

# THE MILITANT

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key to building public health care  
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 72/NO. 37 SEPTEMBER 22, 2008

## With Vermont, SWP ticket is on the ballot in 10 states

BY TED LEONARD

MONTPELIER, Vermont—Supporters of the Socialist Workers Party have succeeded in putting the presidential ticket of Róger Calero and his running mate Alyson Kennedy on the ballot in 10 states (see chart on page 4).

Kennedy filed more than 2,300 signatures on September 9 to qualify for ballot status in Vermont.

The New York State Board of Elections informed the socialist campaign that same day that the SWP ticket is on the ballot in New York. The following day the Vermont election board confirmed the party will be on the ballot in that state as well, bringing the total states where the SWP is on the ballot to 10.

At the University of Vermont in Burlington, Kennedy was interviewed for the *Cynic*, the school paper. The reporter asked, "Because youth are

interested in this election, what would you tell them?"

"They should vote for me and my running mate Róger Calero because we are the only candidates who are for the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Europe, and Guantánamo Bay, Cuba," replied Kennedy. "The SWP ticket offers the only working-class alternative in the elections."

"Hundreds of people were killed in Haiti in the recent hurricanes," Kennedy noted. "In Cuba only a few deaths have been reported so far. This is because in Cuba, where the interests of workers and farmers come first, working people mobilized to ensure the safety of all. I recently visited New Orleans where three years after Hurricane Katrina, working-class neighborhoods are still devastated."

## Cuban 5 convictions upheld; events will demand freedom

BY BEN JOYCE

The 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta denied requests to reconsider the convictions of the Cuban Five on September 2. The legal defense for the five will appeal the case to the U.S. Supreme Court. The attorneys have until December 1 to do so.

Supporters of the Cuban Five are planning actions this week to mark the 10th anniversary of their arrest and are making a final push to broaden participation.

The Cuban Five—Gerardo Hernán-

dez, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, René González, and Antonio Guerrero—have been imprisoned for 10 years on charges including "conspiracy to commit espionage" and in one case, "conspiracy to commit murder."

They were arrested in South Florida where they were monitoring the activities of right-wing Cuban groups that have attacked Cuba with U.S. backing. The FBI used wiretapping, burglaries, and other assaults on workers

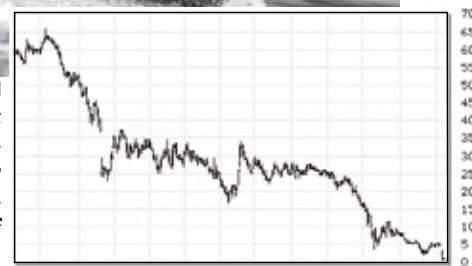
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## U.S. gov't takes over two mortgage giants Guarantees bondholders' investments



Reuters/Jason Reed

Headquarters of mortgage lender Freddie Mac in McLean, Virginia. Washington seized control of this firm and Fannie Mae September 7 in the largest move yet to bail out mortgage industry. Inset: Graph shows decline of Freddie Mac stock price over past year.



BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The U.S. government on September 7 seized control of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac in an effort to bail out the mortgage industry. As two of the largest financial agencies, Fannie Mae and

Freddie Mac fund about three-quarters of new home mortgages. They hold or back \$5.3 trillion of the \$12 trillion in outstanding U.S. home mortgages.

In response to the takeover, the Dow  
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## Georgia court moves to execute Troy Davis, jailed in frame-up

BY CLAY DENNISON

ATLANTA, September 7—A Savannah, Georgia, judge has signed a death warrant for Troy Anthony Davis. Supporters of Davis called an emergency rally for September 11 in front of the

Georgia State Capitol in Atlanta.

Martina Correia, Davis's sister, told the *Militant* that the death warrant is for a date between September 23 and 30. "If the U.S. Supreme Court doesn't grant a stay or if we don't receive clemency, more than likely the prosecution will push for the earlier date," she explained.

Troy Davis was arrested in 1989 for the murder of an off-duty policeman and convicted and sentenced to death in 1991. There was no weapon, DNA, or other physical evidence linking Davis to the killing. Seven of the nine witnesses that originally testified against Davis have since recanted or contradicted their statements, some citing threats and pressure from the cops to finger Davis. New witnesses have come forward who say someone

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[www.thecuban5.org](http://www.thecuban5.org)

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## Free the Cuban Five!



From left to right: Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández, and René González

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# Sami al-Arian is released from prison but faces another trial for ‘contempt’

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

MIAMI—“We would like to express our gratitude to all of you who protested Dr. al-Arian’s imprisonment. . . . Your efforts *have* made a difference,” read the statement by supporters of Sami al-Arian celebrating the victory of his release on bail after five and a half years in prison.

Al-Arian, a tenured University of South Florida professor and supporter of the Palestinian national liberation struggle, was released on bail September 2. He will remain under house arrest at his daughter’s residence in Virginia while he awaits trial on contempt charges against him or until several motions for dismissal of those charges are decided.

Al-Arian had been imprisoned since February 2003 on frame-up “terrorism” charges. In December 2005 the government’s case collapsed when a federal jury in Tampa, Florida, acquitted him of the terrorism charges and deadlocked on other counts. Despite not being convicted on any charge, he was returned to

prison.

Al-Arian agreed to plead guilty to “conspiracy to provide services” to Palestinian Islamic Jihad in return for immunity from further prosecution and an agreement that he be deported from the United States. In return the government was to release him from prison after he served what remained of a 57-month sentence. Instead, the government kept him in prison and continued its campaign of harassment.

During his imprisonment, al-Arian was charged with criminal contempt for refusing to cooperate with a grand jury investigating Muslim organizations in Virginia. He was put in solitary confinement on numerous occasions. He carried out three hunger strikes.

He completed serving all his time

in April. At a pretrial hearing for the contempt charges, Judge Leonie Brinkema granted al-Arian bail. At the same time Immigration and Customs Enforcement incarcerated him pending deportation. The government, however, stalled on deportation proceedings, maintaining that no country will accept al-Arian, in spite of the fact that his attorney submitted travel documents issued by the Egyptian government.

“We are thrilled that our father is back home after five and a half years of visits behind glass,” Laila al-Arian, his eldest daughter, told the *Militant* September 4. “We still have the trial before us. But the Supreme Court could rule in our favor. Or, the judge can drop the charges.” She thanked all those who supported her father over the years.



Sami al-Arian (above) had been imprisoned since February 2003 on frame-up “terrorism” charges.

For more information on Sami al-Arian’s defense campaign see [www.freesamialarian.com](http://www.freesamialarian.com).

Janice Lynn in Washington, D.C., contributed to this article.

## U.S. troops carry out ground assault in Pakistan

BY DOUG NELSON

U.S. Special Forces opened fire on a village in Pakistan September 3 in the first publicly acknowledged U.S. ground assault inside the country. The raid, which killed as many as 20 people, was condemned by Pakistani government officials and further complicated relations between the two governments, which have worked closely together in the “war on terror” since late 2001.

It’s not clear who were the targets of the raid as details of the attack from the U.S. side—based on statements from anonymous government

officials to the *New York Times*—are scant. The assault, according to the *Times*, was carried about by Special Forces under direct U.S. command. NATO officials denied any knowledge or involvement in the operation.

