

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Iowa socialist joins debate at union campaign forum  
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 73/NO. 33 AUGUST 31, 2009

## Troy Davis wins review in death penalty case

Supporters call Sept. 26 Washington march



Militant/Seth Galinsky

May 19 rally to demand justice for Troy Davis at Union Square in New York City. Fight to save Davis's life and free him has become rallying point for opponents of death penalty.

BY RACHELE FRUIT

ATLANTA, August 17—In a 6-2 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court today ordered a federal judge to determine whether new evidence exists that could prove Troy Davis's innocence. Davis, a death-row inmate in Georgia, was convicted in 1991 for killing off-duty police officer Mark MacPhail. Davis is Black. MacPhail was white.

Davis's supporters are organizing a march on Washington, D.C., September 26 to demand a halt to his execution. Amnesty International and Geor-

gians For Alternatives to the Death Penalty are also stepping up efforts to reach out with public educational campaigns to win support for Davis.

In a 2-1 decision in April a federal appeals court ruled against Davis on the grounds that innocence alone is not grounds for a new trial. That ruling also cited the 1996 Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, which imposed deadlines and limited the number of appeals death-row prisoners can make.

Dissenting in today's ruling, Judge

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## Conservatives gain in debate on health care amid insecurity

BY CINDY JAQUITH

Conservative forces are making gains in their effort to block President Barack Obama's health-care "reform," reflecting the increased insecurity and resentment, especially in middle-class layers of the population, as the economic depression grinds on.

Sharply polarized debates on the proposed health-care legislation have broken out at town hall meetings held by members of Congress around the country. A Gallup poll conducted August 6-9 found 49 percent opposed the health plan, and 43 percent approved of it.

At an August 3 town hall meeting in Philadelphia, Sen. Arlen Specter and Health and Human Services Secretary Kathy Sebelius were drowned out by boos.

Many opponents of the plan have charged that the reform is a cover for socialized medicine and single out in particular a "government-run insurance option."

Obama decided to personally take

to the road to defend his plan. At his August 11 town hall meeting in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, the *New York Times* reported, some 2,000 people demonstrated outside, roughly half for and half against the plan. One protester chanted "Euthanize Obama!" while another carried a sign, "Euthanize Ignorance: Go Obama." Another

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## Rising debt, joblessness show capitalist crisis is long-term

BY BEN JOYCE

While some capitalist media are predicting a turnaround in the worldwide capitalist depression, the accelerating mortgage-debt crisis in the housing markets, decline in retail sales, and mounting long-term unemployment indicate the crisis has barely begun.

More than a quarter of those who own a house in the United States now owe more on their mortgage than

## Chicago-area NOW builds Nebraska pro-choice action

BY LAURA ANDERSON

CHICAGO—Responding to the call from the Kansas and Omaha National Organization for Women, the DuPage County NOW in Illinois is organizing pro-choice activists to go to Omaha, Nebraska, to defend a woman's right to choose abortion.

The rightist antiabortion outfit Operation Rescue has announced plans for a "Keep It Closed" campaign August 28-29 aimed at the abortion clinic of Dr. LeRoy Carhart in Omaha.

"NOW is the time for action!" says a letter sent to organizations and individuals in DuPage, Cook, and other counties near the Chicago metropolitan area. The letter pointed to the killing of Dr. George Tiller, who had been targeted by antiabortion groups in Wichita, Kansas, to underscore that action is needed to counter them. Tiller was shot and killed May 31 by an antiabortion rightist while ushering in his church. Doctor Carhart worked

closely with Tiller and says he plans to open a clinic in Kansas.

"The Kansas and Omaha NOW have contacted us asking for our help in the fight to keep one of our most fundamental rights, the right to choose," the DuPage NOW letter states. "Therefore, DuPage NOW, in collaboration with other organizations, is mobilizing on August 27th 2009, to rally in support of Doctor Carhart's Nebraska clinic."

According to Michelle Fadeley, the president of DuPage NOW, abortion rights defenders will be caravaning in cars to Omaha to be part of the two-day effort to defend Doctor Carhart's clinic against the attempt by Operation Rescue and two other anti-abortion groups to shut it down.

At an August 7 Militant Labor Forum titled, "No to Illinois Parental Notification Law! Defend a woman's right to choose abortion!" Fadeley,

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## Slow gov't response to typhoon spurs growing anger in Taiwan

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Floods and mudslides unleashed by Typhoon Morakot swept across Taiwan over the August 8-9 weekend killing at least 500 people and stranding thousands in mountainous villages. It is the latest example of how class inequalities are exposed by "natural disasters."

The typhoon dumped more than 80 inches of rain on Taiwan that weekend. Indigenous Taiwanese tribes, including the Rukai and Paiwan, living in the mountainous southern parts of the island, were the hardest hit by the storm. In Shiao Lin mudslides buried some 200 houses and the village's only school, survivors told the *Wall Street Journal*. Taiwan president Ma Ying-jeou estimates 380 were killed there, but surviving resi-

dents have said those buried in the debris number at least 600.

President Ma said that the typhoon destroyed the homes of 7,000 people and caused agricultural and property damage of more than \$1.5 billion on the island.

Anger by local residents has grown over the government's slow response in conducting rescue operations. In

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Pingtung, Taiwan, August 16, a week after Typhoon Morakot hit region.

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# Nickel miners in Canada strike to defend union

BY MICHEL DUGRÉ  
AND ANNETTE KOURI

SUDBURY, Ontario—More than 3,300 members of the United Steelworkers in Canada have been on strike since July 13 against nickel producer Vale Inco. On August 1 some 100 members of Local 9508 from Voisey’s Bay in Labrador joined the strike. Workers on the picket line here say the company is seeking concessions aimed at breaking the union.

In addition to the strike, Vale Inco has halted mining and refinery operations in Thompson, Manitoba, for maintenance, bringing the company’s nickel production to a standstill across the country.

The heart of Vale Inco’s Canadian operation is here in Sudbury. Workers spoke to the *Militant* about their determination to stand strong. “If we roll over we lose the union” was the way that Rob Guy put it. Guy has 32 years at Inco.

Vale Inco, based in Brazil, is the world’s second largest mining company. Vale bought Inco, previously a Canadian multinational, in 2006.

Workers say the company has been driving ever since to lower wages and working conditions. Workers on the line pointed out that Vale Inco’s demands around the pension plan targets new workers and would impose second-class status on them.

Company demands also open the door to contracting out work in the mines by non-union workers, resulting in decreased job security, workers said.

They also pointed out that the com-

pany’s demands to weaken union representation in the mines and the refineries target the fight for health and safety. Summarizing a very widely held opinion among strikers, Derek Cyr said, “For safety at work you need the union.”

The union explains that reductions in production bonuses—which the union accepted in lieu of a wage increase in the past—and changes in cost-of-living allowance payments mean that wages will be frozen.

