

# THE MILITANT

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 73/NO. 31 AUGUST 17, 2009

## Washington presses for compromise from Kurds

BY DOUG NELSON

Washington is pressing leaders of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), an autonomous administration in northern Iraq, to compromise with the central government in Baghdad in a dispute over land and oil. As Washington plans to reduce its troops in Iraq, finding a way to restrain the Kurdish struggle is more clearly emerging as a major priority for the propertied rulers in the United States, as well as those in the Middle East.

U.S. secretary of defense Robert Gates met with KRG president Masoud Barzani, among others, to discuss Washington's concerns during his trip to Iraq in late July. The main disputed questions are the scope of Kurdish autonomy; the KRG boundaries, particularly control over the oil-rich city of Kirkuk; and division of oil revenues.

The Kurds are an oppressed nationality of some 25–30 million people who have long resided in an area often referred to as Kurdistan that spans parts of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria.

In a 96-1 vote, the Kurdish parliament passed a draft regional constitution June 24 laying claim to disputed

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## U.S. commanders: more troops to Afghanistan

Imperialist war rages after nearly 8 years



U.S. Marine Corps/Philippe Chasse

**U.S. Marines and Afghan soldiers at Forward Operating Base Dwyer, Afghanistan, July 2. U.S. troops in country will top 68,000 by end of year. Washington's top general in Afghanistan will likely ask for thousands more following a soon to be released 'war assessment.'**

BY RÓGER CALERO

Top U.S. military and government officials are saying they need further increases in troop levels for their war in Afghanistan. It has been nearly eight years since a U.S.-led imperialist invasion overthrew the Taliban government there in 2001.

Gen. Stanley McChrystal, the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, is likely to request an increase in American troops as part of a forthcoming as-

essment report recommending changes in strategy in the U.S.-led war in that country reported the *Washington Post*. Defense Secretary Robert Gates re-

**Troops out now!**  
*Editorial—p. 10*

quested the report in late June. It is being prepared by a team of about a dozen military and civilian analysts. Among them are “national security

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## L.A. workers win delay in ‘no match’ mass firings

BY NAOMI CRAINE

LOS ANGELES—One thousand workers at American Apparel and their supporters marched from the factory gate to the Federal Building July 29 to demand an end to mass firings of immigrant workers at this large nonunion garment factory and other workplaces.

Two days later, the company announced it was granting 30-day extensions to all of the workers who had received notice they would be fired.

About 1,800 workers at the company are threatened with firing, allegedly for not having valid authorization to work in the United States, based on an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) audit of their employment records. American Apparel employs more than 5,000 production workers in Los Angeles.

On the day of the march, workers collected several thousand signatures, petitioning Dov Charney, company CEO, to give workers a 30- or 60-day extension. Dozens of workers participated in this effort. The petition passed from sewing machine to sewing machine. Custodians circulated it as they swept the floors. Petitions were circulated in the cafeteria, at the lunch truck, and on an extra bathroom break or two.

Workers built the demonstration

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## New Zealand meetings discuss Chinese in Cuban Revolution

BY PATRICK BROWN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—“This history is not known in China,” said one of the participants in a meeting on “The Unique History of the Chinese in Cuba,” held here July 22. “Whatever differences we have with

you, we really appreciate hearing about it.”

The meeting was one of multiple events at which Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press and a leader of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States, spoke during a July 17–25 visit to New Zealand.

The comments were part of the animated discussion at a meeting sponsored by the public library in Botany, a southern suburb of Auckland that has become home to a sizeable number of immigrants from China over the past decade and a half.

Waters had begun her visit at the July 17–19 “Rising Dragons Soaring Bananas” conference in Auckland. (The full text of Waters's speech at the conference was published in last week's *Militant*, along with a report of the conference.)

Her presentations drew on the book *Our History Is Still Being Written: the Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution*, published by Pathfinder Press. Waters edited the book in which Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, and Moisés Sío

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## Deflation looms in deepening capitalist crisis

BY SETH GALINSKY

According to the *Wall Street Journal*, the U.S. economy has come out of its “tailspin.” The capitalist daily pointed to a decline in inventories and a slowing of the contraction in production in the second quarter of this year as evidence that the economy “may be poised to resume growing.”

At the same time, the *Journal* said that “new signs of stress emerged.” It noted that “unemployment in the euro-zone economies rose to the highest level in a decade and consumer

**Continued on page 3**

## South Africa: workers protest conditions of capitalist crisis

BY BEN JOYCE

Since mid-July, hundreds of thousands of workers and others in South Africa have held protests and strikes in several South African towns. The world capitalist crisis continues to take its toll on working people there.

Inflation in South Africa is currently at 7.2 percent, according to a Bloomberg survey, and Reuters reports that nearly one in three workers are unemployed. Some 40 percent of the population there lives below the official poverty line.

Such conditions and the resulting protests highlight the challenges faced by the ruling African National Congress (ANC) government of President Jacob Zuma in addressing the legacy of sharp inequality faced by Africans under apartheid rule, which massive protests succeeded in overthrowing in the early 1990s. Nelson Mandela, the central leader of the ANC, was elected president of the country in 1994.

Police have arrested some 200 people around the country protesting poor living conditions and inad-

equately government services such as water, electricity, and housing. Some 200 protesters burned vehicles and blocked roads with burning tires in the township of Thokoza, where cops have used rubber bullets and tear gas in response to the protests.

“We’ve been given promises for all these years,” Siphos Duma of Thokoza told Agence France-Presse. “We are

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# White House builds on domestic spy program

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In a July 29 speech in New York to the Council of Foreign Relations, Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano presented the Obama administration’s approach to fighting “domestic terrorism.” It largely continues the course of the previous Bush administration.

Napolitano stressed the importance of getting more individuals on the lookout for “suspicious” packages and “unusual activities,” and promptly reporting them to government authorities. The administration’s approach also calls for a more coordinated sharing of “intelligence” data among federal, state, and local cop agencies.

She denied that the plan was essentially an appeal for everyone to become snitches. There’s a “balance to be struck,” Napolitano said, between identifying “suspicious activities” and creating “a culture of everybody spying on one another.” However, the goal, she emphasized, is to get “in a constant state of preparedness and not a constant state of fear.”

“The place we start is the work of engaging the American people in our collective effort,” said Napolitano. “For too long we’ve treated the public as a liability to be protected rather than an asset in our nation’s collective security.”

She held up several well known frame-up cases as examples. In one case she claimed “an attentive store clerk” told authorities about men trying to duplicate “extremist DVDs.” This led federal agents to round up five young men who were convicted last December of “conspiring” to attack soldiers at Ft.

Dix, New Jersey, she said.

In fact, the trial of the Ft. Dix Five, as they became known by supporters of their defense, revealed that the government’s entire case was built on entrapment by paid informants.

The “breadth of the threat” should not just be focused on New York City, Washington, D.C., or a few other urban areas, she said, pointing to recent arrests in Minneapolis and North Carolina.

The grand jury indictments of Somalis from Minneapolis and Seattle for “conspiracy to kill, kidnap, maim or injure” people in foreign countries was recently made public. In North Carolina, seven men were arrested July 27 and charged with “plotting” terrorism abroad.

### Intelligence ‘fusion centers’

The Homeland Security secretary pointed to the 70 state-run intelligence “fusion centers,” which began under the Bush administration, as “critical” to fighting “terrorism.” The centers allow cops from federal agencies such as the FBI and Immigration and Customs Enforcement to share information through



Cops patrol New York City subway platform February 6. Thirty-five million dollars of federal stimulus funds is being granted to hire 120 more cops to be deployed in subways.

common databases with the 780,000 cops spread out across 18,000 state, local, and tribal agencies nationwide.

In addition to these “fusion centers,” Homeland Security “will be collaborating with the Department of Justice and the FBI in more than 100 joint terrorism task forces across the country,” said Napolitano.

Also being expanded is 287(g), a program initiated in 1996 under the Clinton administration. It gives local police

authority to check immigration status of those they arrest. Since 2006 deputized officers have identified more than 120,000 undocumented workers nationwide, reported the *Los Angeles Times*.

While in New York Napolitano visited “Ground Zero” and took a ride in a subway car with Mayor Michael Bloomberg. She announced that \$35 million in federal stimulus funds is being granted to hire 120 more cops to be deployed in the city’s subways.

## N.Y.: city gov’t pays for homeless to leave town

BY BEN JOYCE

NEW YORK—The government of the billionaire families that rule the Big Apple has been implementing a new tool for fighting homelessness here—a one-way ticket out of town.

The city government has paid for more than 550 homeless families to leave New York since it began a relocation program in 2007. So far people

have been sent to 24 states and five continents, most often to Puerto Rico, Florida, Georgia, and the Carolinas, but also to Paris and Johannesburg, South Africa.