The assault took place in the village of Musa Nikow in the South Waziristan district near the Afghan border. According to local residents, most of those killed were civilians. Some 3,000 villagers protested the attack two days later in Wana, the district’s main town.

“Such actions are completely counterproductive and can result in huge losses, because it gives the civilians a cause to rise against the Pakistani military,” said Pakistani military spokesman Maj. Gen. Athar Abbas. About 100,000 Pakistani soldiers operate along the Afghan border.

Citing the same fears, Pakistani prime minister Yousuf Raza Gilani said his government will not allow such violations of its sovereignty. Gilani made his statement the day of the assault just hours after his motorcade was attacked by sniper fire in the country’s capital.

The incident also occurred three

days before Pakistani presidential elections, which were called following the August 18 resignation of close U.S. ally Pervez Musharraf. The election brought Asif Ali Zardari, leader of the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) and widower of slain former prime minister Benazir Bhutto, to power. The outcome further strengthened the PPP’s new dominant position won in elections for parliament and prime minister earlier this year.

On the day of presidential elections, the Pakistani government temporarily blocked major fuel and supply routes to U.S.-led NATO troops in Afghanistan to protest the U.S. ground assault—a political move likely designed to win more PPP votes. The stoppage was too short to affect military operations in Afghanistan, according to NATO officials.

According to anonymous U.S. officials cited by the *Times*, the September 3 assault is the beginning of a stepped-up military campaign inside Pakistan. Five days since the raid, two missile attacks from aerial drones killed at least 19, at least seven of whom were civilians. Some 25 were wounded.

### For further reading

#### FBI on Trial

by Margaret Jayko

The 1987 victory in the 14-year Socialist Workers Party legal battle against the FBI, CIA, and other government spy agencies “increases the space for politics, expands the de facto use of the Bill of Rights, increases the confidence of working people that you can be political.” **\$18.95**

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# Chicago students protest unequal school funding

BY JOHN HAWKINS

NORTHFIELD, Illinois—More than 1,000 Chicago public school students, most of whom are Black, boycotted the first day of school September 2. Joined by parents and supporters, they traveled to New Trier Township High School in this northern suburb of Northfield to register in the predominantly white schools here. The boycott was called by more than 50 Chicago-area ministers led by Rev. James Meeks, pastor of Salem Baptist Church on the city's South Side. Meeks is also an Illinois state senator.

In the weeks leading up to the boycott state and city officials denounced the planned protest and pressured organizers to call it off, arguing that the boycott would cause students to miss a day's education and cost Chicago schools more than \$100,000 in state education funds.

But boycott organizers and others responded as did Mara Munoz who told the *Militant*, "If this protest doesn't do anything else it will educate our people and other people as well on the reality of inequality in the schools. It's important that we stand up and fight for equal education."

According to the Education Trust, in 2005 the average gap nationwide between "high-income" school districts and "low-income" ones was \$938. In Illinois the gap was \$2,235. Only New York had a larger gap that year.

"Illinois is the seventh wealthiest state in the country in terms of income," Meeks told the press at a news conference outside New Trier High School, "yet it is 49th in terms of state funding of public schools."

Nadell Jackson, 13, a student on Chicago's South Side who joined the protest, told reporters that because there are not enough books to go around, he often has to share books and can't take them home to study.

De'Erica Munoz, 17, already com-

mutes two hours each way to a school on Chicago's North Side from her South Side neighborhood because the schools are supposed to be better. Even there, she said, "We need more computers; the auditorium has broken seats."

"This looks like a college campus," she said looking at the New Trier school. "We should have the same opportunities as suburban kids."

At one of several news conferences held throughout the day, organizers of the boycott announced plans to enlist other school districts to join the Urban League's civil rights suit against the state government and board of education for unequal funding of state schools.



AP/M. Spencer Green  
Some 1,000 Chicago public school students attempt to register at a suburban, predominantly white school in Northfield, Illinois, in a protest against unequal funding of Illinois schools.

# Calero backs antidiscrimination fight

BY JOHN HAWKINS

CHICAGO—Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate Róger Calero received a warm response from the crowd at Salem Baptist Church on Chicago's South Side September 3 as people prepared to board school buses headed downtown for a protest against unequal funding of Illinois schools.

A day earlier more than 1,000 Chicago public school students boycotted the first day of school and traveled to New Trier Township High School in Northfield, a North Shore suburb, to register for school there (see article above).

Chicago public schools, with a student population close to 47 percent African American and 40 percent Latino, have a graduation rate of about 70 percent, compared to 99 percent in North Shore schools. At New Trier High \$17,000 is spent per student compared with \$10,000 per student in Chicago.

One woman, who brought her two grandchildren to take part in the protest, asked Calero to give her a copy of the SWP campaign brochure. "I saw her

copy," she said, pointing to her friend. "In the speeches at the Democratic convention it was as if working people don't exist. This is different."

Later that day Calero spoke to a class on "American Government" and another on "Black Politics" at Chicago State University, a majority Black college also on Chicago's South Side.

A lively discussion broke out in the Black Politics class when one student said she disagreed with students missing school September 2. Another student said not only had she supported the protest but she had also participated along with her three children. "Just seeing the difference in the facilities at New Trier was an education that day," she said, adding she was proud to join her kids in protesting the unequal education Black students in Chicago receive.

Calero responded that the resegregation of schools is taking place not only in Chicago, but across the country. "Major battles were fought by Black workers and youth in the 1960s and 1970s to desegregate the schools, but since then the rulers' assault on workers has deepened the class divisions, and workers who are Black bear the brunt of this offensive," he said. "The fight for equal education and against discrimination is a central question facing the working class and our unions."

Another student asked what the socialist candidate would do about the

rising cost of health care and insurance. Calero explained that both John McCain and Barack Obama want to shift the responsibility for health care more onto the individual, McCain through his proposal for a tax credit of \$5,000 per family to buy health insurance and Obama through his proposed legislation making it mandatory for parents to buy health insurance for their children.

"We say workers should fight for a federal government guarantee of lifetime medical care and retirement pensions for all. Health care should be a right—part of Social Security from cradle to grave," he continued.

Calero also spent a day at Benito Juarez High School in the predominantly Mexican Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago, where he spoke to nearly 125 students.

He was asked how he came to the United States from Nicaragua, and why he is running for U.S. president since he isn't U.S.-born. He responded that one of the first things he and his running mate Alyson Kennedy will do when elected is to change that, along with the laws that prevent immigrants and former prisoners from voting. "Laws can be changed," he explained. "Jim Crow segregation used to be the law of the land. But that was changed through struggle."

Betsy Farley and Ilona Gersh contributed to this article.