This strike is being waged under very difficult conditions. Industrial production continues to decline worldwide. The threat of deflation, under pressure from excess capacity, is looming. The most recent jobless figures in Canada are still showing high unemployment. The unadjusted rate of jobless and involuntary part-time workers was more than 11 percent in June. Many Vale Inco workers were on lay off when they voted to go on strike.

At union rallies and in material publicizing the fight Steelworkers officials have presented a nationalist course, emphasizing that Vale Inco is based in Brazil. A letter from the union seeking support said: “For foreign companies to extract those Canadian resources and reap such substantial profits, but not provide our families . . . with secure incomes is just not right.”

For about 800 of the Steelworkers in Sudbury, this is their first strike experience. They spoke to the *Militant* about their resolve to stand with the older workers and defend their union.

About a dozen members of the

## New Zealand school workers demand wage raise



Militant/Felicity Coggan

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Chanting “\$12.94—we’re worth more!” some 250 state school support workers, including teacher aides, librarians, administrators, and others marched through South Auckland August 7.

The protest was part of nationwide actions by the workers’ union, the 13,000-member New Zealand Educational Institute Te Riu Roa, to protest the government’s refusal to agree to any wage increase. Workers say that many earn just above the minimum wage of NZ\$12.50 per hour, about US\$8.33.

The protest ended in a rally to present Associate Education Minister Pita Sharples messages of support for the union’s demands from school communities. Protest organizer Jane Marti told the crowd, “We do not want the government to use this recession as an excuse not to give us a fair deal.” More information can be found at [fairdeal.org.nz](http://fairdeal.org.nz).

—FELICITY COGGAN

Ontario Public Service Employees Union joined picket lines in Sudbury August 4 with a check for \$2,800 and a promise of more to come.

Unions internationally, including from South Africa and Brazil, have expressed their support. Two union

representatives attended a conference in Brazil hosted by the Labor Federation of Brazil. The federation supports the strike.

One worker told the *Militant*: “I’m sure those workers are watching us and they will want what we get.”

## THE MILITANT

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Militant/Tom Baumann

Union supporters at FlatRate Moving company in Bronx, New York, August 14.

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# Workers in Haiti march to raise minimum wage

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

MIAMI—About 2,000 people protested outside Haiti’s parliament August 4 to demand an increase in the minimum wage. Haitian police responded by firing tear gas at the crowd. Many of the protesters were factory workers.

The next day United Nations troops attacked demonstrators who were protesting a two-month electricity outage in Lascahobas, a rural town near Haiti’s border with the Dominican Republic.

“Seventy gourdes, that doesn’t do anything for me,” Banel Jeune told the Associated Press, referring to his current daily wage (\$2.10). Jeune is a 29-year-old garment worker who sews sleeves on shirts. “I can’t feed my kids, and I can’t send them to school,” he said.

Following the August 4 protest, parliament voted 55-6 to raise the minimum wage from \$1.75 to \$3.75 a day, short of the \$5-a-day wage demanded by the demonstrators.

Haiti with a population of 9 million people is the Western Hemisphere’s poorest nation. Of those employed on the island most work on small farms or sell goods on the streets. Only 250,000 people have jobs covered by the minimum wage law, said Steven Benoit, who sponsored the bill.

UN troops said that at least three people were injured in Lascahobas. Port-au-Prince-based Radio Metropole reported that two people were killed.

This was one of numerous attacks by the UN military force against protesters in Haiti.

A force of 9,000 UN soldiers—operating under the authority of the Security Council—established United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti—has been in the country since the 2004 overthrow of the elected government of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. On February 29 of that year, as armed rightists prepared to lay siege to the capital, U.S. officials placed Aristide on an unmarked plane and forcibly flew him to the Central African Republic and forced him into exile.

## MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

### CALIFORNIA

#### San Francisco

**U.S. Imperialism Sees High Stakes in Expanded Role in Africa.** Speaker: Joel Britton, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Aug. 28, 7:30 p.m. 5482 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

### FLORIDA

#### Miami

**The Crisis Is Far from Over. Working People Need to Take Political Power.** Speaker: Bernie Senter, SWP. Fri., Aug. 28, 8 p.m. 6777 NW 7th Ave., Suite 5. Tel.: (305) 757-8869.

### NEW YORK

#### Manhattan

**U.S./NATO Troops Out of Afghanistan and Pakistan Now!** Speaker: Seth Galinsky, SWP. Fri., Aug. 28, 8 p.m. 307 W 36th St. (near 8th Ave.), 10th Fl. Tel.: (212) 629-6649.

An estimated 4.5 million Haitians live in countries outside of Haiti, said Bernier Lauredan, president of the Haitian League, which is headquartered in Irvington, New Jersey. The group organized a four-day Haitian Diaspora Unity Congress August 6–9, which took place at the Trump International Beach Resort in Sunny Isles Beach, Florida.

The conference was geared towards businesspeople and politicians, as shown by the \$250 admission fee.

The money that Haitians outside the country wire back home accounts for one-third of the island’s gross domestic product. In 2007, remittances sent to Haiti totaled \$1.83 billion, according to the Inter-American Development Bank.

On the last day of the conference former U.S. president William Clinton, who is the UN’s special envoy to Haiti, addressed the congress. Clinton lectured Haitian Americans “to do



Militant/Bernie Senter

**Sixty people protest August 9 outside hotel in Sunny Isles Beach, Florida, where former U.S. president William Clinton was addressing Haitian Diaspora Unity Congress. Demonstration demanded freedom for political prisoners in Haiti.**

more” for Haiti. He shared the stage with Haitian prime minister Michele Pierre-Louis.

Sixty people, mostly Haitians from Miami, organized a protest outside

the hotel to coincide with Clinton’s address. Organized by the Haitian rights organization Veye Yo, the demonstrators demanded freedom for all political prisoners in Haiti.

# High court orders new trial in death-row case

Continued from front page

Antonin Scalia called the court action to remand the case to a U.S. district court in Georgia, “an extraordinary step—one not taken in nearly 50 years.” He also asserted that the evidence to be reviewed has already been considered and rejected multiple times. Judge Clarence Thomas joined in dissenting. Judges John Paul Stevens, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and Stephen Breyer signed the majority opinion. Newly confirmed Justice Sonia Sotomayor did not participate in the decision.

Stephen Bright of the Southern Center for Human Rights in Atlanta called the court’s order “an immensely important decision” but told the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* that it places the burden of proof upon Davis. Tom Dunn, one of Davis’s attorneys, told the *Journal* he is confident in his client’s innocence.

Davis has maintained his innocence for the past 20 years. There was no physical evidence linking Davis to the killing. He was convicted on the basis of eyewitness testimony. Since the trial, seven of nine state witnesses have recanted or contradicted their testimony.