The program only requires that the family have someone elsewhere who agrees to take them in. Homeless families can reject the offer and choose to stay in shelters.

There are more than 35,500 individuals living in city shelters—15,000 of them children—as of the end of July, according to the New York City Department of Homeless Services.

The official unemployment rate in June was 9.5 percent in New York City and nationwide. These figures do not include those who the government claims have not looked for a job in the past month or those who are forced to work only part-time hours. Including these categories, 16.5 percent of the workforce is unemployed or underemployed as of June.

“We want to divert as many families as we can that need assistance,” Vida Chavez-Downes, director of the “Resource Room,” a city office that helps move the families out of town, told the *New York Times*. “We have paid for visas, we’ve gone down to the consulate, we’ve provided letters, we’ve paid for passports for people to go. Anyone who comes through our door.”

Arnold Cohen, president of the advocacy group Partnership for the Homeless, is critical of the program. “We’re taking people from a shelter bed here to the living room couch of another family. Essentially, this family is still homeless,” he said.

Julie Bosman of the *Times* notes in a July 29 article that homelessness is “a seemingly intractable problem” for the Bloomberg administration, and the relocation program is “a way of keeping [the homeless] out of the expensive shelter system, which costs \$36,000 a year per family.”

## THE MILITANT

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Militant/Alex Xezonakis

July 27 picket demands release of “North West 10,” Pakistani students in United Kingdom framed up on “terror” charges.

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# Latvia crisis: farmers face lack of payment, low prices

BY CATHARINA TIRSÉN

LATGALE, Latvia—The Latvian government agreed July 27 to a raft of additional austerity measures in order to obtain more loans from the International Monetary Fund. A \$285 million loan, part of a \$10.5 billion package, had been delayed until the government agreed to the fund's demands for further cuts in social spending and to raise taxes.

Farmers in this region are not likely to get much relief from the deal. "I am glad now we don't have any cows," said Arnolds Dzalbs, a farmer in the Auleja village, about 19 miles from the Belorussia border. Preilu Siers dairy pays little for farmers' milk, he said, and refuses to take any milk for a whole month this summer.

Dzalbs works land that belonged to his family until 1948, when the bureaucratic rulers led by Joseph Stalin in the Soviet Union ordered forced collectivization in Latvia, which was then a republic in the Soviet Union. Both he and his father then worked on the kolkhoz—the collective farm formed out of land taken from all farmers in the village. After Latvia became independent in 1991, the land was given back to those who had owned it. Dzalbs and his wife now farm 100 hectares (1 hectare=2.5 acres).

They raise pigs. They have 16 sows, and sell the piglets to individuals who raise them for the meat. The farm has three tractors and a big combine for harvesting.

Dzalbs is quite frustrated by the conditions farmers face. "We used to grow sugar beets and Latvia had three sugar factories," he said. "The last one closed a couple of years ago [after the European Union (EU) introduced sugar quotas]. Then farmers changed what they produced. Now we can't sell milk. So who knows how long raising pigs will last?"

One of their neighbors, Péteris Dzalbs, sells milk to the dairy but has not been paid for the past four months. He has also started raising pigs.

Next door Andrejs Nikitins and his wife Galina farm 18 hectares, which had belonged to his grandparents before 1948. They have three sows, one cow, two calves, and a couple of hens.

They also grow potatoes, vegetables, and fodder for the animals. They sell piglets like most other farmers here. This reporter accompanied Andrejs and his sister, Vija Nikitina, now a meat packer in Stockholm, Sweden, to buy a new horse for the farm. The horse is used for day-to-day tasks on the farm, but for harvesting they rely on their neighbor's modern combine harvester.

Zanna Stepina, from Ukraine, grows and sells flowers on 38 hectares, 30 of which had been collectivized from her husband's family in 1948. At first they grew cabbage, she said. "We grew 25 tons, but could not sell it because of competition from the EU."

Fewer flowers are being sold and their prices have gone down, said Stepina. "Soon I think we will only sell flowers for the graveyard! The government talks about rationing food again like during the Soviet Union. This is not popular," she said. "At least as farmers we have food!"

Besides returning land that had been taken away in 1948 to farmers' families, the government gave out



Militant/Dag Tirsén  
Péteris Dzalbs (right), a farmer in Auleja village in Latgale, Latvia, shows milk cooler. Falling prices of milk and late payment for delivered milk is threatening livelihoods of small farmers.

certificates based on how long you have lived in Latvia. The certificates can be used to buy an apartment, land, or may be sold.

Nikitina said she sold hers to a company to buy a dress for her graduation. Others, like Viktor Krasovitsky, have been able to buy 3,000 hectares of land nearby.

Krasovitsky used to own Parex Bank, which was taken over by the

Latvian state in November after rumors led to a bank run, emptying one-quarter of its deposits. Krasovitsky is still the richest man in Latvia. He made his fortune when he and his partner were Komsomol (Communist Party youth) members. Moscow gave them a monopoly to exchange money in 1990 when they started a travel agency. In six months they earned enough money to start the bank.

## Deflation looms in deepening economic crisis

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prices there fell, a worrisome sign of deflation—a backhanded admission that the capitalist crisis will not be over anytime soon.

Speaking at a health-care rally in North Carolina July 29, U.S. president Barack Obama noted a rise in housing prices. "We may be seeing the beginning of the end of the recession," he said. Just two days later he struck a more cautious note saying, "As far as I'm concerned, we won't have a recovery as long as we keep losing jobs."

The annual rate of housing starts increased 3.6 percent from May to June, although housing starts were still 46 percent less than in June of last year. Single-family home starts have risen for two months in a row for the first time since early 2007. Nonetheless, U.S. home foreclosures set a record in the first half of the year, with no end in sight.

The continuing decline in heavy industry and construction has hit both trucking and railroads, with a shrinking demand for raw materials. U.S. railroad shipments are down more than 20 percent compared to last year. Union Pacific railroad alone has laid off 4,400 workers and sidelined 60,000 railcars and 1,900 locomotives.

*Newsweek* captured the lack of confidence within the capitalist ruling class in its August 2 issue. The cover showed a big balloon that proclaimed "The recession is OVER!\*" Then in smaller letters it said, "good luck surviving the recovery."

‘Deflationary spiral’

In a July 15 speech in South Africa, Justin Lin, World Bank chief economist, alluded to the fundamental problem capitalism faces regardless of temporary recoveries and stimulus measures. "While the crisis originated in the financial sector," he said, "the challenge now is in the real sector"—meaning manufacturing and industrial production.

"Significant excess capacity has built up," he said. "Unless this issue is addressed, we will face a deflationary downward spiral."

Prices have been flat or have declined in China, Finland, France, Ireland, Japan, Germany, Spain, and Switzerland. Consumer prices in Japan fell 1.7 percent since June. In Germany, Europe's largest economy, consumer prices fell 0.6 percent over the last year through July—the first annual decline in 22 years.

To working people, a price decline can seem like a good thing. But deflation is part of intensifying competition among capitalists as they contend over shrinking markets and is a product of the long-term tendency of their profit rates to fall. It puts enormous downward pressures on investment in manufacturing and production.

To shore up profit rates, the bosses will try to get more work out of fewer workers, speed up production lines, and slash wages and benefits. They will also go after the social wage, including Social Security and Medicare.

Capitalist businesses across the globe are laying off workers and cutting back

on production. In the United Kingdom unemployment among young people aged 18–24 jumped from 11.9 percent to 17.3 percent over the past year. With an official rate of 18 percent, Spain has the highest unemployment in the European Union.

To mask unemployment the German government subsidizes a program that assigns unemployed workers to "transfer" companies. There they get paid to work on their résumé, talk to a job counselor, and get technical training. The thousands of workers in these programs are not counted in unemployment statistics.

Unemployment is also rising in Latin America and Africa, although so far not as quickly as in Europe and the United States.

In the United States more than 100,000 have exhausted their unemployment benefits in the last few months. With extensions, laid-off workers in 24 states can collect benefits for up to 79 weeks. Unless Congress approves another extension, close to 1.5 million people could be cut off by the end of the year.

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# U.S. troops leave Ecuador, expand bases in Colombia

BY RÓGER CALERO

The U.S. military is taking steps to move operations from Ecuador to military bases in Colombia.

Negotiations between U.S. and Colombian officials on a plan to run U.S. military surveillance and interdiction operations from three airfields and two navy bases in Colombia are well under way, reported the magazine *Cambio* in early July.

Since the end of 2008, when the government of Ecuador announced that it would not renew a decade-long “anti-drug” program allowing U.S. spy planes to operate from Ecuador’s Eloy Alfaro Air Base in the coastal city of Manta, Washington has been looking for another beachhead for its activities in South America. As a Forward Operation Location, Eloy Alfaro has been one of several air bases that replaced U.S. facilities shut down in Panama in 1999.