## — CALENDAR —

### MASSACHUSETTS

#### Boston

**March and Rally to Support the Cuban Five.** Fri., Sept. 12, 4 p.m. *Meet at downtown crossing T stop at Washington & Winter streets. Tel.: (617) 522-9478.*

### CANADA

#### Montreal

**Demonstration: 10 Years of Injustice! Enough is Enough! Free the Five Cubans—Political Prisoners in the United States!** Fri., Sept. 12, 5 p.m.–7 p.m. *In front of the U.S. Consulate, 1144 St. Alexandre St. Tel.: (514) 728-9363.*

#### Toronto

**Political/Cultural Night for the Cuban Five.** Speakers: Laureano Cardoso, Consul General of Cuba in Toronto; others. Fri., Sept. 12, 7 p.m. *Auditorium, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 252 Bloor St. W (at St. George subway). Info: torontoforumoncuba@rogers.com.*

#### Vancouver

**Picket: Free the Five Cuban Heroes!** Fri., Sept. 12, noon. *In front of U.S. Consulate 1075 W. Pender St. Cultural Night.* Fri. Sept. 12, 7 p.m. *Mount Pleasant Neighborhood House, 800 East Broadway, one block east of Fraser Street on Broadway. Tel: 604-780-7604.*

## — MILITANT

## LABOR FORUMS —

### MINNESOTA

#### Minneapolis

**The Fight for Women's Rights Today.** Fri. Sept. 19. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. *1311 1/2 E Lake St. Tel.: (612) 729-1205.*

### TEXAS

#### Houston

**Behind the Government Bailout of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac: Their Mortgage Crisis.** Speaker: Anthony Dutrow, SWP candidate for state representative. Fri., Sept. 19, 7:30 p.m. *4800 W 34th St., Suite C-51A. Tel.: (713) 688-4919.*

### NEW ZEALAND

#### Auckland

**For a Working-Class Alternative in the New Zealand Parliamentary Elections.** Speakers: Communist League candidates Patrick Brown and Annalucia Vermunt. Fri., Sept. 19, 7 p.m. Donation: \$3. *Suite 3, 7 Mason Ave., Otahuhu (upstairs, above Laundromat). Tel.: (09) 276-8885.*

## SWP presidential campaign tour schedule



Presidential candidate Róger Calero, center facing camera, speaks with participants in May Day rally in Los Angeles demanding legalization of immigrants.



Vice presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy being interviewed by a Georgia TV station April 1 at a truckers' convoy in Atlanta protesting high fuel costs.

### Presidential candidate Róger Calero

September 13–16 Washington, D.C.	September 23–25 Twin Cities, MN	Sept. 30–Oct. 1 Omaha, NE
September 19–21 Miami	September 26–28 Des Moines, IA	

### Vice presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy

September 12–16 Newark, NJ	September 23–26 Seattle
September 17–20 New York City	September 28–30 Los Angeles



# ‘It’s not about money, it’s about the party’s character — We can’t be bribed’

BY DAVE PRINCE

The quote in the above headline is the reaction of a longtime member of the Socialist Workers Party to the “Economic Stimulus Act” that was announced with considerable fanfare by the White House and Congress last February as a measure that was going to put money in the hands of tens of millions to bolster U.S. capitalism.

Its real purpose was to bribe the working class and divert attention from the employers’ offensive to drive us into the ground. Every week workers are faced with the grinding reality of the unfolding financial crisis and recession. Unemployment stands at more than 6 percent by the government’s figures. Real wages are declining and health and safety conditions on the job are deteriorating, putting workers’ lives and limbs in jeopardy.

Two hundred fifteen members of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists and SWP supporters proudly rejected this bribe. They instead put

their checks in the mail to the socialist movement’s Capital Fund.

Workers sending their “stimulus” checks to the Capital Fund is consistent with the long and proud tradition of workers in the revolutionary socialist movement of not accepting company “blood money” bribes. That is, bribes that come with our blood, and the blood of our fellow workers, on them.

By sending in their “blood money” checks, class-conscious workers recognize that these funds can best be put to use for the communist movement’s long-term publishing goals, aimed at ending the wages system. They explain to their fellow workers why they don’t accept “blood money,” and how the Capital Fund is used to advance the book-publishing program of the communist movement, the goal of which is to eliminate for all time the wages system, the source of the capitalists’ exploitation of the working class and oppression of hundreds of millions.

When a boss doles out a contract-signing bonus in lieu of paying higher wages or so-called production or safety bonuses, it is to shut us up, to get us to ignore the blood, often literally, that they take out of our hides every day. These employer bribes range from \$10 to sometimes a few thousand with what is described by the boss class as a “contract signing bonus.”

The “economic stimulus” checks were more of the same, except on a larger scale. Socialist workers know that every time a bribe is accepted it opens the door to accepting the next one, something the employing class counts on. The “silver



Site of a crane collapse in New York City May 30, where two workers were killed. Bosses use production and safety bonuses to try to bribe workers into ignoring the blood shed on the job. Class-conscious workers recognize the best thing to do with “blood money” is to donate it to the communist movement’s publishing program.

bullet” is their favorite weapon in the class struggle.

During the past few months, two workers at Dakota Premium Foods sent \$600 each, the lump-sum payment the bosses finally resorted to in order to sell a contract proposal after the workers in Local 789 in South St. Paul, Minnesota, rejected the company’s first offer. In addition, several “safety” bonus checks came from workers at the Dakota plant who rejected bribes for safety while cattle were being slaughtered and processed at dangerous breakneck speed in the plant.

A rail worker in the San Francisco Bay Area, who is a member of the United Transportation Union and a supporter of the SWP, just sent in more than \$2,200 from a contract-signing bonus.

The “Economic Stimulus” Appeal was the first time a number of youth learned about this tradition of socialist workers. One new member of the SWP handed in his check with the comment:

“My first ‘blood money’ contribution.”

Many contributors sent their check with a brief note that captured the spirit of rejecting the bribe: “The IRS made us wait but now we can turn it over”; “It is with great pleasure that I contribute this ‘blood money’”; “Here’s the ‘pound of flesh’ sent me.”

Three socialists who had already sent in the checks they received wrote saying they were also honored to be able to turn over the “stimulus checks” sent to estates of recently deceased family members.

The government put up obstacles to many workers who wanted to throw this bribe in their face. Two members of the party explained that they were only able to send in \$300 between them because the government claimed they “owed back taxes.” Another worker reported that a state court, in a matter involving a contested settlement, had succeeded in getting the federal government to put

Continued on page 9

## \$4,000 from ‘Economic Stimulus’ bribes donated to the ‘Militant’!

The *Militant* thanks all the readers who sent us their blood money “Economic Stimulus” checks. A total of \$4,000 came in.

If you haven’t yet received your check but want to donate it, just send it in when you receive it. **Send contributions to: *The Militant*, 306 W. 37th St. 10th Floor New York, NY 10018.**

## Cuba rebuilds after 2 devastating storms

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The island of Cuba suffered immense devastation when Hurricane Gustav slammed into its shores August 30 and then Hurricane Ike nine days later.

Not a single person died from Hurricane Gustav. The revolutionary government there led working people to mobilize and evacuate those living in the most threatened areas. More than 2.6 million people were also organized to evacuate their homes before Hurricane Ike hit. Four people in Cuba died from that storm.

In contrast, in nearby Haiti, which was also hit by the storms, more than 300 people lost their lives. Toilers there were forced to fend for themselves.

According to *Juventud Rebelde*, even as heavy rains still fell, the Cuban government has begun working with leaders in the affected regions on taking steps to immediately begin reconstruction efforts.

Hurricane Gustav hit Cuba with sustained winds of 150 miles per hour and gusts reaching a record of 212 miles per hour. Hardest hit were the Isle of Youth and provinces on the western part of the island, including Pinar del Río.

In his “Reflections” column in *Granma* September 3, former Cuban president Fidel Castro estimated that about \$3 billion to \$4 billion will be needed for recovery costs. “How many safe, hurricane-proof homes

does Cuba need? No less than 1.5 million houses for a total of 3.5 million families,” he wrote.