An attractive flyer that calls on people to “Get on the bus” is being circulated to build the September 26 march

on Washington two days before the Supreme Court reconvenes. Amnesty International is organizing the rally, and buses will be leaving from Atlanta; Savannah, Georgia; North Carolina; and New York City. Details on the march are available at JusticeForTroy.org.

Amnesty International is also urging students to organize teach-ins the week of September 21–27. “We must shine as bright a spotlight on this case as we can, to make it clear to the Court and to Georgia authorities that the injustices of this case are simply not acceptable,” said an Amnesty statement. “So we need all of you to reach out to

your campuses and communities.”

James Clark, coordinator of Georgians For Alternatives to the Death Penalty, in a recent letter to supporters outlined the work that has been done in Georgia to put pressure on Larry Chisolm, district attorney in Chatham County where the case was prosecuted.

Teams are collecting signatures on petitions requesting that Chisolm reopen Davis’s case. So far 11,000 signatures of Savannah residents have been publicly presented to Chisolm. Canvassing trips to Savannah will continue every other weekend between now and the march on Washington.

## Atlanta socialists back fight to free Troy Davis

ATLANTA—Lisa Potash, Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Atlanta, and Jacob Perasso, the party’s candidate for president of the city council, have pledged to redouble efforts to free Troy Davis.

In a message to Martina Correia, Davis’s sister, Potash wrote, “It is because of the steadfastness of you and your family, and the determination expressed by many thousands at the rallies here and around the world and through the petitioning campaign in Savannah, that this new stage in the fight has been opened. . . . See you in Washington.”

Perasso is urging his campaign supporters to join him in Savannah on August 28–29 in a petitioning effort to get Davis’s case reopened. Anyone interested in participating in this effort can contact Georgians For Alternatives to the Death Penalty at jclark@gfadp.org or the Socialist Workers campaign office at swpatlanta@bellsouth.net.

# Chicago NOW builds Nebraska pro-choice action

Continued from front page

along with Khadine Bennett from the ACLU, Soo Ji Min from the Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health, and Laura Anderson from the Socialist Workers Party spoke on the latest attack on women’s right to choose abortion in Illinois.

The Parental Notice of Abortion Act of 1995 went into effect August 4 in Illinois after a federal court injunction barring its implementation was lifted.

Panelists pointed to the fact that Illinois now becomes the 35th state requiring some sort of parental involvement in the decision to have an abortion. A young woman’s primary

reason for not telling a parent is usually because of fears of abuse or eviction.

Fadeley explained how young women used to be able to go to Illinois to get an abortion without a parent’s permission. “All the other surrounding states require some sort of parental involvement. . . . The right wingers want us to believe that they are defenders of life but they just want to push women’s rights back,” she said.

DuPage NOW organized a protest July 18 to counter the Pro-Life Action League (PLAL) “Face the Truth” tour in Naperville, Illinois.

The PLAL is an antiabortion right-wing group that mobilized hundreds

of people to protest the opening of the Planned Parenthood clinic in Aurora, Illinois, in the summer of 2007. At that time pro-choice activists held counter pickets in Aurora to defend women’s right to choose.

At the forum their was a discussion on going to the Omaha action and on the need to have a mobilization to push back the right-wing attacks that have been chipping away at the right to choose since it was won in 1973.

**THE MILITANT**

online

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# Montreal rally protests cop killing of immigrant

BY JOE YOUNG

MONTREAL—Some 500 people demonstrated here August 9 to demand justice for Fredy Villanueva, who was gunned down by cops exactly one year ago.

“Today we march for justice and truth. And we are going to continue until charges are laid against the police officer who shot my brother,” said Wendy Villanueva. The cop killed Fredy Villanueva, 18, while he was coming to the aid of his brother Danny who was being harassed by the police. The Villanueva family moved to Canada from Honduras in 1998.

The day after cops killed Villanueva the police riot squad attacked a peaceful protest against the killing. The cops involved have not been charged. Initially the government refused to pay the costs for lawyers at the coroner’s inquest for two others who were wounded during the police shooting. After Villanueva’s family refused to cooperate with the inquest, the government relented and the inquest will start in the fall.

The march was very youthful and many from the community participated chanting, “Police, murderers!” and “Jail the police.” There were signs commemorating many of those killed by the police over the last few years. Speaking at the rally were the fathers of Mohamed Anas Bennis and Quilem Registre, two others the police have killed. Many people watching from their apartments encouraged the marchers.

The capitalist media violence-baited the march in the days leading up to it. One article in *24 heures* was entitled, “Montreal North: People Fear the Aug. 9 March.” At the beginning of the

march police on bicycles provocatively blocked the way before allowing the protesters to proceed.

At the end of the demonstration, Fredy’s mother Lilian Villanueva said, “Immigrants must not die because they are immigrants.” The march was organized by Montréal-Nord Républik and the Coalition against Repression and Police Abuse. In their leaflet distributed during the march, the coalition called for a public inquiry.

Beverly Bernardo, the Communist League candidate for the borough of Villeray-Saint-Michel-Parc-Extension, participated with her supporters. The CL campaign platform calls for charging the police who killed Villanueva. TVA television interviewed Bernardo during the march.



Militant/John Steele

Participants in August 9 rally in Montreal to demand justice for Fredy Villanueva, who cops killed one year ago. Signs list names of many victims of cop killings in Montreal since 1980s. Large sign second from left says, “The blood of all of us is red. But it has to stop being shed!”

## FlatRate movers in New York fight for union

BY TOM BAUMANN

NEW YORK—A giant inflatable rat could be seen August 14 in front of FlatRate Moving company’s Bronx location. After a three-month union-organizing drive, workers there were voting on whether to join Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union/United Food and Commercial Workers Local 116.

More than 40 workers have been fired since early July for supporting the union, including 28 in just one week, according to Warren Iglesias, 23, who was one of the first to be fired. Iglesias said the supervisors claim he was let go because of the “bad economy,” even though there is still plenty of work.

Workers said the company began to

interrogate workers after they learned of the organizing drive. “Are you with the company or are you with the union?” Humberto Matos said his boss asked him. He was fired July 8.

Francisco García, another worker who says he was fired for union activity, had been with the company for 18 months. He said he worked long hours, taking home \$35–\$45 per day on average. “I read an ad in the *Daily News* advertising good salary, vacations, bonuses, and benefits, but none of it was true,” he said.

One of the central demands was company health care. Only four out of nearly 300 workers receive health benefits, Iglesias said. “They play favorites.”

Workers are demanding an hourly

wage instead of being paid on commission. They said the company divides a 27 percent commission among the workers on each job. “Movers work in groups of four, five, or six,” said Rafael Ramos. “Sometimes you get only \$15–\$17 a day.”