Last May U.S. officials announced that Washington would remove all U.S. military personnel from Ecuador in September, before the agreement expires in November, and move operations to Colombia.

According to *Cambio*, the agreement

between Bogotá and Washington states that operations will not be limited to areas along the Pacific, previously covered from Manta, but will also include the Caribbean. The agreement also calls for greater cooperation in fighting “terrorism.”

The agreement leaves open the possibility that U.S. forces stationed in Colombia could “cooperate with other nations in the region,” and carry out “combined exercises to confront common threats to peace, stability, freedom, and democracy,” said the Colombian magazine.

The increased operations by U.S. forces from Colombian bases also seeks to complement those being carried out under Plan Colombia, the centerpiece of U.S. imperialism’s growing military presence in the Andean region. Plan Colombia was first announced in 1999 under the U.S. administration of William Clinton. Since 2000 the U.S. government has given more than \$5 billion to Colombia’s army and police. A slight reduction in funds—from \$547 million to \$513 million—from Washington is scheduled for 2010.

Venezuela’s foreign minister Nicolás



Troops at Ecuador’s Manta air base. Ecuadoran government will no longer allow Washington to use base. U.S. military is expanding ‘antidrug and counterterrorism’ operations in Colombia.

Maduro called the new military agreement between the Colombian and U.S. government “a threat to the entire region.”

Colombia’s foreign minister Jaime Bermúdez defended his government’s relations with Washington. The Colombian government “didn’t say anything when ships of the Russian navy carried out military maneuvers in the Venezuelan Caribbean,” said Bermúdez.

While the U.S. government has been pouring billions of dollars in military aid into Colombia, Washington and Bogotá have seized on the increased military

cooperation between the Venezuelan government and those of Russia and China to step up its campaign of targeting Caracas as a “destabilizing” force in Latin America.

Washington is also cranking up its accusations that Caracas has been allowing Colombia’s guerrilla groups to use Venezuela’s territory as a launching pad for drug trafficking into the United States.

President Hugo Chávez said July 20 that he very much regretted the situation, “but we have to review relations with the government of Colombia because they are opening the doors to those who attack us constantly.” He said he has instructed his foreign minister to review all bilateral relations and warned of scaling back ties with Colombia. “The items that we purchase from Colombia will have to be purchased elsewhere, in countries that are truly friendly,” he said.

Despite frictions between the two governments, the total trade between Colombia and Venezuela amounted to \$7.2 billion in 2008, favoring Colombia with exports reaching \$6 billion.

This year so far, however, trade has slowed down under the impact of the world capitalist crisis, on top of trade restrictions being put in place by Venezuela. Colombia’s exports to Venezuela were \$2.24 billion in the first five months of the year, down 1 percent from the same period last year. The drop is due partly to Venezuela’s restrictions on Colombian car imports, according to the *Wall Street Journal*.

Because of long delays in payments for Colombian goods, exports of some items from Colombia have dropped drastically.

The Colombian trade minister Luis Guillermo Plata urged the Venezuelan government July 22 to authorize overdue payments worth \$275 million to Colombian exporters, according to the *Journal*.

## Washington seeks compromise from Kurds

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territories, including Kirkuk. Since 2007 the Iraqi government has repeatedly postponed a referendum on the city’s status.

Geoff Morrell, Gates’s chief spokesman, said the defense secretary has endorsed an April UN report that outlines a number of possible compromises, including a call for a power-sharing solution for the city’s status. In response to growing tensions earlier this year, Washington increased its forces in Kirkuk from about 900 to 3,200 troops.

The U.S. rulers are concerned that an escalating conflict on these issues would destabilize Iraq and threaten Washington’s interests in the region.

The conflict over Kurdish control of land and resources is “probably our No. 1 driver of instability,” Gen. Raymond Odierno, the top U.S. commander in Iraq, said July 28.

Tense standoffs between Iraq’s Kurdish and Arab troops in the disputed areas along the KRG border underscore the volatility of the conflict. Last month about 2,000 Kurdish Pesh Merga troops faced off with an Arab-led Iraqi army unit for 24 hours when the Arab forces approached the disputed and predominantly Kurdish town of Makhmur. The standoff ended when U.S. military officials convinced Baghdad to divert its Arab troops from the area.

The Pesh Merga, a militia force that fought the Baath regime of Saddam Hussein, numbering about 80,000, is officially part of the Iraqi army, but function as units loyal to the KRG.

About half of the Kurdish people live in Turkey, where they have been subjected to systematic discrimination and violent repression by the government. They face the highest rates of illiteracy and poverty in that country.

In 1984 the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), a Maoist group, opened armed struggle against the Turkish government, which responded with ferocity against the Kurdish population. More



U.S. Navy photo by Paul Seebor

**Kurdish tribal council members in Khanaqin, Iraq, June 2008. Kurds are oppressed nationality of 25–30 million people in Iraq, Iran, Turkey, and Syria.**

than 44,000 people were killed over two decades and the PKK was forced to retreat to northern Iraq.

The Turkish military, with U.S.-provided intelligence, has been on a bombing campaign targeting PKK forces in Kurdish areas along Iraq’s northern border since December 2007. The PKK is estimated to have about 5,000 members in Iraq.

While maintaining its war against the PKK and its determination to marginalize any struggle for Kurdish autonomy, the Turkish government, led by the Justice and Development Party, has eased up some of its repressive measures in the country and sought greater cooperation with the KRG.

Earlier this year, the Turkish government allowed the launching of a Kurdish television channel.

The Turkish government is touting its new approach to the Kurds as a “democratic opening.” Changes under discussion include: an end to charging and jailing minors as “terrorist” for chanting illegal slogans or throwing rocks at police; reinstating Kurdish names of villages and ending laws against use of Kurdish names in general; allowing Kurdish cultural performances by local and regional artists that promote “peace

and friendship”; allowing the teaching of the Kurdish language in schools; and allowing candidates to campaign in Kurdish.

The government has ruled out granting amnesty to Abdullah Ocalan, the PKK’s central leader, who has been imprisoned since 1999. At the same time, Ankara will consider reviewing the incarceration of PKK members who were not involved in armed attacks and pardoning rank-and-file PKK members who desert the group and have not taken part in any military operations.

Barzani pointed to the moves as a positive step to weaken the PKK.

Meanwhile, recent elections in Iraqi Kurdistan reveal a loosening of the grip of the two ruling bourgeois parties—the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdistan Democratic Party. The Change List, a split from the PUK, took nearly a quarter of the parliamentary seats in a campaign that criticized clan nepotism and a lack of services.

### For further reading...



**Washington’s assault on Iraq: Opening Guns of World War III**  
by Jack Barnes in *New International No. 7*

The murderous assault on Iraq in 1990–91 heralded increasingly sharp conflicts among imperialist powers, growing instability of international capitalism, and more wars and puts spotlight on unresolved fight of Kurdish people for national self-determination. —\$14

### Capitalism’s World Disorder

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# Record of racist war against Chinese in the United States

**Driven Out: The Forgotten War Against Chinese Americans.** by Jean Pfaelzer. Random House, 2007, 432 pages, \$27.95.

BY JIM ALTENBERG

Chinese immigrants on the West Coast of the United States faced an unrelenting campaign of racist terror and government attacks in the last half of the 19th century. In what the Chinese call *pai hua*—the driven out—Chinese immigrants were forced from their homes and workplaces in over 200 cities, towns, and work camps across the western states.

## IN REVIEW

The virtually unknown story of *pai hua* is told in gripping detail by Jean Pfaelzer in her book *Driven Out: The Forgotten War Against Chinese Americans*. U.S. history textbooks make little mention of the Chinese at all, other than to note that they built the western railroads and were subject to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 that banned immigration from China.

The discovery of gold in 1849 drew tens of thousands from around the world

## Meat packers in Utah plant win contract

BY CHUCK GUERRA AND REBECCA WILLIAMSON

Workers at the JBS Swift & Co. meatpacking plant in Hyrum, Utah, voted July 14 to ratify their first union contract. After years of trying to unionize, workers at the plant voted overwhelmingly last summer to be represented by United Food and Commercial Workers Local 711. The contract was approved after eight months of negotiations.

Among the provisions of the new contract are: a pay increase of up to \$1 an hour over the three-year contract, amounting to a 4.6 percent pay increase for many workers; guaranteed hours for full-time employees; health insurance coverage for workers and their families with no increase in premiums; no out-of-pocket expenses for work equipment, tools, and work clothes; and paid funeral leave.