At the same time, the Cuban leader added, “We’re lucky to have a Revolution! No citizen will be abandoned to his fate.”

Extensive preparations were taken to safeguard the population prior to arrival of the hurricanes. Evacuation centers, for example, had doctors, nurses, and medical supplies in place beforehand. Teams of workers cleaned street drains, stored food supplies, and moved animals to higher ground.

Col. Miguel Angel Puig, chief of the Operations Department of the Civil Defense General Staff, said that only 19 people sustained injuries from Hurricane Gustav, none of them life-threatening.

Castro tells the story of the effort to rescue five crew members of a lobster boat from Batabanó in Havana Province. Communication was lost with the boat and once weather permitted, the government started a search. “It eventually involved 36 boats, three helicopters and two planes for almost two days,” he writes. The men were found alive and rescued.

More than 100,000 homes in Cuba were destroyed by Gustav—70,000 in Pinar del Río, where some 500 schools were also damaged, reports the Red Cross.

Vicente La O, director of the Electric Union, reported that 136 high ten-











sion towers were brought down by strong winds.

On the Isle of Youth, of the 25,000 houses on the island, some 20,000 were damaged by the storm and half of these have no roofs or are totally destroyed.

Washington has offered \$100,000 for what it describes as humanitarian aid to Cuba. However, it insists that the money will only be made available to private relief organizations, not to the Cuban government. The offer also includes a request to send United States Agency for International Development agents into the country to “assess” the damage.

If the U.S. government really wanted to help, Cuba’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement, it would “allow the sale to Cuba of those materials considered indispensable and to suspend the restrictions that prevent U.S. companies from offering private commercial credits to our country for the purchase of food in the United States.”

## Socialist Workers Campaign on the Ballot!

STATE	STATUS
 NEW YORK	✓ ON THE BALLOT!
 NEW JERSEY	✓ ON THE BALLOT!
 WASHINGTON	✓ ON THE BALLOT!
 VERMONT	✓ ON THE BALLOT!
 MINNESOTA	✓ ON THE BALLOT!
 LOUISIANA	✓ ON THE BALLOT!
 FLORIDA	✓ ON THE BALLOT!
 DELAWARE	✓ ON THE BALLOT!
 COLORADO	✓ ON THE BALLOT!
 IOWA	✓ ON THE BALLOT!



# 28,000 unionists strike Boeing aircraft company

BY DEAN PEOPLES

SEATTLE—Members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) went on strike against Boeing aircraft company plants September 6. This is the second time in three years that the union has struck Boeing to defend wages, medical benefits, and pensions, and to halt company efforts to weaken the union by replacing bargaining unit jobs with subcontractors. The current contract expired September 4.

On September 3, 28,000 IAM members at Boeing plants in Washington, Oregon, and Kansas voted by 80 percent to reject the company's "last and final" contract proposal. Eighty-seven percent voted to strike. Cheers went up on the second shift shop floor at the Everett, Washington, plant when the strike vote was announced at about 9:30 p.m.

However, immediately after the resounding vote, union officials an-

nounced they had agreed to a request by Washington State governor Christine Gregoire, a federal mediator, and Boeing to extend the contract and postpone strike action for 48 hours. After no new agreement was reached, the workers walked out.

Preceding the vote unionists had been holding daily lunchtime marches and rallies to discuss the details of the company's proposals. With a backlog of orders for planes and the millions of dollars executives are taking in compensation and pensions, workers are not in the mood to accept concessions. Rather, they are seeking to make up for losses in previous contracts, and to counter the impact of the rising cost of living.

Speakers at the rallies emphasized that the next contract "should not leave anyone behind," referring to the two-tier wage structure that since 1992 has frozen wages for new hires. They also



Militant/Dean Peoples

Workers picket an entrance to the Boeing plant in Everett, Washington, September 7.

called for protecting retiree benefits and for an end to further outsourcing of bargaining unit jobs.

The starting pay for grade 4 mechanics, which is what most workers begin as, has been \$12.72 per hour for the past 16 years. For factory service attendants,

starting pay has been \$8.72.

Although the company increased its offer on wages and pensions in its second proposal and backed off from some of its main concessions demands, workers on the picket lines point out that takeaways remain throughout the proposal, especially in medical coverage and subcontracting.

"If they made \$13 billion they can share the wealth. We just want a fair deal," said Mike Ice, a crane operator on picket duty at the Everett plant.

"Job security is the main issue for me," said Julie, an interior parts expeditor who did not want her last name used. Current contract language could eliminate her job, she said.

The proposal that was rejected contained an 11 percent general wage increase over three years, an increase in the pension formula from \$70 to \$80 per year of service, and a signing bonus of \$5,000–\$6,000. It raised starting pay for new hires by \$2.28 per hour.

However, this is far short of the \$4.50 raise for new hires that the union is demanding. The union proposal would apply to everyone currently in the six-year wage progression, whereas the company proposal only includes new hires and those who would be left below the new rate. The company has rejected the union proposal to shorten the six-year wage progression.

*Dean Peoples is an assembly mechanic at the Everett, Washington, plant and a member of IAM District 751.*

## 'Official' unemployment jumps to 6.1 percent

BY SETH GALINSKY

The official unemployment rate in the United States rose to 6.1 percent in August, the highest in five years. The 0.4 percent one-month jump may sound small as a statistic, but translated into human cost it means a total of 9.4 million unemployed, 2.2 million more than a year ago. Most of the increase was in the last four months alone.

If you add those not included because Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) doublespeak excludes the "marginally attached" from the official count—the real figure rises to 11 million unemployed workers.

In addition, 5.7 million people work part time, many of whom the BLS says "would like to work full time." The number of workers holding two or more jobs increased by 298,000 in August, to 8.1 million people.

While the "experts" debate whether or not the United States is in a recession, the BLS announced that real wages for workers officially dropped 1.3 percent. Like unemployment statistics, the inflation rate used to calculate the amount is manipulated to grossly underestimate the price rises working people pay.

Blacks are the hardest hit with a jump from 9.7 percent to 10.6 percent unemployed in August, almost a full percentage point. Among Latinos unemployment rose from 7.4 percent to 8 percent. Last hired, first fired continues to be the reality for those most oppressed by the workings of capitalism.

Unlike in May, when a big part of the unemployment rise was among teenagers, this month youth unemployment stayed at about 18.9 percent, but jumped among adults.

The latest figures are not final. Figures for June and July were revised upwards bringing job losses to more than 600,000 so far this year.

"What is worrisome is that more full-time workers have been laid off, more people are being forced to work part time who want to work full time and more people are trying to get multiple jobs to make ends meet," admitted Bruce Kasman, chief economist of J.P. Morgan Chase.

Both Democrat Barack Obama and Republican John McCain seized on the job losses to promote their election

campaigns. Obama said he was for \$65 billion in additional tax rebates and \$50 billion for state and local governments and "infrastructure." McCain is not opposed to further tax rebates, but said the key question is tax cuts.

The \$160 billion tax rebates issued early this year had little impact on economic growth or unemployment.

The Obama campaign blamed the policies of President George Bush for the steep job losses and implied that a McCain victory would mean more of the same. But McCain also distanced himself from Bush. "Some Americans have been left behind in the changing economy, and it often seems your government hasn't even noticed," he said.

Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate Róger Calero said in an interview that "both Obama and McCain want to blame this on policies of the Bush administration."

"But the problem is that the owners of big business shut down plants and toss out hundreds of thousands of workers," Calero said. "It's not because we don't need housing, public trans-

portation, schools, and health care, but because the owners are not in business to make things workers need. All they care about is profits.

"If they think they are not making high enough profits they lay off workers regardless of the consequences," he continued.

The socialist candidate noted the disproportionate impact of unemployment on Blacks, Latinos, and women. "That's why we need affirmative action with quotas to fight against the impact of 'last hired, first fired.'"

"The rebate stimulus plan is a bribe to get our silence," Calero said. "What we need is government protection. Every time the cost of living goes up, wages should go up automatically.

"We need federal legislation to cut the workweek with no cut in pay along with a public works program that can put millions to work. That would include building public housing in Chicago, rebuilding New Orleans, and providing aid to countries in the Caribbean that have been devastated by the hurricanes."

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



September 23, 1983

BOSTON—Elijah Pate, a 19-year-old Black, was shot and killed by city cops here on September 7, after allegedly stealing a car. City officials and the cops admitted that Pate was unarmed.

On September 8, as outrage in the Black community grew over this killing, city officials were forced to admit that Pate had been shot more than once, but refused to identify the location of the bullet wounds in Pate's body.

This racist killing by cops comes only three weeks after a similar attack on August 20. Then city cops shot and seriously wounded a 14-year-old Latino, Alex Valentin.

Two days later, in a further attack on the community, city officials went to court charging Valentin with assaulting the cops.



September 22, 1958

While government and Big Business spokesmen are exuding confidence over the economic situation, the Bureau of Labor Statistics has gloomy news about the unemployed. According to Department of Labor figures for August 1958, the level of unemployment in the U.S. has remained constant despite a rise in economic activity in the last three months. Since Spring, about 7.5% of the labor force has been unemployed.

This protracted unemployment occurs in the face of an upturn in certain sections of the economy in the last three months. According to the Federal Reserve Board's monthly summary for August, industrial production has regained more than half of the ground lost during the recession. Far less than half of the laid-off workers have got their jobs back.



September 23, 1933

In full realization of the great historic responsibility which devolved upon them, the undersigned organizations have unanimously decided to combine their forces for joint work for the regeneration of the revolutionary proletarian movement on an international scale.

The position of world capitalism; the frightful crisis which plunged the working masses into unheard of misery; the revolutionary movement of the oppressed colonial masses; the world danger of Fascism; the perspective of a new cycle of wars which threaten to destroy the whole human culture—these are the conditions which imperatively demand the welding together of the proletarian vanguard into a new (Fourth) International.



# Young Guinean doctors are key to building public health system in Equatorial Guinea

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL  
AND MARY-ALICE WATERS

(Second of three articles)

BATA, Equatorial Guinea—"This is the first time we've had doctors working in this city," said Antonio Oyono Esono, a Guinean health ministry official, speaking to a group of visitors at the public hospital in Eb-biyin, a district capital in the north-east corner of this Central African country.

Oyono was pointing out that the public health system in Equatorial Guinea is being built through the growing numbers of Guinean doctors, graduates of the new medical school here, who today are working with volunteer Cuban medical personnel in cities and towns across the country.

During a two-week fact-finding trip to Equatorial Guinea in July and August, internationalist supporters of New York-based Pathfinder Press had the opportunity to visit hospitals and clinics and talk with doctors, nurses, and medical technicians working in nine different regions of the country, in the process learning about the expansion of public health programs here. An article on broader developments in the country, "Equatorial Guinea: Changing economic and social relations highlight realities facing millions in Africa," appeared in the September 8 *Militant*.

## Imperialism's toll in Africa

Equatorial Guinea shares with the rest of Africa a centuries-long legacy of colonial and imperialist domination. The health conditions facing the peoples of the continent today are a graphic expression of this exploitation.

Every year millions in sub-Saharan Africa are killed by preventable or curable diseases. More than 3



Dr. Marcelino Edjang Ondó, medical director of hospital in Niefang, Equatorial Guinea, with Dr. Manuel Simón Matindi (standing). They are among the dozens of recent graduates of the medical school in Bata now working in towns and cities across the country. Inset: Map shows the hospital and several clinics and first-aid centers in the district where Guinean and Cuban medical personnel work.

million people die yearly from HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, or malaria, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). The AIDS pandemic has particularly ravaged southern Africa—in Zimbabwe an estimated 20 percent of women between the ages of 15 and 49 are infected with HIV, and about the same percentage in South Africa.

Diarrheal diseases—preventable with clean water and simple hygienic measures—are another leading cause of death, especially among infants. More than 40 percent of the population of sub-Saharan Africa lack access to safe water, according to WHO estimates, and the reality is undoubtedly worse. Widespread malnutrition contributes to the ravages of disease at all ages.

Of the 20 countries with the highest maternal mortality rates in the world, 19 are in Africa. Some 43 percent of the world's children who die before reaching the age of five are



African. Infant mortality rates are as high as 165 per 1,000 live births in Sierra Leone and 154 in Angola, compared to the national average of 6.9 in the United States. Life expectancy, which stands at 79 in the United Kingdom, is reported to be 45 in Nigeria and 38 in Angola.

Equatorial Guinea, while far from the worst-off on the continent, faces this same legacy. Until a decade and a half ago, paved roads and telephone service barely existed, let alone access to health care. Few outside the two largest cities had access to electricity. Even today it is a country with virtually no industry, and land cultivation is largely subsistence agriculture.

During the first years following independence from Spain in 1968, several hospitals were built in the largest provincial towns by the government of Francisco Macías Nguema. But what became an 11-year reign of terror under Macías led to the deteriora-

tion of hospitals and clinics and the exodus of trained medical personnel. No institutions of higher learning had ever existed in the country, and few Guineans who managed to study abroad, whether in medicine or any other field, returned to the country. (See accompanying article on the country's history.)

## Malaria endemic in region

As in much of Central Africa today, malaria is endemic in Equatorial Guinea. Typhoid fever, tuberculosis, and intestinal parasites are also widespread. HIV/AIDS, though less severe than in many other countries of sub-Saharan Africa, is increasing. Only 28 percent of the population has access to sanitation services, and even in urban areas water available through municipal distribution systems is not safely drinkable. It must first be boiled or chemically treated. According to *La Gaceta de Guinea Ecuatorial*, a magazine widely circulated in this country, average life expectancy at birth is 54 years.

Since the discovery in the mid-1990s of substantial oil deposits beneath the territorial waters of Equatorial Guinea, the government has used considerable resources, largely derived from petroleum production, to develop the country's infrastructure. Upgrading the health-care system has been one of the goals.

A broad program of medical cooperation between the governments of Equatorial Guinea and Cuba was established in 2000. Cuba agreed, among other things, to send medical brigades to help staff hospitals and public health centers throughout Equatorial Guinea. Today 160 Cuban doctors, nurses, and lab technicians are working in 18 of the country's 21 districts, including the most remote areas. The brigades, which are as large as seven or as small as two—a doctor and a nurse—live in the communities they work in, sharing the conditions of life of the population.