Workers said they also wanted paid vacations in their new contract, which currently only drivers receive.

Many cited abuse by supervisors for the reason they supported the union. Enrique Valásquez, a driver, was involved in a car accident with a company moving truck. “I came in for work every day for one month after that, but I only worked three days.” He was then fired.

The company declined to comment.

To win union recognition, the workers needed 122 votes in favor. As of Friday night, the ballots cast were 86 against and 67 in favor, with 95 votes challenged. Iglesias said company intimidation discouraged some workers from voting for the union. The next step will be to resolve votes challenged by the union and the company.

Dan Fein contributed to this article.

## New Zealand: Telephone workers end strike

BY JANET ROTH

AUCKLAND, New Zealand, August 13—Telephone lines engineers returned to work here today but are refusing to work on broadband lines in continued opposition to an assault on their wages and working conditions by Chorus, a unit of Telecom that manages phone and Internet service in New Zealand. The workers are organized by the Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union.

Chorus bosses have given Visionstream, one of its three contractors, service contracts in Auckland and Northland, New Zealand, replacing Downer EDI and Transfield Services in those regions.

The change will affect about 900 out of 2,500 workers nationwide. Visionstream says it will hire only those who sign owner-operator agreements, meaning they will get paid for each job they are given rather than receiving set wages and hours of work.

Under this deal, each engineer would be forced to set up a business and provide his or her own vehicle, tools, and equipment. Workers on the picket line here estimated that setup expenses alone would run into tens of thousands of dollars. Most have refused to sign on to the scheme.

“We just want wages,” striker Mike Looker told the *Militant*. Visionstream, he said, “is giving us terms and we have to agree. There’s no negotiations. We’ll get up to 60 percent less in earnings.

There’s nasty clauses, like they’re not obligated to give us work or pay us.”

In addition to their picket lines, strikers have conducted protest marches in a number of cities.

Workers outside of Auckland and

Northland are employed by Downer or Transfield. In place of hourly wages, Downer bosses are seeking to impose a choice for workers between a piece-rate system or signing a similar owner-operator agreement.

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



August 31, 1984

LAWRENCE, Massachusetts—On August 8, Puerto Ricans and Dominicans from the Lower Tower Hill section of this city rebelled against the racism and oppression that has come to characterize their day-to-day lives here.

The incidents that touched off the rebellion began earlier that day when two Latino women were subjected to racist taunts from a group of whites as they walked past Pettoruto’s Liquor Store. Later that evening, a small group of whites who lived above this same liquor store came down the block, entered the Latino neighborhood, and smashed the windshield of a car parked on the street.

Shortly thereafter, the mainly Puerto Rican and Dominican community took control of the four-block Lower Tower Hill area. City cops tried to enter the neighborhood but were forced to retreat until state police reinforcements arrived.



August 31, 1959

Weighted heavily on the side of liberal Democrats elected last fall as “friends” of labor and of civil rights, the 86th Congress is winding up its first session by clubbing the labor movement over the head and knifing the Negro people in the back. There will almost certainly be no civil rights law this year. A last minute flurry by some Senators and Representatives to make a showing for the benefit of their constituents only further exposes the sham.

The liberals forgot their campaign promises even before Congress got under way. Civil rights legislation suffered its first defeat in January when most liberal Democrats knuckled under to Lyndon Johnson and Speaker Sam Rayburn (both from Texas), the majority leaders in the Senate and House. Johnson blocked a move in the Senate to change Rule 22 by means of which Dixiecrats can filibuster any civil rights measure.



September 1, 1934

Unless Mrs. Elinore M. Herrick, vice-chairman of the Regional Labor Board, succeeds in delaying the issue (when has she ever settled one?) 10,000 truck drivers in Greater New York will go out on strike today.

The issue is simple and clear. In January 1933 the trucking bosses succeeded in persuading the leaders of the truck drivers union that a voluntary reduction of \$5 a week would be for the good of the industry. The period of the reduction has expired, and presumably the bosses were to restore the wages to the 1933 level, but this they refuse to do.

There is no need to offer here the pretext on the part of the bosses for not sticking to their promise. The workers were tricked by pleas for cooperation with the bosses. Now they are undeceived, and willing to fight for their most elementary rights.



# How Cuban workers defeated U.S.-backed invasion

Below is an excerpt from *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month in August. In fewer than 72 hours of combat April 17–19, 1961, Cuba's revolutionary armed forces defeated a U.S.-organized invasion near the Bay of Pigs by 1,500 mercenaries. Leading up to the invasion, on April 15, counterrevolutionaries had bombed several Cuban airbases, killing seven young defenders of the revolution. The following selection is from a speech by Fidel Castro on April 16, 1961. Copyright © 2001 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY FIDEL CASTRO

Yesterday at 6:00 a.m., as everyone knows, three groups of bombers penetrated the national territory from abroad and attacked three points of the national territory. At each of these points, men defended themselves heroically. In each of these points, the courageous blood of the defenders was shed. . . .

There were Yankee planes, Yankee bombs, and Yankee weapons, as well as mercenaries paid by the Yankee Central Intelligence Agency. . . .

And these miserable gringo imperialists, after shrouding seven homes in



Top: worker and peasant militia members mobilize to confront mercenary invasion of Cuba. Inset: April 18, 1961, issue of *Revolución*: "Everyone to their posts in combat and work!"

mourning, after murdering a handful of young people who were not millionaire parasites—because those we've come here to bury were not millionaire parasites, they were not mercenaries who sold themselves for foreign gold, they were not thieves. They are true sons of our people! [Prolonged applause]

They were young workers, children from families of ordinary people who never stole anything from anyone, who never exploited anyone, and who had a right to live more than the millionaires. They had more right to live than the parasites and the *gusanos*! [Applause] Because they did not live off the labor of others, like the Yankee millionaires. They did not live off foreign gold, like the mercenaries and *gusanos* who have sold out to imperialism. [Shouts of "Down with them!"] They did not live off vice or theft, and they had a right to have their lives respected. And no miserable imperialist millionaire has the right to send planes, bombs, and missiles to snuff out these young and cherished lives of the homeland! [Applause] . . .

What the imperialists cannot forgive is that we are here. What the

imperialists cannot forgive is the dignity, the integrity, the courage, the firmness of ideas, the spirit of sacrifice, and the revolutionary spirit of the people of Cuba. [Applause] That is what they cannot forgive, that we are here under their very nose. What they cannot forgive is that we have made a socialist revolution right under the very nose of the United States! [Applause and shouts] That we defend this socialist revolution with these guns! [Applause] That we defend this socialist revolution with the same courage shown yesterday when our antiaircraft artillery riddled the aggressor's planes with bullets! [Applause and shouts of "Venceremos!" and other revolutionary slogans.]

This revolution is not defended with mercenaries. This revolution is defended by men and women of the people.