More than 1,100 workers at the beef slaughtering and butchering plant joined the union. On Dec. 12, 2006, Immigration and Customs Enforcement cops raided the plant along with the five other meatpacking plants then owned by Swift, arresting nearly 1,300 workers for allegedly not having proper documents. The Hyrum plant is the only one that was non-union at the time.

### From Pathfinder

#### ***The Changing Face of U.S. Politics***

by Jack Barnes

Building the kind of party working people need to prepare for coming battles through which they will revolutionize themselves, their unions, and all society. —\$24

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to California. The gold rush opened up a massive land grab not only for mining claims, but for agriculture, railroads, and settlements.

The gold rush was marked from its outset by anti-Chinese agitation, lynchings, and arsons, from which state and local governments refused to provide protection or to prosecute the mobs that attacked Chinese settlements. Special taxes were levied on Chinese and other “foreign” miners. Laws modeled on the defeated slaveholders’ post-Civil War Black Codes, which were used against Black former slaves, were adopted and used to restrict the rights of Chinese in innumerable ways.

Chinese defended themselves from the beginning. They bought guns and practiced marksmanship openly. Many Chinese businesses and houses were linked with underground tunnels that were used for storage and escape. They waged strikes and boycotts, and filed lawsuits and petitions to uphold their rights. They called upon the government of China to ensure better treatment of overseas Chinese. In 1867, 2,000 Chinese railroad workers in Chico, California, went on strike demanding, among other things, an end to the bosses’ authority to whip workers and prevent them from quitting their jobs.

The defeat of Radical Reconstruction in 1877 gave fresh impetus to anti-Chinese agitation as it did to racist forces across the country. Businessmen, politicians, and public figures sought to divide a growing nationwide trade union movement by scapegoating the Chinese for the horrific price all workers paid as industrial capitalism came to California. They hosted anti-Chinese conventions and organizations, and backed vigilante mobs.

Many trade union officials in California were at the forefront of the anti-Chinese agitation. They refused to admit Chinese to membership, and called for Chinese workers to be replaced with whites.

The Workingmen’s Party, led by Dennis Kearney, held street meetings



Los Angeles Public Library

Chinese field workers in Butte County, California, 1870s. In 1885, 15 years of anti-Chinese agitation culminated with Chinese in Eureka, California, being driven out to San Francisco.

that quickly turned into anti-Chinese pogroms in San Francisco; Truckee, California; and elsewhere. Kearney and others used radical-sounding demagoguery, railing against the greedy bosses and exploiters for hiring Chinese at low pay. Their wrath, however, was turned not on the bosses, but on the Chinese workers.

Many of the state’s largest employers—railroads, lumber companies, large farms—had become dependent on Chinese labor. They became targets of boycotts and intimidation campaigns to force them to fire Chinese employees.

In February 1885, 15 years of anti-Chinese agitation culminated when Chinese in the Humboldt County town of Eureka were forced to board ships to San Francisco. An enraged mob gave all Chinese 48 hours to leave the city. Laws forbidding the employment of Chinese in the county remained on the books into the 1940s. The extension of this campaign of pogroms, arsons, and threats of violence became known as the “Eureka Method.” To this day, Pfaelzer says, many Chinese parents choose not to send their children to the state university campus there.

As depression conditions spread in the wake of the economic turmoil of 1893, agitation against the Chinese reached a fever pitch. The 1892 Geary Act required Chinese laborers to register with the government and wear a photo ID tag

at all times. The U.S. Supreme Court turned down a challenge to the law in 1893. Fears of racist terror deportation led many Chinese to leave California for the east or Hawaii.

War Kee, then editor of the *Oriental Chinese Newspaper* in San Francisco, expressed the pride and self-worth that four decades of pogroms and lynchings could not erase. “Chinese are human beings, not cattle,” he wrote, “and they object to having tags placed around their necks.” Backed by the Chinese consul and most powerful Chinese business interests in the United States, Chinese refused to comply with the “Dog Tag Law.” Chinese workers launched a general strike against the law on Sept. 19, 1893. Resistance by Chinese workers and the bosses’ need for Chinese labor effectively blocked enforcement of the law.

In recapturing this lost piece of history, Pfaelzer has made an important contribution. She unwraps the irrational and self-contradictory justifications used to support half a century of anti-Chinese terror and shows them to be lies. More importantly, in destroying the myth of the Chinese as docile victims, recounting the story of *pai hua* restores generations of proud fighters to their place in the history of the working class. As the capitalist crisis of our own day deepens, the experience of those years in California will help working people become better fighters today.

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



August 31, 1984

BELFAST, Ireland—One man was killed and at least 20 people were injured when the British Army and Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) attacked a peaceful demonstration in West Belfast on Sunday, August 12.

Sean Downes’ heart stopped when he was hit in the chest by a rock-hard, four-inch-long plastic bullet fired at close range. Others—including children—were injured as the RUC hit out indiscriminately with batons and plastic bullets.

The march—an annual event—had been called to commemorate the 13th anniversary of the introduction of internment without trial in British-ruled Northern Ireland. Despite being officially ended, internment is still maintained in Northern Ireland through other means. Activists in the freedom struggle are tried in special juryless courts.



August 17, 1959

Five Negro students yesterday demonstrated the heroism that assures ultimate victory over the forces of race hatred. Two of them, Elizabeth Eckford, 17, and Jefferson Thomas, 16, calmly walked into Little Rock’s Central High School after a mob of 250 racists, incited by Gov. Faubus, had tried to claw through police and firemen in front of the school. The night before, 20 minutes after a TV speech by Faubus, a carload of white men pumped bullets at the home of Negro leader Daisy Bates.

The mob at Central High came directly from a Negro-baiting rally at the state capitol where Faubus said he was with them “all the way.” He urged that they avoid violence except as “a last resort.”

A racist woman stood up to a fire hose, screaming, “I’m not going to school with niggers!” Another shrieked, “Communists, Communists!”



August 18, 1934

Riding high over all moves of the reactionary officialdom for postponement, the overwhelming majority of the 570 delegates to the annual convention of the United Textile Workers, now in session in New York, voted for a general strike on or about September 1.

With a strike of 20,000 cotton workers already in progress in Alabama and the report that 2,000 have joined them in Georgia, the sentiment for a general strike which will involve more than 500,000 exploited slaves from Maine to Alabama, swept over the convention like a mighty tide.

As [union president] McMahon concluded his demagogic speech the entire delegation from Alabama, where the workers have faced bullets, tear gas, cops and soldiers, jumped from their seats and shouted for a strike vote.



# Anti-Semitism cannot be abolished under capitalism

Printed below is an excerpt from *On the Jewish Question* by Leon Trotsky, one of *Pathfinder's Books of the Month* for August. The pamphlet contains a collection of letters, interviews, and writings by Trotsky on anti-Semitism and the plight of Jews with the rise of fascism in Germany. Upon Trotsky's arrival in Mexico in January 1937, a group of Jewish journalists asked him about his attitude toward Jewish assimilation, Zionism, anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union, and Birobidjan, an area in Siberia that Stalin set aside for Jews to settle. In 1934 Birobidjan was declared an autonomous area. Below is Trotsky's response. Copyright © 1970 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY LEON TROTSKY

Before trying to answer your questions I ought to warn you that unfortunately I have not had the opportunity to learn the Jewish language, which moreover has been developed only since I became an adult. I have not had and I do not have the possibility of following the Jewish press, which prevents me from giving a precise opinion on the different aspects of so important and tragic a problem. I cannot therefore claim any special authority in replying to your



A group of Polish women and children wait to be led off by storm troopers during the Nazi destruction of the Warsaw ghetto in Poland in 1943.

questions. Nevertheless I am going to try and say what I think about it.

During my youth I rather leaned toward the prognosis that the Jews of different countries would be assimilated and that the Jewish question would thus disappear in a quasi-automatic fashion. The historical development of the last quarter of a century has not confirmed this perspective. Decaying capitalism has everywhere swung over to an exacerbated nationalism, one part of which is anti-Semitism. The Jewish question has loomed largest in the most highly developed capitalist country of Europe, in Germany.

On the other hand the Jews of different countries have created their press and developed the Yiddish language as an instrument adapted to modern culture. One must therefore reckon with the fact that the Jewish nation will maintain itself for an entire epoch to come. Now the nation cannot normally exist without a common territory. Zionism springs from this very idea. But the facts of every passing day demonstrate to us that Zionism is incapable of resolving the Jewish question. The conflict between the Jews and Arabs in Palestine acquires a more and more tragic and more and more menacing character. I do not at all believe that the Jewish question can be resolved within the framework of rotting capitalism and under the control of British imperialism.

