Casa de las Américas. She is the granddaughter of Luis Miranda, longtime defender of the Cuban Revolution and president of Casa until his death last year. Ulises Antón opened the program with a statement on behalf of Casa.

One theme of the meeting was the fight to free Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, René González, Fernando González, and Antonio Guerrero, five Cuban revolutionaries in U.S. prisons. The Cuban Five,

as they are known, were arrested in 1998 on frame-up conspiracy charges. They had been keeping tabs on rightist groups in Florida planning violent attacks on the people of Cuba.

Sally O'Brien, coproducer of the new documentary *Against Silence in Our Own Voices: Families of the Five Speak Out*, introduced her film, which interviews the wives and mothers of the five prisoners.

Puerto Rican activist Miguel Meléndez read greetings from former U.S. political prisoner Dylcia Pagán, who led a delegation of Puerto Rican independence fighters to Cuba earlier this year. In Cuba they met with families of the Cuban Five and pledged their support in the fight to free them.

"Our revolution is proof that a better world is possible," said keynote speaker Ileana Núñez, Cuba's deputy ambassador to the United Nations. Núñez said that despite the hardships the U.S. embargo on trade with Cuba imposes, the infant mortality rate on the island is the lowest it has ever been and literacy stands at an all-time high of 99.6 percent.

Labor Department: safety agency and bosses responsible for fatal mine collapse last year

BY DOUG NELSON

The Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) was complicit with the mine bosses in the fatal collapse at the Crandall Canyon mine in Utah nearly one year ago, according to a July 24 report from the U.S. Labor Department.

MSHA released its investigative report the same day that the report by the Labor Department came out. The safety agency is highly critical of the mine's operator, Genwall Resources Inc., while covering up its own role in allowing the company to put workers lives at great risk.

The collapse, which occurred last August, killed six miners. Three others died and six were injured in the rescue operation that followed.

"The August 6 collapse was not a 'natural' earthquake," but the result of a "flawed" mine plan that was "destined to fail," said the MSHA report. The company used a dangerous mining method in which coal is extracted from pillars that hold up the roof. Although MSHA approved this method, the agency said the company took too much coal from the pillars and mined coal from the floor, increasing the pressure on remaining pillars.

The safety agency report faults the company for failing to accurately and in a timely manner report three incidents in which coal burst from pillars under increasing pressure—evidence of growing instability caused by the mining. Two bursts occurred five months before the collapse, one severe enough to cause the company to abandon a section of the mine. A third happened three days before the collapse. MSHA says the com-

pany is also at fault for not revising its plans or mining methods following the coal bursts.

As a result of its findings the safety agency fined Genwall, a subsidiary of Murray Energy Corp., \$1.6 million for safety violations resulting in the death of the six miners. This is the highest fine levied by MSHA in its history.

MSHA also fined the company's mining engineer consultant, Agapito Associates Inc., \$220,000 for its inaccurate "analysis" of the mine that was used by Genwall to justify part of its plan.

Widespread outrage at Genwall's blatant disregard for workers' safety prompted Congress to press for an "independent review" by the Labor Department.

Utah coal boss countersues energy company

BY VED DOOKHUN

C.W. Mining Corp., which owns the Co-Op mine in Huntington, Utah, has filed a lawsuit against the Kansas City-based utility company Aquila Inc., claiming Aquila's actions forced the mine company into bankruptcy last fall.

Aquila won a settlement against C.W. Mining for almost \$25 million after the company failed to deliver about 1 million tons of coal in 2004–2005. It had agreed to supply 2.5 million tons of coal between 2003 and 2008. C.W. Mining delivered only 160,000 tons of coal from January 2004 until April 2005 when it broke the contract. The company claimed it was exempt from contractual agreement because of disrupted production due to a labor dispute at the mine.

The labor dispute was the three-

July 26 celebration held in Equatorial Guinea



Militant/Martin Koppel

MALABO, Equatorial Guinea, July 26—About 80 people attended an event here today to celebrate the anniversary of the launching of the struggle, on July 26, 1953, that led to the victory of the Cuban Revolution.

The celebration was hosted by the brigade of Cuban volunteer doctors, nurses, and medical technicians who are providing free, quality health care in cities and towns throughout this African country. Among the participants in the event were five Equatorial Guinean students who in September will be starting a six-year program to become doctors. They will be attending the medical school led by Cuban doctors in Bata, Equatorial Guinea.

The evening's program focused on the international campaign to demand the release of five Cuban revolutionaries jailed in U.S. prisons on frame-up charges. Several of the Guinean students presented biographical sketches of each of the five. The photo above shows one of the students, Fátima Patabobe, at the microphone. Guinean youth who graduated from the medical school have organized a committee here that sponsors educational activities on the campaign for the freedom of the five Cubans.