Who has the weapons? Do the mercenaries perhaps have the weapons? [Shouts of "No!"] Because mercenaries and millionaires are the same thing. Do the little rich boys perhaps have the weapons? [Shouts of "No!"] Do the overseers perhaps have the weapons? [Shouts of "No!"] Who has the weapons? [Shouts] In whose hands are these weapons now being raised? [Shouts] Are they the hands of playboys? [Shouts of "No!"] Are they the hands of the rich? [Shouts of "No!"] Are they the hands of the exploiters? [Shouts of "No!"]

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Whose hands are now raising these weapons? Aren't they the hands of workers? [Shouts of "Yes!"] Aren't they the hands of peasants? [Shouts of "Yes!"] Aren't they hands hardened by work? [Shouts of "Yes!"] Aren't they hands that create? [Shouts of "Yes!"] Aren't they the hands of the humble, of ordinary men and women? [Shouts of "Yes!"] And who are the majority of the people—the millionaires or the workers? The exploiters or the exploited? The privileged or the working people? [Shouts]

Do the privileged have the weapons? [Shouts of "No!"] Are the privileged a minority? [Shouts of "Yes!"] Are the working people a majority? [Shouts of "Yes!"] Is it democratic to have a revolution in which the working people have the weapons? [Shouts of "Yes!"] Applause and shouts of "Fidel, Fidel!" and various revolutionary slogans.]

*Compañero* workers and peasants, this is the socialist and democratic revolution of the working people, with the working people, and for the working people. [Applause] And for this revolution of the working people, by the working people, and for the working people we are prepared to give our lives. [Shouts] . . .

*Compañero* workers and peasants of the homeland: yesterday's attack was the prelude to the mercenaries' aggression. Yesterday's attack, which cost seven heroic lives, aimed to destroy our planes on the ground. But the mercenaries failed; they did not destroy our planes, and the bulk of the enemy planes were damaged or shot down. [Applause]

Here, in front of the graves of our fallen comrades; beside the remains of the heroic youth, children of workers and children of ordinary working men and women, we reaffirm our determination. Just as they faced the bullets, just as they gave their lives, we state that no matter when the mercenaries come, no matter who we face, that we are all proud of our revolution, proud to defend this revolution of the working people, for the working people, and by the working people. And we will not hesitate to defend it to the last drop of blood. [Applause]

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1. *Gusanos* (Spanish for "worms") was the term used by supporters of the revolution to refer to the counterrevolutionary groups in exile that were plotting against the revolution.

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# Bay Area exhibit shows art by Cuban 5 prisoner

BY LEA SHERMAN

BERKELEY, California—A prominent cultural center here was filled August 6 at the opening exhibit of artwork by Antonio Guerrero, one of five Cuban revolutionaries unjustly held in U.S. jails for nearly 11 years. The exhibit “From My Altitude” included portraits of the mothers and wives of the Five, Ernesto Che Guevara, and Fidel Castro, along with paintings of colorful birds, tigers, and landscapes. It was attended by more than 125 people.

Twenty-five of Guerrero’s works, painted from inside the maximum-security prison in Florence, Colorado, lined the walls of La Peña Cultural Center where the solidarity event was held.

Alicia Jrapko, national coordinator for the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five, the group that organized the benefit, chaired a program held at the opening. In her introductory remarks Jrapko said that Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, and René González, known as the Cuban Five, were in the United States to monitor the activities of counterrevolutionary Cuban American groups in Florida that had carried out violent attacks on Cuba, including the bombing of hotels.

The five were arrested in 1998 in Miami and convicted in 2001 in a frame-up trial on charges that included “conspiracy to commit espionage.” Hernández was also convicted of “conspiracy to commit murder.”

“Because the United States has never forgiven Cuba for regaining its sovereignty, the Cuban Five were given long sentences in U.S. jails,” Jrapko said. Hernández was sentenced to a double life term, Labañino and Guerrero to life in prison, René González to 15 years, and Fernando González to 19 years. “As an additional punishment,” she added, the U.S. government has prevented Adriana Pérez, wife of Gerardo Hernández, and Olga Salanueva, wife of René González, from visiting their husbands.

“We’re here to celebrate their courage and continue the struggle so justice will prevail,” she said.

The keynote speaker, award-winning novelist and poet Alice Walker, read from the book *Letters of Love and Hope: The Story of the Cuban Five*.

Walker wrote the introduction to the book, a collection of correspondence between the Cuban Five and their families. Describing the injustice of their incarceration and the appallingly long imprisonments meted out by the U.S. government, Walker called for all to stand with the five and their families until their release.

Gayle McLaughlin, mayor of Richmond, California, also spoke. The Richmond city council unanimously passed a resolution April 7 calling for the release of the Cuban Five and for the U.S. government to grant visitation rights for their families. McLaughlin told the audience that she will soon be leading a delegation from Richmond to its sister city Regla, Cuba.

Carlos Cartagena, a Bay Area artist from El Salvador, read a letter from Antonio Guerrero thanking everyone for their support. Also speaking were Melanie Langlois of the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cu-



Portrait by Antonio Guerrero of Ernesto Che Guevara, a leader of Cuban Revolution. Guerrero is one of five Cuban revolutionaries imprisoned in United States since 1998. Framed by U.S. government, they are serving sentences ranging from 15 years to life.

ban Five, who announced upcoming activities including a national media campaign, and Francisco Torres, the only remaining defendant in the “San Francisco Eight” Black Panther Party frame-up case.

Rafael Manríquez, a local singer, gui-

tarist, and composer from Chile, performed. A portion of the video *Against the Silence*, on the repeated denials by Washington to allow Adriana Pérez to visit her husband, was also shown.

The exhibit will continue through August 29.

## Anger grows in Taiwan over typhoon response

Continued from front page

a visit to a soccer field holding rescued survivors in Chishan August 12 Taiwan’s president “was besieged by angry villagers who accused his administration of moving too slowly to help those still trapped in the mountains near here,” reported the *New York Times*. “‘Save us, people are dying,’ the villagers yelled while holding aloft handmade banners that read ‘The government doesn’t value human life.’”

Six days after the typhoon struck the island, government officials estimated that about 2,000 people were still trapped in some areas, many with no access to food, water, electricity, transportation, or phone lines. Workers have initiated their own rescue operations, and more than 20,000 troops have joined them in this and cleanup work, Taiwanese officials told the *Washington Post*. The government said that as of August 14, about 31,000 people have been pulled from villages inundated by mudslides and floodwaters.

For days after the typhoon swept through the island Taiwan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs rejected any foreign assistance to help with rescue operations. Ministry spokesman Henry Chen told the *Taipei Times* August 12 that the government would seek such help if necessary, “but so far, we are still handling [the situation] well.” The following day the Taiwanese cabinet reversed this decision. It also appealed for heavy-lift helicopters needed to bring bulldozers deep into the moun-

tains, the *New York Times* said.