And how, you ask me, can socialism solve this question? On this point I can but offer hypotheses. Once socialism has become master of our planet or at least of its most important sections, it will have unimaginable resources in all domains. Human history has witnessed the epoch of great migrations on the basis of barbarism. Socialism will open the possibility of great migrations on the basis of the most developed technique and culture. It goes without saying that what is here involved is not compulsory displacements, that is, the creation of new ghettos for certain nationalities, but displacements freely consented to, or rather demanded by certain nationalities or parts of nationalities. The dispersed Jews who would want to be reassembled in the same community will find a sufficiently extensive and rich spot under the sun. The same possibility will be opened for the Arabs, as for all other scattered nations. *National topography will become a part of the planned economy.* This is the grand historical perspective that I envisage. To work for international socialism means also to work for the solution of the Jewish question.

You ask me if the Jewish question still exists in the USSR. Yes, it exists, just as the Ukrainian, the Georgian, even the Russian questions exist there. The omnipotent bureaucracy stifles the development of national culture just as it does the whole of culture. Worse still, the country

of the great proletarian revolution is now passing through a period of profound reaction. If the revolutionary wave revived the finest sentiments of human solidarity, the Thermidorian reaction has stirred up all that is low, dark and backward in this agglomeration of 170 million people. To reinforce its domination the bureaucracy does not even hesitate to resort in a scarcely camouflaged manner to chauvinistic tendencies, above all to anti-Semitic ones. The latest Moscow trial, for example, was staged with the hardly concealed design of presenting internationalists as faithless and lawless Jews who are capable of selling themselves to the German Gestapo.

Since 1925 and above all since 1926, anti-Semitic demagoguery, well camouflaged, unattackable, goes hand in hand with symbolic trials against avowed pogromists. You ask me if the old Jewish petty bourgeoisie in the USSR has been socially assimilated by the new Soviet environment. I am indeed at a loss to give you a clear reply. The social and national statistics in the USSR are extremely tendentious. They serve not to set forth the truth, but above all to glorify the leaders, the chiefs, the creators of happiness. An important part of the Jewish petty bourgeoisie has been absorbed by the formidable apparatuses of the state, industry, commerce, the co-operatives, etc., above all in their lower and middle layers. This fact engenders an anti-Semitic state of feeling and the leaders manipulate it with a cunning skill in order to canalize and to direct especially against the Jews the existing discontent against the bureaucracy.

On Birobidjan I can give you no more than my personal evaluations. I am not acquainted with this region and still less with the conditions in which the Jews have settled there. In any case it can be no more than a very limited experience. The USSR alone would still be too poor to resolve its own Jewish question, even under a regime much more socialist than the present one. The Jewish question, I repeat, is indissolubly bound up with the complete emancipation of humanity. Everything else that is done in this domain can only be a palliative and often even a two-edged blade, as the example of Palestine shows.

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# New Zealand students discuss abortion rights

BY MIKE TUCKER

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—The killing of Dr. George Tiller by an anti-abortion rightist in Kansas in May was the focus of a meeting July 23 at the University of Auckland. Tom Baumann, a leader of the Young Socialists from the United States, was the featured speaker at a meeting organized by the Campus Feminist Collective on the topic “Attacks on Choice.”

“The fight to defend and extend access to safe, legal abortion is more important today than ever,” Baumann told the 30 students and others who attended.

Baumann is a student at Hunter College in New York and is the Socialist Workers Party candidate for Manhattan borough president. He visited New Zealand during July on a speaking tour with Socialist Workers Party leader Mary-Alice Waters (see article on front page).

“Tiller had been the target of rightist attacks for many years,” Baumann told the audience, “but he refused to back down.” Tiller’s killing shows that “as we organize to defend and extend our rights, working people, women, and our allies must also mobilize so that those who wish to silence us by violence are pushed back.”

Toni Haraldsen, who chaired the meeting on behalf of the Campus Feminist Collective, pointed out that those who attack abortion rights also target access to contraception, thereby

showing that their true intent is to deny women the options necessary to decide whether and when to have children.

She asked Janet Roth, a long-time active defender of women’s abortion rights and a member of the Communist League who was in the audience, to clarify the current stage of the fight for abortion rights in New Zealand. Roth explained that legislation adopted by parliament in 1977 sought to tighten restrictions on abortion in New Zealand by requiring that two doctors certify that a continued pregnancy would result in serious danger to the life or to the physical or mental health of the woman before she could obtain an abortion. By the 1980s, however, due to ongoing protest in the streets, this same law was being interpreted and applied in a way that allowed relatively open access to abortion.

This prevailing interpretation of the law is now being challenged in court by the antiabortion group Right to Life, she noted, and actions are needed to prevent this new attempt to deny women in New Zealand the right to abortion.

A lively exchange of views among the students followed the presentations.

One participant suggested that perhaps a woman’s right to abortion should



Militant/Terry Coggan

July 23 meeting at University of Auckland. Behind table are Toni Haraldsen, Campus Feminist Collective, and Tom Baumann, leader of the Young Socialists in the United States. The discussion ranged from the response to killing of Dr. George Tiller, an abortion provider in the United States, to recent attacks on abortion rights in New Zealand.

be conditional, depending on the viability of the fetus, because another life was involved. Some discussion ensued on “when does life begin,” but the student was answered by others who insisted that was not the issue. The question was the fight for women’s equality.

Another participant pointed out that in many parts of Asia abortion is available, but is often imposed on women against their will for reasons of family “honor,” or under the banner of state population control policies. “The point is it must be

the right of women to decide,” he said.

At the end of the meeting, many participants stayed to continue discussion informally and to look at the photos and *Militant* articles Baumann had brought that documented the history of the struggle for abortion rights in the United States as well as recent actions protesting the killing of Tiller.

The next day, a meeting of the Campus Feminist Collective decided to organize similar discussion meetings on a regular monthly basis.

## Army spied on group in Washington State

BY EDWIN FRUIT

SEATTLE, August 3—Members of the antiwar group here Port Militarization Resistance (PMR) discovered a U.S. Army spy in their midst this past week. Documents released to the group about communications between the Olympia, Washington, police and the military showed that one of their members was a snitch for the Fort Lewis Force Protection Division on the base, just outside Tacoma, Washington.

The documents obtained by Brendan Dunn, a member of the antiwar group, revealed that John Jacob, who claimed to be an anarchist, was in fact John Towery II and employed by the military.

In an interview on “Democracy Now!” Dunn said that Jacob said he was employed as a civilian at Fort Lewis and offered to share information about base activities. He said that in addition to getting involved in PMR, Jacob was active in the group Iraq Vets Against the War. PMR activists had organized protests and blockades at Seattle-area ports to

prevent Stryker military vehicles at Fort Lewis from deploying to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Fort Lewis spokesman Joseph Piek confirmed July 27 that Towery is a civilian employed at Fort Lewis. “Mr. John Towery performs sensitive work within the installation law enforcement community, and it would not be appropriate for him to discuss his duties with the media,” Piek wrote in an e-mail to the *Olympian* newspaper.

The next day Piek e-mailed the *Olympian* a definition of Fort Lewis Force Protection. “The Fort Lewis Force Protection Division, under the Directorate of Emergency Services, consists of both military and civilian employees whose focus is on supporting law enforcement and security operations to ensure the safety and security of Fort Lewis, soldiers, family members, the workforce and those personnel accessing the installation,” the e-mail reads. “In support of that focus,” Piek continued, “the Force Protection Division executes

Force Protection (FP), Anti-terrorism (AT), and Criminal Intelligence collection, processing, analysis, reporting and dissemination.”

Members of the resistance group were surprised at the extent of the spying on their activities. The head of investigations and intelligence at New Jersey’s McGuire Air Force base contacted an Olympia police officer about the anarchists, saying he was looking into “leftwing anti-war groups” himself and would appreciate “any Intel.” And the U.S. Capitol Police Intelligence Investigations Section sought information from the Olympia police about an event at Evergreen State College that was planning protests at the Democratic and Republican conventions last year, according to a “Democracy Now” radio program.

Spying by the U.S. military and other government agencies has been occurring around the country over the past several years.

In 2004 at the University of Texas Law School in Austin, two Army lawyers attended, under cover, a conference entitled “Islam and the Law: A Question of Sexism.”

On Mother’s Day 2005, the National Guard in California was keeping tabs on the Raging Grannies and Code Pink.

And last year at the Republican Party convention in St. Paul, Minnesota, the U.S. Northern Command provided support.

Under the Posse Comitatus Act the government is supposedly barred from using the military against citizens for conventional law enforcement. Christopher Pyle, now a professor of politics at Mount Holyoke College, was a military intelligence officer. He recalled: “In the 1960s, Army intelligence had 1,500 plainclothes agents [and some would watch] every demonstration of 20 people or more. They had a giant warehouse in Baltimore full of information on the law-abiding activities of American citizens, mainly protest politics.”

