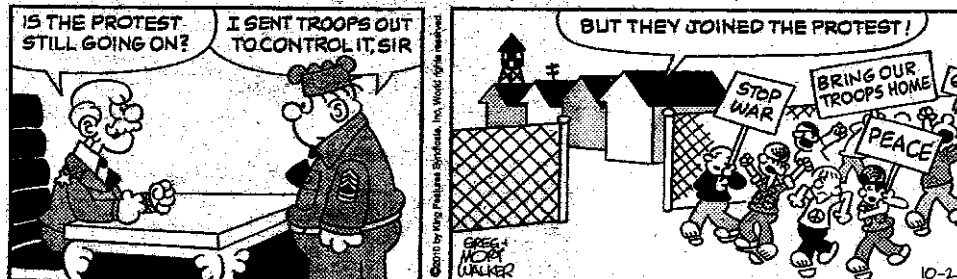


Military Resistance 8/15



Domestic Enemies At Work: Obama Regime Launches “War On Dissent” “Friday’s Raids In Minneapolis Occurred After The Prior Attorney General Guidelines Were Erased That Used To Require A Level Of Factual Justification Before Domestic Groups Could Be Spied On”

September 25, 2010 By Coleen Rowley, Former FBI Special Agent, Huffington Post.com, Inc.

The war on dissent, rather than terrorism, continued full steam with FBI SWAT teams breaking down doors at 7 am Friday (Sept 24) morning and raiding the homes of several anti-war leaders and activists in Minneapolis, Chicago and possibly a couple other Midwest cities.

Members of the FBI’s “Joint Terrorism Task Force” spent a few hours at each Minneapolis residence, seizing personal photographs and papers, computers and cell phones as well as serving Federal Grand Jury subpoenas on the various activists.

Obviously the scathing review of post 9-11 FBI “terrorism investigations” targeting various peace and social justice groups completed by the Department of Justice

Inspector General (IG) and just issued four days ago gave no pause to the FBI to reflect before continuing to do more of the same.

Nor did accompanying media revelations about the FBI having improperly conducted surveillances of an antiwar rally in Pittsburgh; the Catholic Worker peace magazine; a Quaker activist, the Thomas Merton Center in Pittsburgh, of members of the environmental group Greenpeace and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals and of a small student group of anti-war activists in Iowa City, Iowa who were targeted for 9 months in 2008.

National news stories revealed that in one of the investigations, FBI Director Robert Mueller inadvertently providing a fabricated justification for the surveillance of an antiwar rally. From The Boston Globe's article "Red-Baiting, Circa 2002 - 2006":

"The Justice Department's Inspector General report released this week pulled few punches in admonishing the FBI for targeting anti-war groups and advocacy organizations with no apparent justification, and for placing non-violent activists in those groups on terrorist watch lists.

"The report chastised the bureau for having a "weak" rationale for some of its investigations; investigating where there was "little indication of any possible federal crimes"; and extending "the duration of investigations involving advocacy groups or their members without adequate basis." The agency was also taken to task for improperly retaining information about the targeted groups in its files and for classifying investigations of peace groups "under its 'Acts of Terrorism' classification."

"These are serious abuses. Using anti-terrorism laws to target domestic protest organizations is redolent of the actions of the Justice Department against law-abiding protesters during World War I and the Vietnam War -- actions that are rightly remembered as disgraceful.

"FBI Director Robert Mueller was misled by subordinates into telling Congress, falsely, that surveillance of a peaceful 2002 anti-war rally was "an outgrowth of an FBI investigation." In fact, it was the product of an agent receiving a "make-work" assignment on a "slow day."

But perhaps what is more important here than a "let's make work on a slow day" is the perverse career incentives that serve to pressure FBI counter-terrorism agents to produce "stats" (statistics).

An agent gains "stats" for serving subpoenas, national security letters for records, executing search warrants, contacting confidential sources, etc., whether or not any relevant evidence is obtained via this "work" and whether or not it leads to prosecution or preventing a crime.

It is a well known fact that nearly 1,000 people were rounded up and detained (mostly in New York City) immediately after 9-11. None of those detained were ever identified as "terrorists" but that's when these career enhancing "stats" began to be awarded for each detention, arrest, subpoena, search warrant, etc.

The IG, however, has only reviewed FBI “terrorism” investigations thus far from 2002 to 2006. What happened in Iowa City in 2008 shows the FBI did not cease its improper investigations after 2006.

Documents obtained through FOIA showed the FBI and its local law enforcement partners targeted students and anti-war activists in Iowa City, following them to parks, food co-ops, libraries, bars and restaurants, etc., over a 9 month period with little factual justification other than the allegation that the group was plotting to protest the Republican National Convention.

The FBI even managed to secretly search the anti-war members’ personal trash.

It would therefore seem that someone should quickly contact the IG and ask for review of those cases since 2006. Additionally “whistleblower complaints” can be made concerning fraud, waste, abuse and illegality by citizens to the Office of Special Counsel.