—MARTÍN KOPPEL

More than 41,000 Cuban volunteers are currently working in 96 countries as teachers, doctors, and other

aid workers.

"We are taking steps to defend the socialist revolution," Núñez emphasized during the discussion period, explaining that the media falsely counterposes the policies of President Raúl Castro to those of Fidel Castro, who retired from office earlier this year.

Other speakers at the event included Larry Hamm, chairperson of the People's Organization for Progress; Lucius Walker of Pastors for Peace; Monolo de los Santos of Iglesia San Romero de las Américas; and Althea Stevens, who participated in the 2007 Venceremos Brigade trip to Cuba.

Ike Nahem, of the July 26 Coalition, which sponsored the event, closed the program by inviting all participants to join the national march on Washington, D.C., September 13 to free the Cuban Five and to participate in a November national working conference on their defense.

According to the Labor Department, MSHA should never have approved the company's mine plan. The report faults the safety agency for: not conducting an adequate evaluation of the company's plans, ignoring inconsistencies in the plan, failing to adequately inspect the mine prior to and during operations, ignoring concerns that were noted by safety inspectors, and for allowing the company to continue its operations with no modifications following the massive coal burst in March.

In addition, the Labor Department cited 18 deficiencies in MSHA's rescue operations that increased the risks to those involved and could have contributed to the fatalities.

year struggle by miners at Co-Op to win recognition of the United Mine Workers (UMWA) as their union. It began in September 2003 when 75 miners walked off the job over the firing of a fellow miner. Workers there demanded to be represented by the UMWA, not the company union that existed at the mine.

Five entities, all owned by the Kingston family that runs C.W. Mining, filed the suit against Aquila. They were joined in the legal action by the International Association of United Workers union, the company union at the Co-Op mine. The suit asks for \$217 million in damages and claims Aquila has prevented the company from purchasing mining equipment needed to cut coal so it can meet its debts.

Aquila has been garnishing funds

from all known business entities owned by the Kingston family. It has taken \$275,000 from its Bank of Utah account, and prevented Kingston-owned Standard Industries Inc. from receiving \$2.7 million from the sale of the Co-Op mine. Standard Industries sold the mine in November to UtahAmerican Energy Inc., a subsidiary owned by Robert Murray.

Murray Energy's Genwall Resources, which operated the Crandall Canyon mine in the same area of Utah, was fined \$1.6 million July 24 by the Mine Safety and Health Administration (see article on this page). Citing violations it called "highly negligent" and showing reckless disregard for safety the report found the mine owner responsible for the deaths of six miners who were entombed when the mine collapsed last August.

Sharp economic shifts, insecurity, and class struggle

Below is an excerpt from *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, one of *Pathfinder's Books of the Month* in August. The book contains several discussions the Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky held with leaders of the Socialist Workers Party in 1938, heading into the founding conference of the Fourth International. Excerpted below is a discussion with Trotsky on how economic shifts in the capitalist crisis affect combative moods of the workers. Copyright ©1973, Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY LEON TROTSKY

Question: What influence can "prosperity," an economic rise of American capitalism in the next period, have upon our activity as based on the transitional program?

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

Trotsky: It is very difficult to answer because it is an equation with many unknown elements, magnitudes. The first question is if a conjunctural improvement is probable in the near future. It is very difficult to answer, especially for a person who does not follow the charts from day to day. As I see from the *New York Times*, the specialists are very un-



Customers line up outside an IndyMac Bank branch in Santa Monica, California, on July 14 in hopes of getting their money back after federal regulators took over the bank. It was the second largest bank failure in U.S. history.

certain about the question. In last Sunday's issue of the *New York Times*, the business index showed a very confused tendency. During the last week there was a loss, two weeks before a rise, and so on.

If you consider the general picture, we see that a new crisis has begun, showing an almost vertical line of decline up until January of this year; then the line becomes hesitant—a zigzag line, but with general declining tendency. But the decline during this year is undoubtedly slower than the decline during the nine months of the preceding year.

If we consider the preceding period, beginning with the slump of 1929, we see that the crisis lasted almost 3 1/2 years before the upturn began, with some smaller ups and downs, lasting 4 1/2 years—it was Roosevelt "prosperity." In this way the last cycle was of 8 years, 3 1/2 years of crisis and 4 1/2 years of relative "prosperity," 8 years being considered as a normal time for a capitalist cycle.