Recommended reading

**Abortion Is a Woman's Right!**  
 By Pat Grogan, Evelyn Reed

Why abortion rights are central not only to the fight for the emancipation of women, but to forging a united and fighting labor movement. (Also available in Spanish)

—\$6

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## Thousands of workers protest in South Africa

Continued from front page  
tired, enough is enough.”

On July 31, 150,000 municipal workers ended their strike after accepting a 13 percent pay increase from the government. The union had originally demanded 15 percent. Earlier that week, gold miners negotiated increases of 9 percent to 10.5 percent.

More than 3,500 telephone workers at Telkom, the country’s largest fixed-line phone company, conducted a two-day strike August 3–4 in four of South Africa’s nine provinces. The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) also threatened “radical measures” if state power company Eskom did not meet its wage demands. “This might include

pulling off the plug and unleashing a blackout if need be. But we do not want to get to that point although Eskom is pushing us to that direction,” NUMSA said in a statement. Eskom raised electricity prices by 31.3 percent in July.

The South African budget is based on projections of a 1.2 percent growth in the gross domestic product. However, economists now expect it to contract by around 2 percent. Manufacturing fell by 15 percent in February compared to a year earlier and retail sales by 4.5 percent. Mining output, which accounts for more than half of South Africa’s exports, declined by 14.5 percent in May from a year ago. The value of mineral sales in April dropped 19.4 percent.

Despite deepening economic crisis the ANC still enjoys the support of the country’s largest trade union, the Congress of South African Trade Unions. It also maintains an alliance with the South African Communist Party.

Seven positions in Zuma’s 34-member cabinet were given to former trade union officials, including the labor and economic development posts. Four others went to officials in the South African Communist Party, including the trade and industry ministry. Zuma has set up a new National Planning Commission to guide “socio-economic development.” Its leader is Trevor Manuel, the “market-friendly” former finance minister, reported the *Economist*.



# Frame-up case against Cuban 5: A tr

## Prosecution based on secret evidence, searches; Miami trial marked by b

(Seventh in a series)

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

The federal trial in Miami of five Cuban revolutionaries that led to their convictions in June 2001 on frame-up charges was a travesty of justice from beginning to end. Defense requests to change the trial venue were repeatedly denied. The court restricted defense access to evidence. Although the prosecution failed to prove its allegations of espionage and other false charges, the five men were convicted and given long sentences.

They had been monitoring the actions of right-wing Cuban American groups that have carried out murderous bombings and other armed attacks against Cuba, acting with the complicity of the U.S. government.

At their sentencing Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González, and René González affirmed their determination to keep fighting for justice. In September they will have served 11 years in federal prison. Because of their unwavering record as working-class fighters, the campaign to free the Cuban Five, as they have become known internationally, has won increasing support worldwide.

Previous articles in this series have detailed how FBI agents arrested the five men on Sept. 12, 1998, in raids on their homes in South Florida. Denied bail and kept in solitary confinement for 17 months, they were convicted on all charges, given the maximum sentences, and locked up in five different federal prisons.

The trial, held in the federal court in the Southern District of Florida, lasted nearly seven months, from November 2000 to June 2001. It heard 74 witnesses, including three retired U.S. generals and a retired U.S. admiral. Despite the major issues it posed, from constitutional rights to U.S. foreign policy, the proceedings received little coverage in the U.S. big-business media outside southern Florida.

The men faced 26 criminal charges. Guerrero, Hernández, and Labañino were accused of “conspiracy to commit espionage.” Hernández was additionally



Students demonstrate in support of Cuban Five outside U.S. Interests Section in Havana June 18. Placards read “Freedom now.” Pictured from left to right: Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, René González, Antonio Guerrero, and Gerardo Hernández.

charged with “conspiracy to commit murder.” Both of these charges carried a sentence of up to life in prison. The other accusations included failure to register with the U.S. government as foreign agents and lesser charges such as the use of false names.

The murder conspiracy charge against Hernández was unprecedented. The federal prosecutors held him responsible for an action of a sovereign government—Cuba’s downing in 1996 of two hostile planes flown over its territory by Brothers to the Rescue, a counterrevolutionary U.S. group that had carried out many provocative incursions into Cuban airspace over the previous two years despite Havana’s warnings. (The sixth article in this series, in the August 3 issue, details this incident.)

### Secret searches, secret evidence

The government’s case against the Cuban Five was built on “evidence” collected through the secret wiretapping of phone conversations and seizure of computer files and other personal belongings from their homes by FBI agents, using the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. Under that law—which violates the Fourth Amendment’s protections against unreasonable searches and seizures—a secret court was set up inside the U.S. Justice Department to rubber-stamp requests by federal cop agencies to spy on U.S. residents without having to apply for a warrant from a regular court.

U.S. district judge Joan Lenard rejected defense motions to suppress evidence obtained through these secret searches.

In another violation of constitutional rights, the court allowed the prosecution to use secret evidence. After federal agents seized more than 20,000 pages of documents from the five men, the Justice Department stamped every page “top secret.” But not a single one was

a secret U.S. government document.

The government then invoked the Classified Information Procedures Act (CIPA), under which the court restricted defense access to the evidence. The prosecutors were allowed to introduce heavily censored documents or “summaries” of documents as “evidence.” The defense attorneys could only review the materials in a special room in the courthouse basement and were prohibited from taking their working notes from the facility.

A large amount of evidence was suppressed. Under the CIPA provisions, prosecutors met privately with the judge to decide what evidence would be kept from the defense and excluded from the trial. This included documents that could have contradicted the government’s case.

For example, the government alleged that Hernández was tied to the Cuban government’s downing of the two Brothers to the Rescue planes. As proof, they asserted that after the shutdown “Hernández wrote to his superiors that he and others took pride in having contributed to an operation that ‘ended successfully’” and that Cuban intelligence commended Hernández for “outstanding results achieved on the job.”

In an April 1, 2009, phone interview for *Progreso Weekly* magazine (reprinted in the July 20 *Militant*), Hernández explained that the “evidence” was manipulated by suppressing documents.

Just before the shutdown, Hernández had helped get Juan Pablo Roque, a fellow Cuban revolutionary who had infiltrated the Brothers outfit, secretly back to Cuba. “The U.S. government wanted to show that Roque’s return was linked with the shutdown. That’s absolutely false,” Hernández said in the interview. “It’s well documented that Roque’s return had been planned for a year before that happened.”

But the prosecution, he said, “cleverly removed from the evidence certain communications referring to Operation Venice—Roque’s return—and made it seem that they referred to Operation Scorpion, the operation to prevent the violation of Cuban airspace.

“One clear example is a message I sent responding to a request from Cuba saying that for me it was an honor to have made a modest contribution to a successful mission. It is super clear in the evidence that this referred to Opera-

tion Venice, the one about Roque. The government used it as its sole piece of evidence that I had something to do with the shutdown, although they know it did not refer to Operation Scorpion. . . . The prosecution mixed the two up purposely.”

In addition, the U.S. government prevented the defense attorneys from adequately preparing for the trial by limiting access to their clients, who were put in solitary confinement for 17 months prior to the trial.

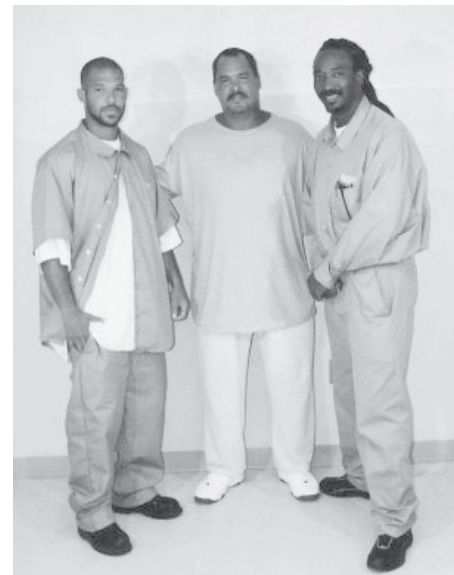
### Judge denies change of venue

From the outset, a central issue was the defense request for a change of venue because the accused could not receive an impartial trial in Miami-Dade County. Despite the atmosphere of bias and intimidation, Judge Lenard rejected seven defense motions to move the proceedings to another location, such as Fort Lauderdale in Broward County, just 30 miles to the north.

That atmosphere was promoted by U.S. officials, who from the moment of the arrests whipped up an effort to convict the five in the media, announcing the discovery of a “Cuban spy network” in Florida that “threatens national security.” The capitalist press in Miami did its part with sensationalist headlines and editorials about “Spies among us.”

Thuggish right-wing Cuban American groups, while much weaker than they were in earlier decades, were part of this picture. They organized protests in Miami during the trial, including actions marking the anniversary of the shutdown. In the months before the trial, Miami was also polarized by the controversy over Elián González, with rightists staging street protests opposing the return of the child to his father in Cuba.