Friday’s raids in Minneapolis occurred after the prior Attorney General Guidelines were erased that used to require a level of factual justification before domestic groups could be spied on.

Additionally, the Patriot Act and an earlier 1996 law broadly prohibiting “material support to terrorism” were allowed to stand even though these laws make speech advocating human rights a terrorist crime.

The final problem is the law enforcement mindset first seen back in 2003 from a spokesman for the California Anti-Terrorism Information Center (CATIC) who was forced to defend his agency’s unjustified targeting of anti-war protesters without any factual evidence.

CATIC Spokesman Van Winkle, apparently without thinking too hard, reasoned that evidence wasn’t needed to issue warnings on war protesters.

“You can make an easy kind of a link that, if you have a protest group protesting a war where the cause that’s being fought against is international terrorism, you might have terrorism at that (protest),” said Van Winkle, “You can almost argue that a protest against (the “war on terror”) is a terrorist act.”

MORE:

Domestic Enemies At Work: Details Of The FBI Raids Homes Of Anti-War & Freedom Road Political Organization Activists:

“‘The FBI Is Harassing Anti-War Organizers And Leaders,’ Kelly Said Before Agents Confiscated His Cell Phone”

“An FBI Swat Team Entered First ‘And Looked For Pointy Things’”

“Once again the government is going after people for exercising their pesky First Amendment rights to speak freely and the other pesky First Amendment right to associate peaceably,” Chuck Samuelson tells The Progressive.

Samuelson calls it “S squared, D squared”-same stuff, different day. “It’s like the bad old days of Richard Nixon,” he says.

Sep 24 & Sept. 25 By Steve Karnowski, The Associated Press & By Matthew Rothschild, The Progressive & By David Hanners and Mara H. Gottfried, Pioneer Press [Excerpts]

The FBI said it searched eight homes in Minneapolis and Chicago as part of a terrorism investigation on Friday, and two subjects said the agency is targeting leaders of the anti-war movement.

FBI spokesman Steve Warfield told The Associated Press agents served six warrants in Minneapolis and two in Chicago.

“These were search warrants only,” Warfield said. “We’re not anticipating any arrests at this time. They’re seeking evidence relating to activities concerning the material support of terrorism.”

“Once again the government is going after people for exercising their pesky First Amendment rights to speak freely and the other pesky First Amendment right to associate peaceably,” Chuck Samuelson tells The Progressive. “We are deeply concerned.”

Samuelson calls it “S squared, D squared”-same stuff, different day. “It’s like the bad old days of Richard Nixon,” he says.

The home of Minneapolis anti-war activists Mick Kelly and Jess Sundin were among those searched, they told the AP.

“The FBI is harassing anti-war organizers and leaders, folks who opposed U.S. intervention in the Middle East and Latin America,” Kelly said before agents confiscated his cell phone.

SWAT team, accompanied by the FBI, knocked on Kelly's door about 7 a.m. and Kelly's partner answered, Dooley said.

“They said they had a search warrant,” he said. “She asked to see it; she couldn't read it through the peephole, so they busted down the door. The door flew across the room and broke a fish tank.”

Sundin called the suggestion they were connected with terrorism “pretty hilarious and ridiculous.”

Sundin said she believes the searches are connected with the Minnesota Anti-War Committee's opposition to U.S. military aid to Colombia and Israel, as well as its opposition to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Warfield said he couldn't comment on whose homes were searched or give details on why because it's an ongoing investigation. “There's no imminent threat to the community,” he said.

Sundin said she wasn't certain exactly what kinds of information the FBI was after or who else had been searched in either city.

An FBI SWAT team entered first “and looked for pointy things. And then they left and the FBI agents came in and looked through everything in the house,” she said.

The agents took “computers, several boxes of papers, everything related to data like discs,” Sundin said.

Both Sundin and Kelly were organizers of a mass march on the first day of the Democratic National Convention in St. Paul two years ago, and recently appeared at a news conference to announce plans for another protest if Minneapolis is selected to hold the 2012 Democratic National Convention.

Police estimated the peaceful march drew 10,000 protesters; organizers put the figure at 30,000. Other protests were marked by destructive acts by anarchists. More than 800 people were arrested during the four days of the convention, including Sundin and Kelly.

Sundin said they've already sought permits for 2012, “something I don't think terrorists would do.”

“They can harass us until the cows come home but we will not stop,” she said Friday at a news conference outside her home amid about 50 supporters carrying signs — with statements that included “Stop FBI harassment” and “Working for justice is not a crime.”

The warrant for Kelly's home, provided by his attorney, sought evidence on travel he did as part of his work for the Freedom Road Socialist Organization and information on any travel to Colombia, the Palestinian territories, Jordan, Syria or Israel.

The federal law cited in the search warrant prohibits “providing material support or resources to designated foreign terrorist organizations.”

“I’m having a hard time paying my rent,” Kelly said. “There is no material support.”

Two groups use the name Freedom Road Socialist Organization, one based in Chicago and one in New York. They split several years ago, and the New York group said it was not targeted.