According to the *Taiwan News*, the government waited five-and-a-half days from the time the typhoon struck to draw up a list of necessary aid items, such as medical supplies to counter contagious diseases and epidemics.

In China 1.4 million people were evacuated and 48,000 vessels recalled to ports in Fujian province prior to the storm’s arrival. Six people were killed by the typhoon as of August 10, according to Xinhua news agency. More

than 5,000 houses were destroyed in Zhejiang and Fujian provinces along China’s east coast.

The Chinese government has donated about \$19 million for Taiwan’s typhoon relief. The United States and Japan are contributing \$250,000 and \$103,000, respectively, reports Agence France-Presse. Meanwhile, the U.S. military has said it is ready to send troops, equipment, and supplies, several military sources told CNN August 14.

## Mounting debt and joblessness

Continued from front page

could reach 25 million” by the end of next year.

According to Weaver, of those who have “subprime” and “Alt-A” mortgages, the two categories with the highest interest, one in three is now more than 60 days’ past due. Many of these are workers. Now, with more than a third of the unemployed out of work for at least six months, they are losing those homes.

While existing house sales rose for the third consecutive month in June, the median price for these is 15.4 percent below what it was the previous June. According to a recent survey conducted by Campbell Communications, two-thirds of house sales from April through June were either the result of foreclosure or banks agreeing to take a loss on the mortgage. Of the remaining sales, only 31 percent were “unforced or optional.”

RealtyTrac reports that foreclosures set a new monthly record in July. A total of 360,149 properties received a default or auction notice or were seized last month—one in 355 households. Foreclosures are now running about six times higher than they were four years ago.

As economic pressures build, working people are buying fewer things at retail stores. The U.S. Census Bureau announced August 13 there was a 0.1 percent decrease in retail sales from

June to July. The July figure is estimated to be 8.3 percent below what it was in July 2008. Gasoline station sales were down 32.5 percent from last year and building material and garden equipment and supplies sales were down 14.7 percent.

Banks continue to face turmoil, with 77 closed so far this year, compared to 25 last year. On August 14, the Alabama State Banking Department shut down Colonial Bank, which had some \$25 billion in “assets,” in what was the largest bank failure yet in 2009 and the sixth-largest bank failure in U.S. history, according to the *Wall Street Journal*.

In face of the deepening capitalist crisis, bosses have been trying to increase their declining rate of profit by squeezing more labor out of workers in less time, what the capitalists call “increasing productivity.” Through speedup, job combinations, and disregard of job safety, workers are forced to produce more for the same or less pay.

The average amount a boss gets for what a worker produces per hour rose by 6.4 percent at an annual rate for the second quarter of 2009, which is the highest increase in nearly six years. Labor costs fell by 5.8 percent as hours worked declined 7.6 percent last quarter. In the previous quarter, hours worked dropped by 9 percent, the highest drop since 1975.

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(see page 5)



# Iowa socialist debates at union campaign forum

BY ELLEN BRICKLEY  
AND HELEN MEYERS

DES MOINES, Iowa—David Rosenfeld, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for Des Moines City Council at-large, was among seven candidates who spoke at a union-sponsored candidates debate held at the International Brotherhood of Teamsters union hall.

Supporters of the socialist campaign wrapped up a successful petitioning effort over the August 8–9 weekend to place Rosenfeld and Rebecca Williamson, for City Council Ward 1, on the ballot.

“We have to face the truth about the economic depression and its consequences for working people. This is the deepest economic and social crisis any of us in this room have ever experienced—and despite the talk about recovery, the crisis is just beginning. We will face growing unemployment, expanding wars, and efforts to radically restructure our standard of living,” Rosenfeld told the gathering of 40 unionists August 11.

Several local unions—including those representing government workers, Teamsters, painters, and plumbers—formed the Workers United coalition to host the city council candidates’ forum. Bob Gilmore of the Painters and Allied Trades International Union moderated the forum and posed several questions to the panelists.

## ‘Put working class in political power’

Most on the panel echoed the pro-business views of candidate Leisha Barcus who said “retaining and recruiting new businesses” was among her top priorities. Rosenfeld said the top priority for workers needs to be “defending our capacity to fight in our own inter-

ests. We need to build the foundations of solidarity by fighting for unemployment compensation at union scale for everyone until they find a job, for universal lifetime medical care, and to legalize all immigrant workers. We need to build a revolutionary movement that can put the working class in political power.”

Candidate David Adelman, a former member of the Iowa Democratic State Central Committee, said it was “atrocious” that workers from outside of Des Moines and Iowa were working at a large construction site near Des Moines. Rosenfeld differed sharply, explaining that such a course divides workers and weakens our capacity to organize an effective fight against the bosses.

“Workers should reject that kind of thinking, just as we should reject the idea that those born in the United States are more deserving of jobs here than workers born in another country,” Rosenfeld said. “We have to build a strong, united workers movement that defends *all* workers, no matter what country you were born in or what piece of paper you may have in your pocket.”

When the forum moderator asked the candidates to say how they would close the city’s budget shortfall, most of the candidates spoke about more efficient management and cutting out waste. Rosenfeld said, “Workers create the wealth, but much of it is simply stolen from us by the bosses and their government in the form of profits and taxes. Workers should pay no income taxes.”

“I will fight tooth and nail against every cutback designed to make workers pay for the capitalists’ crisis-ridden system,” Rosenfeld said.

After the forum, a young staff member of the local American Federation of



Militant/Rebecca Williamson

David Rosenfeld, at right, Socialist Workers Party candidate for City Council in Des Moines, Iowa, debates opponents August 11 at union-sponsored candidates forum at Teamsters hall. From left are candidates David Adelman and Raymond Phillips.

State, County and Municipal Employees union, which organizes government workers, asked Rosenfeld whether he thought that pro-union legislation was key to reversing the decline of the unions. Rosenfeld answered, “The key to building the unions is workers learning to organize themselves to rely on their own collective strength and to fight in their own class interests. No bill in Congress or in the City Council will do that for us.”

## Successful petitioning effort

The invitation to participate in the candidates’ debate is the first fruit of the successful petitioning effort here. More than 600 workers and youth signed petitions to place Rosenfeld and Williamson on the ballot, triple the requirement.

Among those campaigning for the Socialist Workers ticket were five college students. “I really liked the experience of going out into the public and seeing

what people think,” said Leah Morrison, a student at the College of Visual Arts in St. Paul, Minnesota. “I met many young people who are worried about the economy. They liked what we had to say.”

Following the successful day of campaigning, in which 38 copies of the campaign newspaper the *Militant* were sold, volunteers attended a barbecue and campaign rally at the campaign headquarters. Williamson and Rosenfeld were featured on the panel, along with Tom Fiske, Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Minneapolis, and Betsy Farley, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party from Chicago.