During the jury selection, several potential jurors admitted they were concerned about the repercussions if they acquitted the five Cubans. David Cuevas, for example, said he would “fear for my own safety” if he didn’t return a guilty verdict acceptable to right-wing Cuban Americans. Jess Lawhorn expressed concern about economic reprisals against his business. Prospective juror Glanery said that because of publicity and the volatile atmosphere it would be difficult to follow the court’s instruction not to expose oneself to in-



Ramón Labañino, center, one of Cuban Five, with fellow prisoners. He is serving sentence of life plus 18 years in maximum security prison in Pine Knot, Kentucky.



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(see page 6)



# Crave of justice biased atmosphere, intimidation

formation about the case.

These concerns were well-founded. On Nov. 27, 2000, the first day of jury selection, right-wing forces organized a demonstration on the courthouse steps, featuring relatives of the downed Brothers outfit pilots. Jurors were exposed to the lunchtime protest and some were approached by the press.

Judge Lenard took a few steps to give the appearance that jurors were insulated from such pressures. She instructed U.S. government officials to talk to the Brothers pilots' relatives about their improper conduct. She extended a gag order to cover jurors and witnesses in addition to attorneys, and sealed the jury selection questions. She ordered marshals to accompany jurors as they left the building. During the trial she also limited the sketching of witnesses for their protection.

Jurors continued to complain they felt harassed. The judge again modified their guarded transportation to the courthouse and entry and exit from the building.

But during deliberations, right-wing TV stations continued to film jurors entering and leaving the courthouse, all the way to their cars. Even their license plates were filmed.

At one point in the trial, when José Basulto, head of Brothers to the Rescue, was questioned by defense attorney Paul McKenna about that group's record of armed attacks on Cuba, Basulto shot back, "Are you doing the work of the intelligence service of Cuba?"

This red-baiting, spy-baiting attack was a clear warning to the jurors of how they might be treated if they issued a not-guilty verdict. The judge told the jury to ignore the remark and chided Basulto, but allowed the tainted proceedings to continue.

## Double standard

While federal prosecutors insisted that an impartial trial could be held in Miami-Dade County for the five Cuban revolutionaries, just one year later they contradicted their argument in a separate case, *Ramirez v. Ashcroft*. The same U.S. attorney, Guy Lewis, moved for a change of venue in the new case on the basis that a fair trial in Miami-Dade was "virtually impossible" because of media coverage and community "prejudice."

In *Ramirez*, then-attorney general John Ashcroft and the Immigration and Naturalization Service were accused of employment discrimination against Latinos. In asking for a change of venue, the government cited many of the same

facts it had previously dismissed as irrelevant in the case of the Cuban Five, including the right-wing demonstrations over Elián González.

During jury selection for the trial against the Cuban Five, some of the 12 people chosen for the jury—which did not include Cuban

Americans—expressed their hostility toward the Cuban government. David Buker, who said he believed "[Fidel] Castro is a communist dictator and . . . I would like to see him gone and a democracy established in Cuba," was seated on the jury and named its foreman.

At the same time, the prosecution used its allotted peremptory challenges (those not requiring a reason) to strike Blacks from the jury. It used nine of its



Left, Javier Mamani/AFP/Getty Images; Right, Militant/Eric Simpson  
**Demonstrations in support of Cuban Five. Left, Bolivian indigenous women in front of U.S. embassy in La Paz, Bolivia, Sept. 12, 2007. Right, San Francisco June 15 following Supreme Court refusal to hear appeal.**

11 peremptory challenges to strike potential jurors. Seven of the nine were Black. Subsequently, one of the grounds for appeals of the frame-up of the Cuban Five was that the disproportionate exclusion of Blacks from the jury was discriminatory, a violation of the Equal Protection clause of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution.

Federal prosecutors had good reason to try to minimize the number of Blacks

on the jury. From experience many Blacks, especially workers, are likely to recognize a frame-up and understand the class-biased role of the government and police. And many have some knowledge of revolutionary Cuba's outstanding contributions to liberation struggles worldwide.

The next article will take up other issues that came up in the trial.

(To be continued)

## New Zealand meetings on Chinese Cubans

### Continued from front page

Wong talk about their five decades of experience on the front lines of the Cuban Revolution. They also discuss the historic place of Chinese immigration to Cuba. A Chinese translation of the book was launched at a meeting in Beijing in March.

The discussion at the Botany library—located in the middle of a large, busy shopping mall—centered on "what is socialism?" and the character and course of the Cuban and Chinese revolutions. Translation between Mandarin and English was provided by a Botany library staff member and another participant in the meeting.

Several in the audience who were born in China and today live in New Zealand explained that they found the talk interesting and informative, but remained unconvinced that a socialist revolution could provide a way forward.

"I love the story about the struggle, but I don't believe that socialism is the way," commented one. He said that hopes aroused by the anticolonial and socialist revolutions following World War II had been dashed. Waters welcomed the questions, saying they "raised the most important issues facing working people everywhere in the world today."

Another of the Chinese participants remarked that he had a family friend who had left Cuba because life got worse, not better, after the revolution.

### Gains won by Cuban Revolution

In response, Waters noted that not everyone in Cuba had welcomed the overthrow of the Batista dictatorship in 1959, or supported the broadly popular revolutionary measures taken by the new government. Workers and peasants mobilized to carry out a land reform; end organized gambling and prostitution operations, including in Chinatown; teach every adult how to read and write, even in the most remote mountain areas; and nationalized major industries and banks as the U.S. government tried to roll back these gains.

"The attitude of people in Cuba to the revolution—whatever their ancestry—depended more often than not on which class they were part of before the

revolution," she said.

"The Chinese, like other Cubans, were divided by class. Some were wealthy property owners, bankers, and businessmen with capitalist family ties in Panama, Venezuela, and the United States. Some had fled China after the victory of the Chinese revolution in 1949 and had ties to the Kuomintang regime in Taiwan," she explained. Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Party forces overran the island territory of Taiwan—historically part of China—in 1949 after their defeat on the mainland in the Chinese revolution.

Many of those wealthy Chinese families found their privileged lifestyle curtailed and decided to leave Cuba, said Waters.

"However, the big majority of Cubans of Chinese descent were working people," Waters noted, "and for them life was better after the revolution. They had access to jobs, health care, education, and were no longer the object of institutionalized discrimination." Like Choy, Chui, and Sio Wong, they were ready to give their lives for the revolution.

Cuba remains an underdeveloped country, Waters noted, and conditions of life are not easy. Cubans, from Raúl Castro on down, are the first to tell you that many problems they face today are their own doing. "But the single biggest problem they face is the determination of the U.S. rulers to punish them for their revolution," she said. Economic war to try to undermine the support of the Cuban people for the revolution has been "the policy of the U.S. government for 50 years."

### Chinese revolution

Turning to China, Waters observed, "The revolution there was one of the greatest anti-imperialist, national liberation struggles in history. Between 1949 and 1952, working people in the cities and the countryside put an end to the brutal rule of the wealthy landlords and capitalists. But the leadership of China's Communist Party—like the privileged ruling caste of the Soviet Union under Stalin and his successors—had a different class character than the revolutionary leadership of workers and farmers

in Cuba. Despite the words they used, what Mao Zedong and his party brought forth in China was not communism, but its antithesis."

Waters urged participants in the meeting to buy *Our History Is Still Being Written* and to pick up the discussion again after reading it. With the enthusiastic cooperation of the library staff, informal discussion continued after the meeting adjourned, eventually wrapping up almost an hour past the library's closing time.

While the Botany library meeting was one of the highpoints of the visit, Waters also had an opportunity to explain the Cuban Revolution to a still wider audience in "Asian Report," a weekly 15-minute radio talk show hosted by Jason Moon on free-to-air public broadcaster Radio New Zealand. Recorded on July 20, the 13-minute interview was broadcast July 28. It can be heard at [http://www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/asian\\_report](http://www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/asian_report).

### Campus meetings

Waters also spoke to two campus meetings, one at the University of Auckland sponsored by the Spanish Department and hosted by Kathryn Lehman, a department senior lecturer; the other at Auckland University of Technology, sponsored by the Centre for Asian and Migrant Health Research, and chaired by Shoba Nayar.

The speaking tour of New Zealand was wrapped up at a July 24 Militant Labour Forum on "Cuba and Africa—Solidarity to Africa and its struggles for freedom: hallmark of the Cuban Revolution." Both Waters and Tom Baumann, a leader of the U.S. Young Socialists and the Socialist Workers Party candidate for Manhattan borough president in New York City, addressed the meeting.