The website for the Chicago group, which describes itself as a “revolutionary socialist and Marxist-Leninist organization,” shows Kelly and Sundin have been affiliated with it. Kelly edits FightBack!, a Minneapolis-based website and newspaper for the group.

The home of Tracy Molms, 29, who works with Students for a Democratic Society, also was searched. The fifth person whose home was searched didn’t want the name made public, Sundin said.

Molms said she’d traveled to “Palestine” in 2004. She said she’d raised money for the trip in the Twin Cities activist community.

Agents took Molms’ computer, phone, paperwork and “a scarf with a Palestinian flag that I bought in the Twin Cities,” she said.

In Chicago, the home of activists Joe Iosbaker and his wife, Stephanie Weiner, was searched by more than a dozen agents who carried out boxes full of their possessions — including their cell phones — and loaded them into a white van, the couple’s attorney said.

Their attorney, Melinda Power, said the warrant cited possible support, in her words, “for unnamed terrorist organizations.” Iosbaker and Weiner were summoned to testify before a grand jury on Oct. 5.

“These are people committed to social justice,” Power said. “That is not a crime in this country.”

As news of the raid spread around the neighborhood, friends and fellow activists gathered outside the house and several sang John Lennon’s, “Give Peace a Chance.”

The FBI’s spokesman in Chicago, Ross Rice, would only say two searches were conducted Friday in Chicago and that there were no arrests. He declined comment further.

MORE:

Domestic Enemies At Work: Obama’s Dogs Raid Palestinian- American Anti-War Activist “In An Attempt To Silence His Advocacy”

“More Than Half A Dozen Agents Went To Abudayyeh’s Home On Friday And Took Any Documents Containing The Word ‘Palestine’”

9.26.10 By SOPHIA TAREEN (AP) [Excerpts]

CHICAGO — FBI agents in Chicago took a laptop and documents from the home of a Palestinian-American anti-war activist in an attempt to silence his advocacy, an attorney said Sunday.

The FBI on Friday searched eight addresses in Minneapolis and Chicago, including the home of Hatem Abudayyeh, who is the executive director of the Arab American Action Network, attorney Jim Fennerty told The Associated Press.

“The government’s trying to quiet activists,” Fennerty said. “This case is really scary.”

More than half a dozen agents went to Abudayyeh’s home on Friday and took any documents containing the word “Palestine,” Fennerty said.

Abudayyeh, a U.S. citizen whose parent immigrated from Palestine, wasn’t home at the time of the raid because he was at a hospital with his mother who is battling liver cancer, Fennerty said.

Fennerty said Abudayyeh has done nothing wrong and doesn’t have any ties to terrorist groups, including Hamas, the Islamic militant group that seized power in the Gaza Strip in 2007.

His name was also spelled “Hatam” on FBI documents.

A subpoena delivered to one of the Minnesota activists commanded him to produce records he might have relating to the Middle East and Colombia, along with “all records of any payment provided directly or indirectly to Hatam Abudayyeh.”

“Hatem wouldn’t even touch Hamas,” Fennerty told AP. “Hatem is a secular guy, he’s not interested in Hamas.”

Abudayyeh’s parents immigrated to Chicago in the 1970s and were instrumental in founding a community center that later led to the Arab American Action Network. Abudayyeh joined the group in 1999 and became executive director in 2003.

The nonprofit group advocates for Arabs and new immigrants. Recently, its focus has been to combat anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiment following the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

Abudayyeh has not traveled to Palestine in years, Fennerty said, but he cares about the region and has close cultural ties; his wife is a Palestinian immigrant. In fact, their courtship and marriage was the focus of a PBS “New Americans” documentary several years ago. The couple now has a daughter.

“He’s a very caring person, active in his community and other communities,” Fennerty said. “He’s a father.”

MORE:

Turn Out To Condemn The Obama Regime Traitors And Their Harassment Of Activists

From: United for Peace and Justice
To: Military Resistance
Date: Sep 26, 2010

Tuesday 9/28:

NYC, NY - 4:30 to 6pm Federal Building, 26 Federal Plaza

Newark, NJ - 5 to 6pm Federal Building Broad Street

Philadelphia, PA - 4:30pm Federal Building, 6th & Market,

Washington DC - 4:30 - 5:30 FBI Building, 935 Pennsylvania Ave NW.

Boston, MA - 5 pm, JFK Federal Building

Detroit, MI - 4:30 pm McNamara Federal Building, Michigan Ave. at Cass

Raleigh, NC - 9 am. Federal Building, 310 New Bern Ave

Asheville, NC - 5 pm Federal Building,

Atlanta, GA - Noon, FBI Building

Los Angeles, CA - 5 pm, Downtown Federal Building, 300 N Los Angeles St

Tucson, AZ - 5 pm Federal Building

Wednesday 9/29:

Albany, NY -5 to 6 pm Federal Building

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Resistance Action: Three High Officers Killed



A burnt vehicle which belongs to Iraqi television presenter Alaa Muhsin after a bomb attack in Baghdad September 27, 2010. A sticky bomb attached to the car of Muhsin, who works for Iraq government TV, wounded him in Baghdad's southern Saidiya district, police said. REUTERS/Ahmed Malik

Sept 26 (KUNA)

A police source told KUNA that the guerrillas opened fired using weapons with silencers against Colonel Sadeq Abdul Azim Al-Hilo, director of police emergency battalions at Maysan province, while he was leaving a hotel near the National Theatre in Al-Karrada district, killing him on the spot during his visit to Baghdad for a special training.