In the discussion period, Erik Soltvedt-Decker, a freshman at Hamline University in St. Paul, asked, “What is the most important thing for supporters of the Socialist Workers campaign to be doing?” Williamson and Rosenfeld encouraged him and others in attendance to join in the countermobilization in Omaha, Nebraska, over the August 28–29 weekend against plans by the rightist outfit Operation Rescue to harass the abortion clinic of Dr. LeRoy Carhart.

More than \$200 was raised in a collection at the forum and at a party held afterwards.

Maggie Trowe contributed to this article.

## N.Y. socialist candidates back workers’ fights

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK—Dan Fein, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New York City mayor, said the socialist candidates are joining the struggles of working people and youth in the midst of the opening stages of the worldwide depression.

The Socialist Workers ticket of Fein, Maura DeLuca for public advocate, and Tom Baumann for Manhattan borough president, is on the November ballot.

Fein and Baumann went to the Bronx August 14 to meet workers casting their votes in a hotly contested union election at FlatRate Moving Co. Several workers told the candidates they were fired after joining the union organizing drive there. (See story on page 4.)

“The bosses are threatened when workers have more power over working conditions,” Fein told the union backers. “Only by organizing can you have the power to resist what the company is doing to you every day. We need more and stronger unions.”

“The bosses and their government offer many excuses for the crisis,” Fein said. “They blame the previous Bush administration, bad banking practices, or foreign competition. But the economic and social crisis we face today is a crisis of their system—capitalism. The working class needs to take political power so we can organize in the interests of the majority.”

Earlier in the day, Fein and Baumann

taped an interview with Pearl Philip, managing editor of the *Caribbean American Weekly*. It airs on the “Community Dateline” show on AllBlackRadio.com. They explained the socialist campaign platform, their opposition to the U.S. imperialist wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan, and highlighted some of the immediate demands they raise to unite working people.

On August 16 campaigners for the socialist ticket joined the “Festival of the Sun” in Manhattan. Construction workers, day laborers, garment workers, and office cleaners, among others, attended the festival, which featured music and dance from Mexico.

After taking a campaign flyer or buying a copy of the *Militant* or a subscription, festival participants often told the socialist campaigners about the conditions on the jobs where they work. Many undocumented immigrants in the construction industry work nonunion, making just over half what union construction workers earn.

“That’s why we say legalize undocumented workers now with no restrictions and stop the deportations,” Baumann said. “The bosses want a section of workers they can superexploit. The unions should organize all workers, with or without papers, in a common fight to raise everyone to union scale.”

DeLuca will fly to Omaha, Nebraska, August 28 to join the defense of an abortion clinic there run by Dr. LeRoy

Carhart. Operation Rescue, a rightist group that opposes legal abortion, announced it will protest outside the clinic after Carhart said he will open a second clinic in Wichita, Kansas, to perform late-term abortions.

“The right to choose abortion is key to the fight for women’s rights,” DeLuca said. “The working class can never be free if women are not free.” The socialist candidate for public advocate is encouraging others to also go to Omaha.

The Socialist Workers candidates are backing the ongoing fight to free Troy Davis, who has been in jail in Georgia since 1989 on frame-up charges of murdering a cop in Savannah, Georgia. Davis is Black; the cop was white.

Davis’s supporters are organizing a march on Washington September 26 to oppose his execution and to demand his freedom. “The recent Supreme Court decision ordering the Federal District Court in Georgia to review the evidence in the case is an important victory,” Fein said. “I will be marching in Washington, D.C., to demand ‘Free Troy Davis Now! Abolish the death penalty!’ The socialist campaign will be working to get as many people from New York and the region to join this action as we can.”

The socialist candidates and their supporters will also march as a campaign contingent with banners and distribute literature at the West Indian American Day Carnival September 7 in Brooklyn.

## For further reading...

### Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?

by Mary-Alice Waters

“To think that a socialist revolution in the U.S. is not possible, you would have to believe not only that the ruling families of the imperialist countries and their economic wizards have found a way to ‘manage’ capitalism. You would also have to close your eyes to the spreading imperialist wars, civil wars, and economic, financial, and social crises we are in the midst of.” Also available in Spanish and French. **\$7**

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# A gain in fight to free Troy Davis

In the face of worldwide support for death-row inmate Troy Davis, the U.S. Supreme Court has ordered a federal district court to “receive testimony and make findings of fact” in his case. Davis, who is Black, was convicted in 1991 in a frame-up trial in a Georgia court for the shooting death of a white cop. His case mirrors that of many other workers railroaded to jail by the capitalist system, especially those who are African American.

Since his trial, seven of nine state witnesses against him—those who were not cops—have recanted or contradicted their testimony. Many of them have signed affidavits saying they were pressured by the police to name Davis as the killer. In one such affidavit, Dorothy Ferrell said she “felt like I had to cooperate with the officer because of my being on parole . . . I told the detective that Troy Davis was the shooter, even though the truth was that I didn’t see who shot the officer.” The Supreme Court noted that *not a single state or federal court* ever considered this evidence. They simply threw out every appeal Davis made.

The Supreme Court’s decision to compel the lower court to now hear the evidence was not unanimous. Both justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas

signed a dissent, written by Scalia. Innocence is irrelevant to whether you should be executed, Scalia essentially argued. “This Court has *never* held that the Constitution forbids the execution of a convicted defendant who had a full and fair trial but is later able to convince a habeas court that he is ‘actually’ innocent,” he wrote.

Scalia gave great weight to the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, engineered by then-president William Clinton. That law sharply reduced the ability of prisoners to appeal and was used extensively by the lower courts in Georgia as a rationale to reject Davis’s efforts to reopen his case once more evidence of the police frame-up against him emerged.

The Supreme Court’s decision strengthens Davis supporters’ ability to reach out widely with this case and bring the maximum pressure to bear to win a reversal of a gross injustice. Supporters of Davis have called for a national march on Washington September 26 and a week of teach-ins and other educational activities for September 21–27. These offer an excellent opportunity to strike another blow at the barbaric death penalty and bring Davis one step closer to freedom.

# Conservatives gain in health-care debate

**Continued from front page**

1,800 were inside the meeting.

Right-wing commentators have appealed to distrust of the federal government. In his August 6 broadcast, Rush Limbaugh said, “Obama said he cared about jobs. Well, we’ve lost almost 3 million since he took office. . . . He has broken almost every promise he has made and everybody knows that his “No New Tax” pledge on the middle-class tax is next.”

Talk show host Bill O’Reilly stoked resentment against the uninsured, blaming them for their own lack of coverage. “The statistics show that 15 percent of Americans lack medical insurance and some of those simply would rather buy a flat screen TV than spend money on insuring their health,” he said.