The cooperation agreement also included creation of a medical school here in Bata, the largest city, as a professional school of the national

Continued on next page

## Background on Central African nation

BATA, Equatorial Guinea—This Central African country of close to 1 million is composed of a continental

region as well as the island of Bioko and several smaller islands in the Gulf of Guinea (see map on facing page). The language of daily life for the big majority is Fang, Bubi, or another of the indigenous languages. Most Guineans in urban areas also speak Spanish, which is the language of schooling, and some speak French as well. Spanish and French are the two official languages for state business and legal purposes.

The island of Bioko was a staging post for the world slave trade well into the 19th century. The ports of what is now Equatorial Guinea came under Portuguese, Spanish, British, and Dutch colonial rule at different times. After the European colonial powers partitioned Africa among themselves in 1885, the region became the only part of the continent south of the Sahara "owned" by Madrid. Under Spanish rule there was little market activity beyond Spanish-dominated logging and the cultivation of cacao and coffee, virtually all for export.

Equatorial Guinea gained inde-

pendence from Spain in 1968. The first Guinean government, headed by President Francisco Macías Nguema, became an 11-year reign of terror. Declaring himself president for life, and sometimes referring to himself as a "socialist," Macías cloaked his cruel, Pol Pot-like repression in anti-Spanish, anticlerical, and anti-"white" demagoguery. Churches and schools were closed, and Guineans with even a few years of education became special targets. Many were jailed, tortured, or executed, and tens of thousands of Guineans fled into exile.

In a country that after centuries of colonial and imperialist domination was already one of the most ravaged in Africa, even minimal trade and production for the market collapsed. On Aug. 3, 1979, Macías was overthrown in a coup by young Guinean military officers led by Teodoro Obiang Nguema, who is today president of Equatorial Guinea. Most Guineans mark that date as the beginning of the work to initiate modern development of the country.

—MARTÍN KOPPEL

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**Continued from previous page**  
university. Its purpose is to train hundreds of Guinean doctors and nurses to progressively replace the Cuban medical personnel who provide almost all primary medical care.

**Guinean doctors today lead hospitals**  
Since August 2006, when the first class of 73 students graduated from the medical school, dozens of Guinean doctors have begun working at health-care centers across the country side by side with the Cuban physicians, nurses, and technicians. Their combined efforts are already having a palpable impact.

The medical director of every public hospital we visited was a recently graduated Guinean doctor, and we were told this is true in other districts as well. Their confidence was striking, and their solid medical training is beginning to transform relations within communities in ways they described with optimism.

In Evinayong, a provincial capital of 34,000 inhabitants in the south-central region, the medical director of the hospital is Dr. Santiago Nguema Ndong, a native of that city. We had met him on a previous visit in October 2005, as he and 19 classmates were about to leave for Cuba for their final year of medical school.

“Malaria is the number one health problem we face,” Nguema told us. “It is the main cause of infant mortality.” In areas where the medical brigades have been working for the last eight years, Nguema and others reported, the number of infant deaths has begun to be reduced, due to the timely treatment of more patients and through preventive efforts.

Statistics on such questions, however, are often unreliable throughout much of sub-Saharan Africa. This is another of the challenges now being taken on by district hospital staffs as they gather records and begin to compile more accurate statistics.

World Health Organization figures for 2006—the most recent available—list the infant mortality rate for Equatorial Guinea as 123 per 1,000 live births. But records compiled by the medical brigades show that in 2002 the overall average for infants treated by the hospitals and clinics the brigades service was 47 per 1,000 live births. By 2007 that figure was reduced to 16.5 per 1,000. In the areas served by the Evinayong medical brigade, infant mortality was 35 per 1,000 for the first half of this year.

María Elena Núñez, a nurse working in Evinayong, reported there had been only one maternal death at that hospital in the past year and a half. This is a significant achievement in a country where, according to WHO figures, the number of maternal deaths is 880 per 100,000 live births.

**Impact of lack of electricity**

The prevalence of many diseases long ago eradicated in the advanced capitalist countries is primarily due to the absence of any infrastructure providing safe drinking water, sewage disposal, or the eradication of disease-carrying insects. The lack of electrical power, reliable means of communication, and passable roads compounds the difficulties.

Outside the two major cities of

Malabo and Bata, electricity is available a few hours a day. In the largest provincial capitals—Ebebiyin, Mongomo, and Evinayong—generators, when running, provide electricity for 12 hours a day, from 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. Elsewhere it is usually available, at best, five hours a day, from about 6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. As the medical personnel in Ebebiyin pointed out to us, that means doctors cannot perform even emergency surgery during the day, unless the hospital has a functioning diesel generator, which many don’t.

“When you have to draw blood from a patient at night to run a lab test, it’s hard to even find the vein when you have only a flashlight or a kerosene lamp,” we were told by Dr. Amarilis Contreras in the north-central town of Añisok.

At the hospital in Niefang, doctors showed us a brand-new premature infant incubator that had been donated some time ago by Exxon-Mobil, one of the major U.S. companies exploiting deepwater petroleum deposits in Equatorial Guinea. The machine was sitting in the hallway, still tightly wrapped in protective plastic. Without reliable, round-the-clock electricity, it was unusable, the head of the pediatric unit explained. And ExxonMobil donated neither a generator, nor the fuel to keep one running.

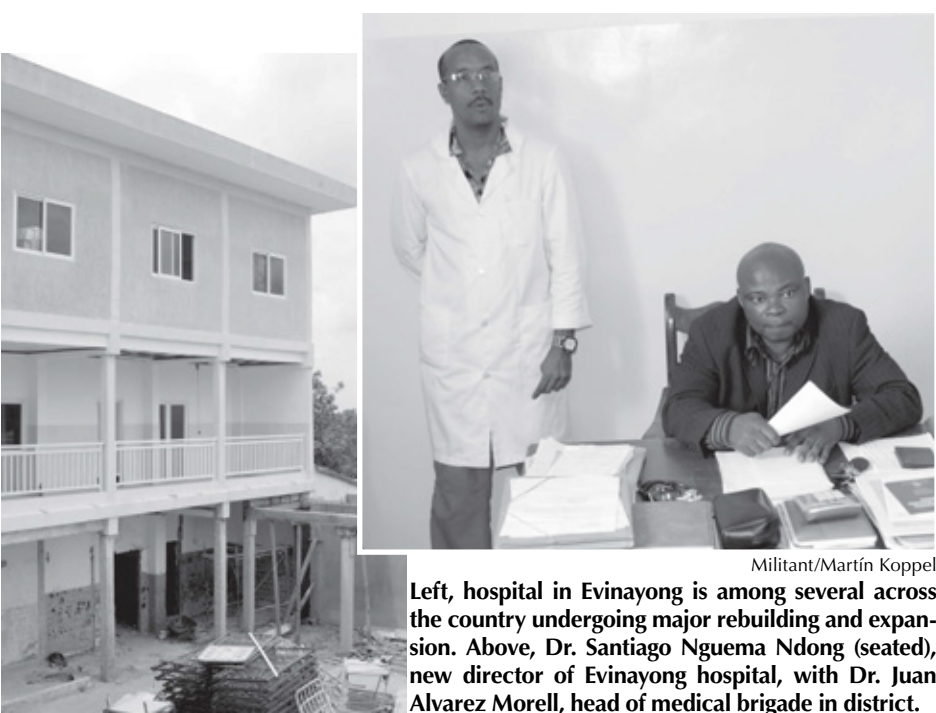
As noted in the first of these articles, there is no national electric grid in Equatorial Guinea; each city and town relies on its own generators. A hydroelectric project, currently being built near Añisok, is expected to provide electricity for continental Equatorial Guinea when it is completed within five years.