Another source at the Defence Ministry said that the unidentified guerrillas in a car attacked a pickup car that was carrying a Major in Iraqi army near the Al-Zawraa' park at Al-Mansura and shot him dead before they were able to escape. The Iraqi police cordoned off the scene while and hospitalized the officer at Al-Yarmouk Hospital.

Guerrillas assassinated a Captain Haider Zuhair in the Federal police using weapons that also included silencers near the Karkh district court in Baghdad.(

Obama's Lying Bullshit Reeks On: These Are Not U.S. Combat Soldiers;

They Are Not In Action In An Iraqi Urban Center



U.S. soldiers at the site of a car bomb attack in Kirkuk, 155 miles north of Baghdad September 27, 2010. REUTERS/Ako Rasheed

**POLITICIANS CAN'T BE COUNTED ON TO HALT
THE BLOODSHED**

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE
WARS**

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Polish Soldier Killed In Ghazni

Sep 27, 2010 DPA

Warsaw - A Polish soldier died Monday in Afghanistan from injuries sustained in a roadside bomb attack, the Defence Ministry in Warsaw said.

Sgt. Kazimierz Kasprzak, 32, was the 21st Polish soldier killed in NATO operations against Taliban insurgents.

Kasprzak was injured when a roadside bomb exploded during a patrol in the eastern Ghazni province. Kasprzak was airlifted by helicopter to a hospital in a military base in Ghazni, and later died during an operation.

U.S. Soldier Wounded In Kandahar



U.S. military medics load a U.S. soldier wounded in a roadside bomb attack onto an ambulance in Kandahar province, Afghanistan September 27, 2010. REUTERS/Erik de Castro

Resistance Captures Occupation Workers In Kunar

26 September 2010 By Jon Boone in Kabul and James Meikle, Guardian News and Media Limited [Excerpts]

A British woman working for an American company and at least three Afghan co-workers have been captured by unidentified attackers in Afghanistan. They were in a two-vehicle convoy intercepted by insurgents in Kunar province.

Neither the Foreign Office in London nor Washington-based Development Alternatives Inc (DAI) would confirm the woman's identity, but DAI, a contractor with the US Agency for International Development (USAID), said it was working "on a suspected abduction" and would be issuing a statement. The FO said relatives had been told and appealed to the British media not to name her.

Kunar police chief Khalilullah Ziayee said the party had been travelling from Asadabad, the capital of Kunar, to Jalalabad in the south.

The party intended to visit a canal that had been built by DAI, which implements projects for USAID.

The British woman was in a car with two Afghans, one of whom was acting as a guard, the other driving the Toyota Corolla they were travelling in. In areas where security is poor, foreign nationals will often opt to travel in more ordinary looking vehicles rather than four wheel drives, as they are thought to be lower profile.

Ziayee said the woman was wearing a burqa when the party was last seen at around 10.30am travelling through the district of Chowki.

He said that she was “kidnapped by the opposition” after a brief fight with local police, who gave chase into the mountains.

An official with the Kunar criminal investigation unit said local insurgents were responsible, led by a man called Mullah Basir and an associate called Qari Ruhullah. At midday, a group of 12 senior elders from the area were sent into the area where the hostages were believed to be to try to secure their release.

No Shit Kidding?

[Thanks to Michael Letwin, New York City Labor Against The War & Military Resistance, who sent this in.]

September 26, 2010 By ROD NORDLAND, New York Times [Excerpts]

ARGHANDAB, Afghanistan — American and Afghan troops have begun the active combat phase of a military operation designed to drive the Taliban out of districts around the Taliban stronghold of Kandahar city, military officials said Sunday.

Along with the military buildup has come a similar effort to increase the presence of United States State Department employees, along with aid contractors paid by the Americans, staffing district stabilization teams in those key districts.

The civilian buildup has not been as dramatic as the military one, however, and although province-wide some 300 American civilian staff have arrived, at the district levels there are only a few.

Arghandab, where the civilian effort is deemed to have been the most successful, the district team still comprises only two Americans, as well as contractors and local employees.