Groups involved in opposing the plan include mainstream Republicans, libertarians, and rightists. They have called for a September 12 “taxpayer” march on Washington to oppose the various bills in Congress. One of the main sponsors of the action is Freedom-Works, a group headed by former House of Representatives majority leader Richard Armey.

Initially caught unawares, Democrats tried to dismiss opponents as “right-wing extremists.” House majority leader Nancy Pelosi called protesters “Astroturf,” meaning they were fake and illegitimate, and even charged some were “carrying swastikas and symbols like that.”

In fact, those speaking out at the town meetings have raised a variety of issues, not all of them “right wing.” “Why are you introducing a health-care bill with so many pages and that is so hard to understand?” asked

nurse Mary Kay Gibson at a meeting in Salisbury, Maryland, with Sen. Benjamin Cardin.

Some at the town meetings are worried by proposals being raised in Congress to raise taxes to pay for the plan. Some are wary of government intrusion into their personal lives and those of their families.

Some critics of the bills are opposed to women’s right to choose abortion and some are against any form of government social services. Most appear to be from the middle class, with very few African Americans.

There were no reports of anyone at the town meetings protesting the steep cuts in Medicaid and Medicare that are part of the proposed reforms or the requirement that U.S. citizens and legal residents obtain medical insurance or face fines.

Now Democrats are backpedaling. After former Alaska governor Sarah Palin succeeded in gaining some traction for her charge that one health bill included “death panels,” drafters of the Senate bill deleted a measure for Medicare to cover doctor-patient end-of-life consultations. Obama and others closely associated with the plan are now saying the government-run insurance option could be dropped.

Top union officials are urging their members to support the Obama plan. The AFL-CIO tops charge the opposition is “stirred up by insurance companies.” But the Service Employees International Union, one of the loudest union voices for the plan, is itself in a coalition called Americans for Stable Quality Care, which includes the Federation of American Hospitals and the Bayer, Bristol-Myers Squibb, GlaxoSmithKline, Eli Lilly, Merck, and Pfizer drug giants.

# The class struggle in Nepal today

BY BEN JOYCE

In the letter excerpted below, Jim Brash asks why the *Militant* “which is known for its internationalist viewpoint, hasn’t written a single editorial about what’s going on in Nepal, so readers in the U.S. can glimpse what working people and peasants are accomplishing over there.”

In April 2006 working people in Nepal took to the streets and conducted a general strike against the monarchy. Mass mobilizations forced the king to reinstate the parliament, which he had dissolved in 2005.

Following months of negotiations, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)—CPN(M)—agreed in No-

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## REPLY TO A READER

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vember to end the protracted guerrilla struggle it had waged since 1996, and joined a coalition of capitalist parties committed to establishing bourgeois parliamentary democracy. In April 2008 the Maoists became the biggest party in parliament.

In the wake of the electoral victory, CPN(M) leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal, known as Prachanda, became prime minister. In May 2009 Prachanda resigned in protest after President Ram Baran Yadav rejected his decision to fire the head of the army. (Readers can review the *Militant*’s coverage on Nepal in the May 8, 2006, Jan. 7, 2007, and May 12, 2008, issues.)

The end of monarchical rule and its dictatorial measures in Nepal represented an advance for working people, removing a major obstacle in their line of march toward taking political power. The CPN(M), however, is another substantial obstacle to this course.

As their name indicates, the Maoists identify with the political program of Mao Zedong, the leader of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) during its rise to power. Mao followed Stalin’s course of seeking a coalition government with the bourgeois Chiang Kai-shek forces until 1947. Chiang was overthrown in 1949 by a massive upsurge of millions of peasants.

In 1950 the U.S. government invaded Korea seeking to halt the spread of socialist revolution. The Chinese government entered the war in defense of insurgent Korea. Massive mobilizations by Chinese toilers in both city and countryside, demanding land and punishment of the landlords and capitalist factory owners, compelled the CCP bureaucracy to overturn capitalist property relations.

In a similar fashion, the Nepalese Maoists’ goal is to run the capitalist state as part of a coalition, not make a socialist revolution. In 2008 Prachanda told the *New York Times*, “We are fighting feudalism, we are not fighting capitalism.” He continued, “In this phase of our socioeconomic development, it is not possible to have a socialist revolution. . . . We will create a conducive atmosphere to have more profit for the capitalist.”

But in every semicolonial country where Stalinists have applied this counterrevolutionary course the working class has suffered major defeats.

During its drawn-out guerrilla struggle, the CPN(M) took over sections of the countryside and imposed on the peasants a policy of forced collectivization, as Mao had done in China at one point—taking land away from those who worked it and bureaucratically setting up collectives, with disregard for the will or initiative of the peasantry.

In response to the bloody counterinsurgency campaign of the Nepalese police, Prachanda, in a Feb. 20, 2000, interview in *Revolutionary Worker*, a U.S. Maoist paper, boasted that they had “more than 700 martyrs.” He said, “We encourage for our cultural revolution this kind of sacrifice, and we glorify this kind of sacrifice.”

This perspective is the opposite of the proletarian internationalist course carried out by leaders of the Cuban Revolution. Though they were prepared for a long fight, the revolutionary guerrilla war was organized with the aim of leading the working people of Cuba to swiftly take political power and reconstruct society based on the needs of the majority. This is the only course that working people in Nepal, the United States, and the world over can count on as a way forward out of the brutality of the capitalist system.

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## LETTERS

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### Events in Nepal

I’ve been reading through some of the recent and back issues of the *Militant* and I couldn’t find any articles on what’s currently going on in Nepal. The people of that nation are currently in the process of building a new democratic society.

Members of the Nepalese left and various Maoist organizations are actually not only part of writing the new constitution and leading this new Nepal forward, but also among those leading the call for a multiparty system of government.

I find it curious that the *Militant*, which is known for its internationalist viewpoint, hasn’t written a single editorial about what’s going on in Nepal, so readers in the U.S. can

glimpse at what working people and peasants are accomplishing over there.

*Jim Brash*  
*East Orange, New Jersey*

### Leonard Peltier

Leonard Peltier is an Annishinabe/Lakota Indian activist framed up for the deaths of two FBI agents at a government shootout in 1975 in Pine Ridge, South Dakota.

In Portland, Oregon, 40 or more people turned out for a vigil July 27 demanding his freedom. Signs read: “Political Prisoner 33 years”; “Free Leonard Peltier”; and “Parole Now.”

His first full parole hearing in many years was held July 28. The

board has three weeks to issue its decision.

Visit the Web site [whoisleonardpeltier.info](http://whoisleonardpeltier.info) for updates and more information.  
*Marta De León*  
*Beaverton, Oregon*

*Editor’s note*—as of August 19 the parole board had not announced a decision on Peltier’s case.

**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.**