In Kogo, in the extreme southwest corner of the country, the terrain and transportation difficulties make it hard for patients from the surrounding area to get to the hospital. Kogo is an isolated town on the edge of a river delta with extensive mangrove swamps. Mosquito-borne malaria and sleeping sickness, which is transmitted by tsetse flies, are even more prevalent than in other parts of the country. Cuban doctors, who have been trained to work and provide care under even the most onerous conditions, travel by canoe to hard-to-reach villages (as hundreds volunteered to do in Mississippi and Louisiana following Hurricane Katrina—an offer impudently rejected by Washington).

“We often made trips that took four hours by boat, then a long walk,” Dr. William Pérez, a Cuban volunteer who worked in Kogo, told us. “I had the bitter experience of seeing a child who died on the way to the hospital because the trip took six hours.”

Now, for the first time, the narrow coastal path between Mбини and Kogo is being turned into a paved road that will be passable year round.

In several towns we were told by medical personnel that many patients who test HIV-positive



Militant/Martin Koppel  
Left, hospital in Evinayong is among several across the country undergoing major rebuilding and expansion. Above, Dr. Santiago Nguema Ndong (seated), new director of Evinayong hospital, with Dr. Juan Alvarez Morell, head of medical brigade in district.

cannot afford to go to Bata, the only city on the continent where a reliable diagnosis can be made and appropriate treatment initiated.

**Expanding medical knowledge**

Doctors in every town we visited explained that one of the challenges they face is convincing local residents to go to the hospital for medical treatment. Many, they said, have grown up accepting disease and death at an early age as a fact of life. Superstition and confidence in traditional tribal healers, known as *curanderos*, lead many patients to come for medical help only when it is already too late. That is a major reason many children die of malaria, which is usually not fatal if treated in time.

“Last July a 27-year-old teacher here died from AIDS,” Dr. Contreras told us in Añisok. “She had gone to a curandero instead of the hospital. We often hear people call AIDS ‘the bad luck disease.’”

Systematic popular awareness efforts have helped convince greater numbers of people to go to the hospitals and clinics for treatment. Dr. Juan Alvarez Morell, head of the medical brigade in Evinayong, said brigade members speak on “weekly radio programs and give talks at the hospital and in the community to educate about infant malaria, diarrhea, and other health problems. We promote our vaccination campaigns.”

A notable change is happening as young Guinean doctors take charge of hospitals and integrate themselves

in medical programs around the country. They are reaching out to traditional curanderos and *parteras* (midwives) to win their confidence and train them to recognize medical conditions that need immediate hospital care. The young doctors are convincing traditional healers to help get people to go to the hospital and clinics. Results vary from area to area. But Dr. Marcelino Edjang Ondó, the hospital director in Niefang, reported they have had success there in working with the curanderos.

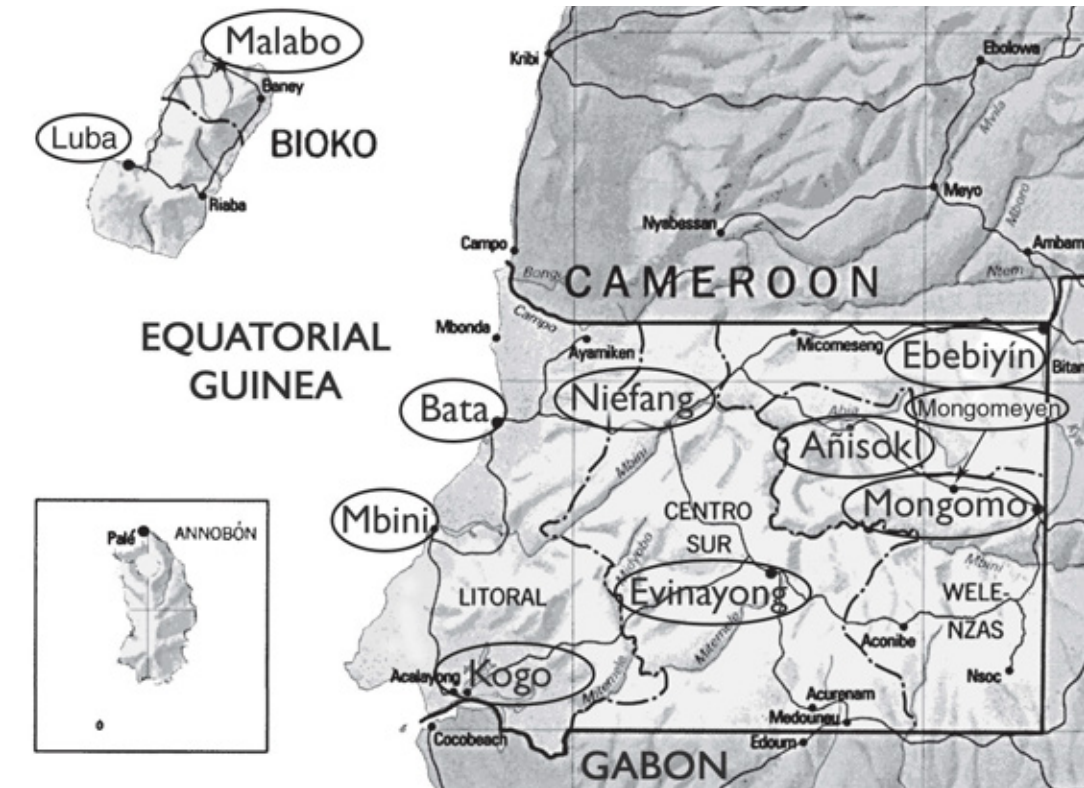
“Traditions don’t change overnight,” said Dr. Dayamí Escalona, head of the medical brigade in Niefang. “We find ways to link our use of modern science and the work of the curanderos to win their cooperation.”

That the Guinean doctors, whose mother tongue is the indigenous language, most often grew up in the area and are known in the community is a great aid in gaining the confidence of patients and the cooperation of traditional tribal leaders in working with the curanderos and parteras.

**Rebuilding hospitals**

In about half the hospitals we visited, major rebuilding and repair work was under way. In three towns—Mongomo, Evinayong, and Luba—the old structures had been gutted, and largely new buildings were going up inside the shell. The dilapidated condition of almost all public hospitals in the past is slowly being transformed—a measure of the

**Continued on page 8**



Equatorial Guinea, on western coast of Central Africa. Circles show towns visited during reporting trip.



# Equatorial Guinea

Continued from page 7

resources the government of Equatorial Guinea is putting into upgrading the primary health-care system.

The gap between facilities available to working people and to those with substantial wealth, Guineans and foreigners alike, was brought home to us, however, by a visit to the Centro Médico La Paz. This ultra-modern private hospital here in Bata, an Israeli-run project organized in collaboration with the government of Equatorial Guinea, opened at the end of 2007. A similar hospital is under construction in Malabo.

Most of the 35 doctors on the hospital staff—in their majority Israeli, with some from Argentina, Uruguay, and other countries—are not resident in Equatorial Guinea. They fly into Bata for a few days or weeks at a time. Three of the doctors are Guineans, recent graduates of the medical school here.