“It’s hard to get people to come here,” says Kevin Melton, who is just finishing up a year-long tour in Arghandab. [Civilians that is. As individuals, troops have difficulty refusing to “come here”. One of these days, that will change, when

troops have had enough of being suicide soldiers for Obama, and refuse to “come here” by the hundreds and thousands. T]

REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE: ALL HOME NOW



U.S. soldiers from Task Force 1-66 patrol in Arghandab river valley, Kandahar province, September 6, 2010. REUTERS/Oleg Popov



U.S. Marines from 1st Light Armoured Reconnaissance Battalion patrol in Taghaz village in Helmand, Afghanistan September 9, 2010. REUTERS/Erik de Castro

MILITARY NEWS

**NOT ANOTHER DAY
NOT ANOTHER DOLLAR
NOT ANOTHER LIFE**



The casket of Army Sgt. Andrew R. Looney at Arlington National Cemetery Aug. 4, 2010. Looney was killed in Afghanistan. (AP Photo/Susan Walsh)

VA Fucking Over Veterans Using GI Bill, As Usual: “Veterans Current On Repayment Plans Are Getting Letters Telling Them They Are Delinquent And Information On Their Debt Has Been Turned Over To A Collection Agency”

September 27, 2010 By Rick Maze, Army Times [Excerpts]

While the Veterans Affairs Department has made strides in improving the processing of Post-9/11 GI Bill claims, kinks remain in the year-old program that have student veterans exasperated.

Among them is Iraq war veteran Aaron Sandvig, a former Army sergeant from California who decided to attend law school in Minnesota specifically because the tuition promised by VA was \$750 per credit hour, enough that he could attend school without taking out any loans.

Classes at the William Mitchell College of Law began Aug. 16.

On Sept. 2, Sandvig learned the rate for the fall semester was dropping to \$450 per credit hour, leaving him to make up \$4,200 to pay for school.

He said he will now have to take out loans. “I feel cheated by finding out after the fact,” he said.

“This information should have been given to us months ago. My school choice was directly affected by the amount that I thought I would be receiving, based upon VA’s officially posted rates.”

At Wichita State University in Kansas, retired Army veteran Keith Butler, a 44-year-old single father with two children, is frustrated just trying to get someone at VA to answer his questions — a problem that plagued the Post-9/11 GI Bill last year — about why he has not been receiving the correct housing stipend rate.

“This program is a great thing,” he said. “Unfortunately, for the second year in a row, the GI Bill folks continue to execute poorly on getting the funds to us vets in a timely manner,” he said.

He said he has waited 45 minutes on hold because “if you hang up, you start over.” He has sent e-mails for which he has waited as long as two weeks for a

reply, and said he had to resort at one point to using some of his children's college savings to pay bills.

“My claim is just a renewal, for goodness sake,” Butler said. “This is not that hard.”

Keith Wilson, VA's education service director who noted that average time to process a Post-9/11 GI Bill claim has been cut from an average of 28 days last year to 10 days this year, said he was unaware of problems getting through to the VA call center and wondered whether this was a local issue involving telephone switching equipment. **[And his dog ate his homework.]**

On the issue of late release of information on tuition and fee caps, Wilson said VA is hamstrung by delays among the states in announcing their tuition and fees for public colleges and universities, which are needed to set the separate tuition and fee caps for each state.

Veterans groups have suggested that VA release state caps as the information becomes available, rather than waiting until all states have provided information. [Duh.]

Poor communication was a theme in testimony from school officials and veterans groups.

Veterans have no way to track their claims or to ensure that information they receive from VA employees on the GI Bill hot line is accurate, said James Wear, assistant veterans benefits policy director for Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Calling back to VA can yield a totally different answer, he said.

Student Veterans of America also says people answering the hot line do not appear to have any authority to correct mistakes, which leaves veterans to seek additional help from their school, veterans service organizations or Congress.

Overpayment of benefits, which can happen for assorted reasons, can cause large problems even when veterans make arrangements to repay, said Faith Deslauriers of the National Association of Veterans' Program Administrators.

Veterans current on repayment plans are getting letters telling them they are delinquent and information on their debt has been turned over to a collection agency.

Deslauriers said she is helping a veteran whose credit card was canceled for that reason.

“It is affecting their credit and their access to credit,” she said.

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America gave the House subcommittee several examples of overpayments that came as a result of VA errors or students changing a course load for which the school refunded tuition and fees but VA

either never cashed the credit or failed to credit the payment to the individual student's account.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Traveling Soldier is the publication of the Military Resistance Organization.

Telling the truth - about the occupations or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance to Imperial wars inside the armed forces.

Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces.

If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers. <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/>

CLASS WAR REPORTS



Capitalists At Work:

“The Super-Rich Got Even Wealthier This Year”

“The Combined Net Worth Of The 400 Richest Americans Climbed 8 Percent This Year, To \$1.37 Trillion”

“The Rest Of America Got Poorer, Of Course”

The number in poverty rose to a post-war high. The median wage continues to deteriorate. And some 20 million Americans don't have work.

The super-rich got even wealthier this year, and yet most of them are paying even fewer taxes to support the education, job training, and job creation of the rest of us.

According to Forbes magazine's annual survey, just released, the combined net worth of the 400 richest Americans climbed 8 percent this year, to \$1.37 trillion. Wealth rose for 217 members of the list, while 85 saw a decline.