Now the new crisis began in August 1937, and in nine months has reached the point which was reached in the preceding crisis in 2 1/2 years. It is very difficult to make a prognosis now concerning the time, the point

of a new rise. If we consider the new slump from the point of its deepness, I repeat, the work of 2 1/2 years is completed by the crisis, yet it has not reached the lowest point of the preceding crisis. If we consider the new crisis from the point of view of time—nine years, or seven, eight years, it would be too early for a new upturn. . . .

To the first question, if such an upturn can be more favorable to the general perspective before our party, I believe we can answer with a categorical yes, that it would be more favorable for us. There cannot be any reason to believe that American capitalism can of itself in the next period become a sound, healthy capitalism, that it can absorb the 13 million unemployed. But the question is—if we formulate it in a very simple and arithmetical form—if in the next year or two years the industries absorb 4 million workers from the 13 million unemployed, that will leave 9 million. Would that be favorable from the point of view of the revolutionary movement? I believe we can answer with a categorical yes.

We have a situation in a country—a very revolutionary situation in a very conservative country—with a subjective backwardness on the part of the

mentality of the working class. In such a situation, economic pickups—sharp economic pickups, ups and downs—from a historical point of view have a secondary character, but in the immediate sense have a profound effect on the lives of millions of workers. Today they have a very great importance. Such shake-ups are of very great revolutionary importance. They shake off their conservativeness; they force them to seek an account of what is happening, what is the perspective. And every such shake-up pushes some stratum of the workers onto the revolutionary road.

More concretely, now the American workers are at an impasse—in a blind alley. The big movement, the CIO, has no immediate perspective, because it is not guided by a revolutionary party and the difficulties of the CIO are very great. From the other side, the revolutionary elements are too weak to be able to give to the movement a sharp turn to the political road. Imagine that during the next period 4 million workers enter the industries. It will not soften the social antagonisms—on the contrary. It will sharpen them. If the industries were capable of absorbing the 13 million or 11 million unemployed, then it would signify for a long period a softening of the class struggle; but it can only absorb a part, and the majority will remain unemployed. Every unemployed person sees that the employed have work. He will look for work and, not finding any, will enter into the unemployed movement. I believe in this period our slogan of the sliding scale can receive very great popularity; that is, that we ask for work for everybody under decent conditions—in a popular form: "We must find work for all, under decent conditions with decent salaries." The first period of a rise—economic rise—would be very favorable, especially for this slogan. I believe also that the other very important slogan of defense, workers' militia, etc., would also find favorable soil, a base, because through such a limited and uncertain rise—the capitalists become very anxious to have immediate profits, and they look with great hostility on the unions which disturb the possibility of a new rise in profits.

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Defend, extend affirmative action

Democratic presidential contender Barack Obama says that “affirmative action is not going to be the long-term solution to the problems of race in America.” White workers get short shrift with these programs, he implies. He goes as far as to state that affirmative action “doesn’t really matter.” Republican candidate John McCain openly opposes affirmative action.

Affirmative action programs address continuing institutionalized racism and sexism by giving preferential treatment in hiring, education, and housing to Blacks, other oppressed nationalities, and women. The racist inequalities confronting Blacks and other oppressed nationalities, like the sex inequalities women face, are constantly reinforced and reproduced by the capitalist job market. The bosses use race divisions as one of their main tools to keep the labor movement divided and weakened. Any measure that makes it harder for the employers to discriminate against part of the working class is an advance for the whole class.

Affirmative action programs are needed, not to make up for the past, but to deal with the discrimination that exists today. The official unemployment rate for Black workers, for example, is almost three times the rate for whites, underscoring that Blacks are still the last hired and the first fired. Blacks make up 41 percent of the prison population, but just 13 percent of the overall population.

For capitalist politicians like Obama, vague rheto-

ric about “long-term solutions” serves to obfuscate the class issues involved. He doesn’t point the finger at the racism inherent in capitalism, he blames Black men for abandoning “their responsibilities.” He doesn’t call for the government to take measures against rising unemployment, he proposes giving money to “faith-based” organizations to dispense charity. He doesn’t call for defending and extending affirmative action with quotas to make it effective, he worries about the programs being “properly structured.”

The fight for affirmative action really *does* matter. It is only along a course of defending affirmative action and demanding enforcement of quotas that a strong and united labor movement can be built capable of defending working people in the battles to come with the employers and their government.



Book on Palestine is published in Greece

BY NATASHA TERLEXIS

ATHENS—Since its publication in April the new Greek-language book *Israel and the Palestinian Struggle for Self-Determination* has sold 30 copies and another 55 have been ordered by bookstores in Greece.

Published by Diethnes Vima, the book includes speeches and resolutions adopted by the Socialist Workers Party of the United States since the early 1970s. Many of the articles were published in the Education for Socialists booklet *Israel and the Arab Revolution*.