Among the nearly 40 participants were several students and others who had built the meetings throughout the week, and four Tamil activists who have been actively mobilizing defense of the Tamil people's fight for self-determination in face of the Sri Lankan government's recent brutal military offensive to crush that struggle.

## 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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# All troops out of Central Asia now!

The U.S.-led imperialist war in Afghanistan is going into its ninth year this October. It is part of Washington’s multifront “long war” in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq. Working people should demand the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. and “coalition” forces—not one penny, not one person for Washington’s wars.

The growing crisis of world capitalism—now in the opening stages of a depression—is driving the propertied families that run the U.S. government to accelerate their war drive, as they try to get a leg up on their competitors abroad. Their goal—to set up stable allies in that region of the world to help them more effectively exploit working people there—is proving to be a more difficult task in Afghanistan.

Though the U.S. rulers have made political and military progress in Iraq, they continue to face substantial obstacles towards their goal of a stable regime in Baghdad. That fact is sharply highlighted by the explosive character of the fight for Kurdish rights and self-determination in Iraq and the region. The Kurdish Regional Government, an autonomous administration in northern Iraq, has laid claims to land and oil deposits, which are disputed by the government in Baghdad.

Gen. Raymond Odierno, the top U.S. commander in Iraq, said the conflict over Kurdish control of land and resources is “probably our No. 1 driver of instability.”

The Obama administration has ordered some 21,000 troops to Afghanistan during its less than seven months in power. The Pentagon says its goal is to have 68,000 there by the end of the year—nearly double the level when former president George Bush left office. The total number of U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan combined are nearing the level they were at around the height of the “surge” in Iraq in 2007. Even still, top U.S. military and government officials are saying that further increases in troop levels will be needed.

The U.S. government, its imperialist allies, and the media bombard working people daily with scenes of the suicide bombings and other dead-end tactics of armed Islamic groups. What working people in the region need most is time and political space to find effective methods of struggle and develop revolutionary leadership. Getting imperialist troops out is the most important blow that can be struck toward that goal—one that is in the interests of working people in the United States and throughout the world. Troops out now!

# More U.S. troops to war in Afghanistan

Continued from front page

specialists” from the American Enterprise Institute, the Brookings Institution, and the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

General McChrystal was instructed by his superiors—including Defense Secretary Gates and Adm. Michael Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—to assess the war thoroughly, and not hold back in his recommendations for more troops, funds, or equipment, reported the *Army Times* Web site July 31. McChrystal was handpicked by Gates and confirmed unanimously by the Senate in June as commander of U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan.

“This war has been fought without resources, but above all without realism,” said Anthony Cordesman, from the Center for Strategic and International Studies, who is involved in preparing the report.

While posturing as being “concerned” about troop levels in Afghanistan, the administration of President Barack Obama is committed to pursuing the Afghanistan war. The number of U.S. troops there will nearly double by the end of this year—from 38,000 when Obama took office to 68,000.

The troop level increase is tied to a change in how the war is being conducted in Afghanistan. The new approach, a version of the strategy launched in Iraq in 2007 known as the “surge,” will concentrate on clearing and holding key population centers rather than fighting in remote mountainous areas where Taliban combatants seek sanctuary.

The assessment report also calls for expanding the Afghan army from 134,000 to 240,000, and the police

force from 92,000 to 160,000, reported the *Washington Post*.

U.S. commanders hope that a change in the “operational culture” of U.S. and NATO forces to using more counterinsurgency methods will deepen the divisions among the Taliban and other forces fighting against the imperialist-led forces, and weaken their influence over the population. This approach is being put to the test in Helmand Province where U.S. and British troops have been engaged in major military operations since June in anticipation of the August 20 presidential and provincial elections.

Since McChrystal took command in Afghanistan the U.S. military has stopped releasing body counts of insurgents reportedly killed in operations. The death toll “distracts from the real objectives and isn’t necessary to communicate what we’re trying to achieve,” said Col. Greg Julian, a U.S. military spokesperson.

U.S. military officials have often insisted that almost all the deaths caused by U.S. and NATO military operations are Islamist fighters, and have refused to take responsibility for the killing of civilians. This has long been a source of friction and opposition to foreign military presence in the population.

As part of the military buildup in Afghanistan, Spanish prime minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero said July 29 that his government was willing to increase Spanish troops if needed. Madrid, which currently has 800 troops in Afghanistan, recently sent an additional force of 450. A smaller contingent of 130 Mongolian soldiers will arrive in Kabul in August for training of Afghan soldiers and other operations.

## LETTERS

### Free the Cuban 5!

The article, *How U.S. government framed Cuban revolutionary: Facts of Cuba’s 1996 downing of rightist planes*, was not only very well done but urgently

needed. It should be part of the truth kit that every defender of the Cuban 5 uses.

It would be great if this article were available at the Web sites that are most used by people seeking more information and updates on what they can do to join the defense efforts.

Rachele Fruit  
Atlanta, Georgia

### World capitalist crisis

The editorial in the August 3 *Militant* states: “The only thing the employers can do to turn around their declining rates of profit is to lower the standard of living for working people.”

I was thinking that you could

add: but this won’t resolve the deepening capitalist economic crisis. . . .

Add to that the increase in the savings rate, stemming from the fear of poverty, and the increased difficulties of getting a consumer loan or a home loan—it all points in the same direction.

Jim Miller  
Seattle, Washington

**The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.**

# American Apparel

Continued from front page

broadly in the plant following a meeting the previous Saturday of some 250 workers from American Apparel organized by Hermandad Mexicana Latinoamericana. Some supervisors, most of whom are facing firing, attended the meeting.

The fight against the firings has won support from U.S.-born workers as well as immigrants. “Now is the time to get motivated for the cause,” said R. Henderson, an African American who attended the Saturday meeting. “I saw so many coworkers there. They are hard-working people, not criminals. We are all workers. That’s the point. We have the same problems.” Some Black workers in the fabric control and shipping departments also signed the petition.

“I have papers,” said José Gómez, “but I support the others. How are they going to find work?” Some workers with papers declined to sign.

### ‘We’re defending our rights’

The petitions were delivered to Charney by Esther Hernández, a sewing machine operator who spoke at the rally. “We’re proud to be here because we’re defending our rights,” she declared, as she presented the stack of petitions to Charney, who went on the march. “We’re asking for more time. We don’t want to be trampled on, we don’t want to lose our jobs,” she added to shouts of agreement from her coworkers. Juan Calmo, a sewing machine operator, also spoke.

Isela Sánchez had been building the march all day in the plant. She has a letter from the company giving her 30 days to provide valid papers or be fired, with a deadline of August 6. “Immigration raids are a big problem,” she said. “But even bigger is the problem of them taking away our work for lack of documents. We can’t survive without work. We have a good boss. But the government isn’t letting us work. And the economy is getting worse.”

As they got off the job, workers crowded in front of the entrance to the plant, and assembled on the loading dock, urging their fellow workers to stay and march.

The march was originally planned to stay on the sidewalk, but workers filled the streets chanting, “*¡Sí se puede!*” (Yes, we can) and “Obama, fulfill your promise!” The central focus of the march, which was called by the Southern California Immigration Coalition (SCIC), was to demand that President Barack Obama stop the rampant I-9 audits and E-Verify, which are leading to mass firings.

I-9 audits are investigations conducted by ICE that review the legal status of workers and oblige employers to act on any “discrepancies.” E-verify is an Internet database bosses use to check a newly hired worker’s status with the federal government.

“Other companies are doing the same thing,” said Manuel, a second shift sewer who had received a letter from the company. “We want them to stop the firings. That is the objective of the march.”

“We need the government to legalize all workers. They say we’re criminals, but our crime is to be hungry,” said sewing machine operator Erendira Valades.

On July 1 ICE notified 652 companies—nearly 50 of them in Los Angeles—of plans to audit their employment records.

Pedro, a meatpacking worker, also spoke at the rally. “The companies take advantage of undocumented workers to lower the wages and keep us quiet. I’m active in the union at my plant. The only way for us to advance is to organize together. We need to move forward with this fight, which is just beginning,” he said.

Other speakers included Marcelino Arteaga of the Overhill Farms Workers Council; Nativo López, president of Hermandad Mexicana Latinoamericana; Daniel Montes from the SCIC; and State Senator Gilbert Cedillo.

Charney also spoke briefly toward the end of the rally. For years Charney has promoted a “Legalize LA” campaign for immigration reform, including giving T-shirts to immigrant rights organizations.

Nearly 300 people turned out August 1 for another rally sponsored by the SCIC. More than half of them were workers from American Apparel. “We won a round,” said Adan Hernández, commenting on the 30-day extension won on the job. “We have to make the politicians realize that what they’re doing has consequences for working people and they have to stop it.”

Arlene Rubinstein contributed to this article.