For example, Charles and David Koch, the energy magnates who are pouring vast sums of money into Republican coffers and sponsoring tea partiers all over America, each gained \$5.5 billion of wealth over the past year. Each is now worth \$21.5 billion.

Wall Street continued to dominate the list; 109 of the richest 400 are in finance or investments.

From another survey we learn that the 25 top hedge-fund managers got an average of \$1 billion each, but paid an average of 17 percent in taxes (because so much of their income is considered capital gains, taxed at 15 percent thanks to the Bush tax cuts).

The rest of America got poorer, of course. The number in poverty rose to a post-war high. The median wage continues to deteriorate. And some 20 million Americans don't have work.

Only twice before in American history has so much been held by so few, and the gap between them and the great majority been a chasm - the late 1920s, and the era of the robber barons in the 1880s.

And yet the Bush tax cuts of 2001 and 2003, which conferred almost all their benefits on the rich, continue.

Democrats have decided to delay voting on whether to extend them for the top 2 percent of Americans or for the bottom 98 percent until after the mid-term elections.

Troops Invited:

Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send email to contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe.

Chinese Workers Organizing For Self-Emancipation:

**“Karl Marx Was Right. And Just Like
Karl Marx Said, Only Through
Struggle With The Capitalists Can We
Gain Our Rights,’ Liu Says”
“Marx Could Well Have Looked At The
Factories Of Shenzhen And Seen A
Country Ripe For A Communist
Revolution”**



Some 2,000 Chinese workers clash with police as they stage a strike outside the Taiwan-funded KOK Machinery rubber factory in Kunshan, east China's Jiangsu province, on June 7. AFP/Getty Images

September 24, 2010 by Rob Gifford, NPR [Excerpts]

Over the summer, a rash of suicides and strikes hit factories in southern China as workers protested against labor conditions. Rather than cracking down, factory bosses have responded to the protests by increasing salaries and improving working conditions.

Word of the better conditions has filtered through to other workers in southern China, and some observers are predicting more strikes in coming months.

The Taiwanese company Foxconn has set up a sprawling campus of factories in the southern city of Shenzhen, employing hundreds of thousands of workers.

But earlier in the year, a spate of suicides hit the company: workers jumping off the top of dormitories to their deaths in protest against military-style discipline enforced in the factory.

Workers there are reluctant to speak to the media, but one supervisor, who only gives his family name, Li, says everyone in Shenzhen knows the system is harsh.

“Everyone knows Foxconn’s management system is the strictest. Sometimes you have to work a whole month without a day off, at least 12 hours a day,” Li says. “And they don’t let people from the same town work or live together. So it’s difficult to build up friendships that could lead to strikes.”

At other factories, it was a different method of protest. At one Honda auto plant in nearby Foshan, workers came out in a series of well-organized strikes, demanding better pay and conditions.

Migrant workers have sporadically protested for years in Shenzhen, but Liu Kaiming, who heads a civil society organization called the Institute for Contemporary Observation, says he thinks these protests mark a turning point.

In both cases, he says, the factory bosses responded by immediately saying they would raise salaries and improve working conditions.

“This is all happening, firstly, because it is a new, younger generation of migrant workers, who won’t accept such bad conditions,” he says. “Secondly, there’s a shortage of workers, so they know they have more leverage.

“And thirdly, cell phones and the Internet mean they know more about the outside world, and are better able to organize as well.”

At Shenzhen train station, workers come in from the countryside and head to places like the Songgang Jiashan factory, where the workers have been unhappy for years.

Now, empowered by the success of the Foxconn and Honda protests, a group of them, led by a 30-year-old migrant, Liu Dechang, are huddled in the back room of a small restaurant, plotting a strike.

“Of course what happened at Foxconn and Honda has influenced us. When we saw what happened there, we had more confidence. We thought, if they could do it, we could do it, too,” Liu says.

These workers are not skilled, so they perhaps have less leverage than others. But they are determined.

Liu Dechang says conditions at the factory are appalling, but the Taiwanese boss won’t listen to their complaints. And the bosses always have good relations with Communist Party officials, he says, which prevents change from happening.

“Karl Marx was right. We should struggle like he said in 19th century Europe. Chinese factories now are just like factories in 19th century Europe. And just like Karl Marx said, only through struggle with the capitalists can we gain our rights,” Liu says. As a result, workers are extolling a communist struggle to a Communist Party government that has ditched its allegiance to the workers and joined forces with capitalists.

Indeed, Karl Marx could well have looked at the factories of Shenzhen and seen a country ripe for a communist revolution.

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?