Twelve copies were snatched off the table at a

recent event organized by Palestinian groups at the gates of the Israeli embassy in Greece.

A June book launch was attended by 25 people. Speaking at the event were Georges Mehrabian, representing Diethnes Vima; Moisis Litsis, a journalist and member of the European Network of Jewish Peace Organizations; Renata Menis, an Athens-based painter who donated the art work for the cover; and Sami Monastiriotis-Ghneim, a young Palestinian-Greek worker at the Athens airport who participated in the preparation of the book.

“This book presents a Marxist perspective, from 1920 to 2006, that helps in understanding events today in the Middle East and most importantly in charting a common perspective of struggle for toilers across national and religious lines,” explained Mehrabian.

Those attending the event included a number of Palestinians, West Africans, and other immigrants as well as some Greeks. A lively discussion took place on the possibility of Palestinian and Israeli Jewish working people joining together in the fight for a democratic secular Palestine.

Volunteers will be organizing distribution of the book in Patras, Greece’s third largest city and a major port and university town, as well as in Cyprus in the fall.

Correction

The article “Conference prepares for new class battles: Socialist Educational and Active Workers Conference draws 380 participants,” in the July 28 issue, has missing text in the jump from page 9 to page 10. Below are the corrected sentences:

“Even compared to meetings about *Our History* in late 2006 and 2007, discussions this spring about the Cuban Revolution more rapidly turned into discussions about the class struggle in the United States and the possibility of a revolution here, she noted.

“Both Waters in her talk, and Barnes in his report and summary remarks, addressed the revolutionary example—and political and moral high ground—demonstrated by Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro in his recent remarks calling on the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) to release all remaining hostages held in the areas it controls in Colombia . . .”

Afghan war

Continued from front page

gun fire from helicopters, Agence France-Presse reported.

Another 55 Taliban were killed July 23 when ISAF and Afghan security forces launched an operation to retake the Ajristan district about 125 miles southwest of Afghanistan’s capital Kabul. The district had been occupied by Taliban militia two days earlier.

The Taliban government was overthrown by the U.S. military in 2001 shortly after the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. The Taliban has since led a guerrilla war against the U.S.-installed government in Kabul. In recent months they have captured several remote districts but have also been easily expelled by ISAF and Afghan army forces.

U.S. and NATO officials say they are investigating three air strikes in July in which Afghan authorities say 78 civilians were killed.

An estimated 698 Afghan civilians have been killed in the war in the first six months of this year, according to the United Nations. That compares with 430 over the same period last year—a 38 percent increase. The United Nations said 255 of the civilians killed this year were slain by NATO troops.

U.S. presidential candidates John McCain and Barack Obama have called for sending thousands more U.S. troops to Afghanistan.

During a visit to Berlin Obama said Germany and other NATO allies needed to send more troops to Afghanistan.

Chancellor Angela Merkel’s cabinet has already approved a plan to increase the number of German troops in Afghanistan by 1,000, bringing the total to 4,500. Germany has the third largest number of troops in Afghanistan but has prohibited their deployment in the south where NATO casualties have been high.

In a interview with *Der Spiegel* Obama’s foreign policy advisor Susan Rice said NATO allies should “lift operational restrictions” on their troops.

The pace of U.S. and NATO air strikes against the Taliban inside Pakistan has also increased in recent months. At least six people were killed near Asam Warsak village in Pakistan July 28, when missiles struck a house in a religious school compound.

A Pakistani intelligence officer said that Midhat Musri al-Sayid Umar, an Egyptian and alleged al-Qaeda chemical weapons expert was the target of the strike, according to press reports. Pakistani authorities could not confirm that Musri al-Sayid Umar, who has a \$5 million bounty on his head, was in fact killed. Claims that he had been killed in another air strike in 2006 turned out to be false.

Several residents in the area said they heard the sound of drone aircraft engines, suggesting the missiles were fired by Predator drones operated by the CIA. NATO and ISAF spokesmen have denied involvement in any cross-border strikes in Pakistan, but said they could not speak for the CIA, reported Reuters.

Maj. Gen. Athar Abbas, Pakistan’s military spokesman, said he had little information about the air strike. “Some incident did take place but what kind of strike it was, whether it was a missile or rocket attack or bomb explosion, we don’t know.” He added that ISAF doesn’t share information about any strike with the Pakistani military prior to an attack.

Despite repeated protests by the Pakistani government, several drone missile attacks have been carried out this year by U.S. forces against Taliban and al-Qaeda-backed militias alleged to have been attempting to enter Afghanistan or retreating from there into Pakistan.

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