Forward Military Resistance along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Afghanistan, Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the wars, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Resistance, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657. Phone: 888.711.2550

**Cuban Dictatorship Firing
500,000 Workers:
“What Existed In Cuba Had
Nothing To Do With Socialism.
But Unfortunately, Large Sections
Of The Left Have Confused State
Ownership With Socialism”
“Corruption In Cuba Is Absolutely
Pervasive, And People Are Driven To
Steal In Order To Survive”**

“There Is A Hip-Hop Movement In Cuba That Expresses The Disgust Of Young Black People, Specifically Against Police Harassment And Brutality”

September 20, 2010 Sam Farber interviewed by Alan Maass. Transcription by Rebecca Anshell Song

Sam Farber is a veteran socialist who was born and raised in Cuba. He is the author of numerous articles and books on the country, including *The Origins of the Cuban Revolution Reconsidered*. He spoke to Alan Maass

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WHAT'S THE background to the dramatic announcement about Cuba shedding half a million state jobs?

I THINK it's important first of all to place this in the context of the Cuban regime being in decline, and that decline being accelerated because of the terrible economic situation.

This is the result of a combination of factors.

One is the irrationalities and crises generated by the bureaucratic system itself. Another, of course, is the world recession, which has had a very negative economic impact on the Cuban economy.

For example, while the number of tourists to Cuba has continued at more or less the same rate, income from tourism is down. And income from nickel production, which has actually been even more important than tourism for the last several years, really fell dramatically because of the big drop in commodity prices--though since then, the price has recovered somewhat.

So the economic crisis is very severe, and for a couple years now, the regime has been talking about how there are 1 million excess state workers--not half a million, but 1 million. So this is what I imagine could be considered a “compromise position”--of laying off half a million people, instead of 1 million, as had been discussed.

Of those half million, 250,000 are supposed to be given licenses for self-employment, and another 200,000 are supposed to be placed in non-state jobs--by which they mean many state businesses are going to be converted into co-ops, where the employees will be the ones responsible. This is what they've already done with taxis, and barbershops and beauty parlors. They want to do that with a lot more occupations and industries.

The official announcement of the layoffs from the main trade union federation--and by the way, shouldn't that be the function of the employer?--left 50,000 workers unaccounted for, perhaps because they will be given new state jobs different from the ones they had before.

THIS IS certainly not the regime's first step in this direction, is it?

I WOULD call this new move an important milestone in a process that's been going on for some time.

A couple years ago, the government began to lease land--in 10-year renewable contracts--to farmers after the sugar industry almost completely collapsed, and the land was going to waste. The idea was for the farmers to become private farmers--to use the land for whatever they wanted. But they aren't owners. They pay rent to the state to use previously idle land, and they must sell most of what they produce to the state at prices determined by the government.

I think this experience with farming might indicate tremendous problems ahead in terms of whether the shift of half a million state workers into self-employment or co-ops will work.

In the case of private farming, the majority of the people who were given land hadn't previously engaged in agriculture. They were people from the cities who were clearly desperate to improve their economic situation, so they took this opportunity.

However, it has been very difficult for those people to acquire the tools they need.

And by tools, I don't mean high-tech scientific equipment or tractors or anything like that--I mean quite basic agricultural tools. The state has done a very inadequate job, to say the least, in helping these people with the basics. So the results so far have been far from impressive.

I expect that similar problems will take place with these new private businesses.

For example, one of the occupations that will be shifted into self-employment or co-ops is auto repair. So a previous state employee becomes an auto mechanic. Where is he going to get spare parts? Where is that auto mechanic going to get the appropriate tools, except from the state?

Here's where the problem of corruption comes into play.

Corruption in Cuba is absolutely pervasive, and people are driven to steal in order to survive.

At the most basic level, this takes place because you simply can't survive on a monthly government ration that only covers two weeks. The ration book is being cut down all the time, and even sharper cuts are imminent.

So people carry out theft from the state as a way of surviving, and I suspect that if somebody becomes an auto mechanic, they'll have to engage in even greater theft to be able to survive as a small businessperson.

The other possible avenue here is that people may get help from outside Cuban capital, particularly from South Florida.

That would be illegal from the U.S. point of view, though it probably won't be illegal in Cuba, because they want that capital to come in. But the consequences of allowing in outside Cuban capital on any scale are uncharted territory.

The Cuban government is in classic contradictory situation in Marxist terms.

It has to take these actions, and yet if it does, all kinds of outcomes that could potentially subvert the system arise. They are between the devil and the deep blue sea.

Before this latest move, there were 591,000 people employed in private businesses. That includes the struggling farmers I just mentioned, but it also includes 143,000 self-employed in the cities.

This is going to add another 250,000 people to the self-employed, plus 200,000 people in co-ops. If you're just talking about strictly private businesses, there will be 450,000 private farmers, plus 400,000 self-employed people who will be legally allowed to hire other people. We're talking about 850,000 people out of a labor force of 5 million--that's 17 percent.

So they are creating a legal petty bourgeoisie in Cuba--and I say legal because a lot of people have been doing this illegally for some time.

What consequences this will have is uncertain because there hasn't been a situation like this, really, since the sixties. This is uncharted territory--especially if they succeed in getting investment money from Cuban friends and relatives in Miami.

Again, that's illegal under American law, but there has always been a section of the American political establishment that thinks it's important to provide money to private enterprises in Cuba to the extent that it can enter the island.

Now, the Cuban government will probably allow it, and this will place heavy pressure to modify the U.S. economic blockade to make it possible.

IS RAÚL Castro responsible for this new direction in economic policy? Does any of it extend back to when Fidel Castro was in charge?

ALL OF this--back to the initiative around private farming--has taken place under Raúl Castro. Raúl Castro took over de facto in 2006 and officially in 2008, so he has been the principal person leading the government on a day-to-day basis. It's unclear what role Fidel Castro has played in setting policy during that time, and what role he will play in the future.

So these measures have been underway since Raúl Castro took over, which can be explained in part by the fact that Raúl Castro has been a great admirer of the Chinese model--since long before he took power. But even more important, of course, is the severity of the economic crisis affecting Cuba.

THE MEDIA largely describes what is taking place in Cuba as a turn to capitalism--away from socialism. But is that accurate--to describe what has existed in Cuba for the past 50 years as socialism?

I HAVE always maintained that what existed in Cuba had nothing to do with socialism. But unfortunately, large sections of the left have confused state ownership with socialism.

When we talk about socialism, we should be talking about rural and urban workers--and their class allies, like the peasantry--running society together.

That has never existed in Cuba.

It is true that for long periods of time, the regime was popular because it was able to deliver significant improvements in standards of living for the poorest people--and it provided a great deal of social mobility, which is something that is sometimes underplayed in terms of the popular support for the Cuban regime.

Just in terms of the massive emigration of the petty bourgeoisie, the big bourgeoisie and professionals from Cuba, that alone allowed for a great number of people to take over those jobs.

But the point is that socialism, in our view, is not state ownership of the economy--because the question then is: Who controls the state?

Certainly, working people in Cuba don't control the state. Rather, it is a bureaucracy, organized around the Cuban Communist Party, that does.

So it isn't socialism that is being replaced.

A bureaucratic state ruling class has decided to incorporate as a very junior partner in the economy a newly created petty bourgeoisie--some of whom will be successful, and may become a new group of private capitalists, which has not really existed in Cuba since the 1960s.

So the bureaucracy will share power with this new group--economic power, at any rate--and a situation like China may eventually develop. But there is also the question of political power, and the central bureaucracy isn't going to share power with newly minted capitalists unless they totally assimilate into the ruling bureaucracy.

But this has also happened in China--you have capitalists joining the Communist Party and becoming a part of it.

WHAT ARE the implications of that analysis for what socialists should say about the U.S. blockade of Cuba?

THIS seems to me to be something that needs to be said over and over again, quite independently of the crisis in Cuba and independently of the crimes and misdeeds--and they are numerous--of the bureaucracy.

We should continue to insist that the criminal economic blockade of Cuba must come to an end.

There is a matter of principle here: The United States has no right to intervene in the internal affairs of Cuba and try to use its economic might to force its preferred capitalist system to be installed in Cuba.

This is the principal reason for our continued opposition to the blockade--to reaffirm the principle of national self-determination and stop the domination of U.S. imperialism.

But there is also a practical reason. The fact of the matter is that the Cuban regime has used the U.S. blockade for years and years as an excuse to hide its own dictatorial nature and economic incompetence.

So for both principled and practical reasons, I think it's high time that this criminal blockade, which has gone on for more than 50 years, comes to an end.

WHAT WILL the effect of the state layoffs be in Cuba? Will they spark a new resistance?

I THINK a lot of people are going to be left out in the cold, because a lot of these enterprises will not have adequate access to the resources they need to succeed.

With respect to the so-called co-ops, they will be created from above. They won't be co-ops created as a result of a surge in the workers' movement, as has taken place, for example, in the U.K. and the Scandinavian countries, where a co-operative movement developed as an ally of the nascent labor movement. Co-op members in Cuba may have neither the access to resources nor the political motivation to succeed.

So it will be the case that many of these co-ops and private enterprise will be failures--for the reasons I was talking about before.

What is going to happen to those people? Emigration from Cuba has been a safety valve for quite some time. But it's bureaucratically difficult and quite expensive to emigrate--there's no legal right to travel in Cuba--so this won't be sufficient.

Up until now, discontent and disgust with the political system has, to some extent, been directed into criminal activity. As I was saying, the problem of theft in Cuba is enormous--not just theft for the purpose of private enterprise, but to survive.

Most promising in terms of the breadth of alternatives about what goes on in Cuba is the tremendous youth alienation that is taking place, particularly among Black youth.

There is a hip-hop movement in Cuba that expresses the disgust of young Black people, specifically against police harassment and brutality.

So youth frustration and alienation may express itself in political protest. This is possible, though we can't be sure. I don't want to be like so many people on the left and say that this is going to happen because we want it to happen. Unfortunately, things don't work out that way.

But the objective possibility of a radicalization and a higher level of struggle will be considerably increased with the kinds of measures that the regime is taking.

I have no doubt about that.

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