We toured the Centro Médico La Paz following the signing of a research agreement between the hospital and the national university. Noting that they had performed neurosurgery there just the day before, director Alon Stamler told us that the hospital is equipped to do the most advanced procedures, making it possible for patients seeking the best-quality care to stay in the country instead of going abroad. Stamler remarked that the international oil companies, whose personnel work sometimes dangerous jobs on offshore platforms, would be among the most appreciative of the medical services the center offers, adding that the new hospital in Malabo hopes to establish long-term corporate contracts with these firms.

The hospital is pay-as-you-go. One night's stay costs \$325, an X-ray \$200, a doctor's visit \$225, a CAT scan \$350. (Many Guineans live on less than a dollar or two a day.) Few beds were occupied in the wards we were shown.

In a conversation after the guided tour, two professors from the national university who had taken part in the visit told us they were proud this facility now made such advanced care available in their country. When asked who would be able to afford it, they ruefully replied, "Hardly anyone."

## Need to train specialists

In the district public hospitals, the number of operations being performed has doubled over the past eight years. But Dr. Juan Carlos Méndez, head of the Cuban medical brigade in Equatorial Guinea, noted that most of these are minor procedures. For serious operations, patients still must go to Bata, where the hospital has surgeons and more advanced equipment.

"We need to train more surgeons and other specialists for our hospitals," said Dr. Edjang of the hospital

in Niefang, where three doctors, two Cuban and one Guinean, are working.

Building on the initial progress, this challenge is being addressed at the medical school in Bata, where several students have now finished their first year of training in surgery, internal medicine, or obstetrics/gynecology.

The third and final article will report more extensively on the medical school, and on the launching of an extension program by the National University of Equatorial Guinea allowing students who do not live in Bata to carry out the full medical school program in their home towns.

*Brian Taylor and Omari Musa contributed to this article.*



Militant/Martin Koppel

Cuban doctors and nurses with Guinean medical students at hospital in Ebebiyin

# U.S. gov't takes over mortgage giants

Continued from front page

Jones industrial average shot up 290 points the following day and 30-year fixed-rate mortgage rates declined by about one-third of a percent. But all this was virtually erased September 9 when stocks fell again, including a 45 percent plunge in share values of Lehman Brothers, the fourth largest Wall Street investment bank.

Lehman Brothers' stock has declined nearly 91 percent this year, down to less than \$8 a share from more than \$60 in February. Like other Wall Street firms, Lehman Brothers made billions over the past decade speculating on securities based on mortgages and other debt, which today are largely worthless.

U.S. treasury secretary Henry Paulson described the housing crisis as "the biggest risk to our economy" and warned that the failure to act "would cause great turmoil in our financial markets here at home and around the globe." Rising home foreclosures and defaults have led to losses at both companies of almost \$15 billion over the past year. The bailout has received bipartisan support.

Paulson pledged to provide Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac with as much as \$200 billion to cover losses from mortgage defaults. He also said that the

government will initially use \$5 billion to buy mortgage securities. He claimed that this will lower interest rates for those seeking home loans.

Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac buy billions of dollars in mortgages each month from banks and other commercial lenders. They then package them as mortgage-backed securities and resell them to investors. They also borrow funds from foreign and domestic investors at rates far lower than the interest rates homeowners with mortgages pay. According to Paulson, more than \$5 trillion of debt and securities issued by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac is owned by central banks and other investors worldwide.

The bailout of the two mortgage giants leaves stockholders just 20 percent of the value of each company, with the other 80 percent now owned by the government. The plan eliminates dividend payments to current shareholders. Both companies were essentially insolvent prior to the bailout with stocks having declined by more than 90 percent during the past year.

Washington's takeover, the September 8 *Wall Street Journal* wrote, "is likely to leave a trail of billions of dollars in losses for stockholders, including some major banks. But it protects the

investments of bondholders, including mutual funds, foreign central banks, and government investment funds that own huge amounts of debt issued by the two companies."

In March the Federal Reserve, the U.S. government's central bank, made \$29 billion available to assist J.P. Morgan Chase in buying out Bear Stearns, the fifth largest Wall Street investment bank, which had collapsed. That buyout "could pale in comparison with the rescue of Fannie and Freddie, in which the funds at risk are in the hundreds of billions of dollars," stated the *Washington Post*.

Fannie Mae was set up in 1938 in the midst of massive mortgage defaults. It was reorganized as a "private" government-sponsored entity in 1968. Freddie Mac came into existence in 1970. Fannie Mae pitches itself as an agency that enables working people to "achieve the American Dream of homeownership." However, the housing crisis is tearing this myth apart. Some 9.2 percent of home mortgages were at least a month overdue or in the foreclosure process in the second quarter of 2008, according to the Mortgage Bankers Association. This is the highest percentage in the 39 years that the group has been doing surveys.

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# Join fight to free the Cuban 5!

Ten years after the five Cubans framed up by the U.S. government were railroaded to prison, we join with people all over the world outraged by this attack on workers rights.

Numerous activities demanding freedom for the five are taking place September 12–13 as part of an international campaign to win support for the case. We encourage our readers to join them.

Gerardo Hernández, Fernando González, Ramón Labañino, René González, and Antonio Guerrero are Cuban revolutionaries who came to the United States to gather information on rightist forces based in Miami that have carried out attacks on Cuba, aided and abetted by the U.S. government. The five were arrested on Sept. 12, 1998, and have been in jail ever since.

The case of the five is full of examples of attacks common to the ruling-class offensive on workers rights. The FBI repeatedly broke into and spied on their homes for years prior to their arrests. After they were arrested they were held in solitary confinement for 17 months. The government used “conspiracy” charges to convict them because it

had no evidence of the crimes they supposedly committed. These violations of basic rights underscore the importance for working people to rally to their defense.

The ruling class will use these methods against vanguard workers more and more as the struggle sharpens. It was “conspiracy” charges that they used to jail leaders of workers’ organizations leading up to and during the second imperialist world war.

Many other working-class fighters today, such as those jailed for fighting for Puerto Rican independence, face the same circumstances.

The response to the September 12–13 actions is an indication that growing numbers are learning about the Cuban Five, recognizing the outrage their continued imprisonment represents, and are willing to unite with others to get out the word and build bigger protests demanding their release.

Let’s go forward from the success of these activities to bring knowledge of this important case to broader layers and widen the support that can be won. Free the Cuban Five!

## Court upholds Cuban 5 convictions

**Continued from front page**

rights to railroad the five to prison, where they are now serving long sentences—up to a double life term plus 15 years in the case of Hernández.

A June 4 court ruling vacated the sentences of three of the five on the grounds that they were excessive. They are now waiting for the original judge to issue them new sentences.

A press conference will take place at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., September 12, where supporters of the five will present tens of thousands of petitions calling for their release. A civil disobedience action will follow the press conference.

A national demonstration for freedom of the Cuban Five will take place in Washington on September 13. The rally begins at 10:00 a.m. in Malcolm X Park followed by a march to the White House at noon.

After the march, participants will hold a conference in the Service Employees International Union building at 1800 Massachusetts Avenue N.W. where Leonard Weinglass, one of the attorneys for the five, as well as a representative of the

Cuban Interests Section in Washington and others, will speak.

That evening there will be a concert at the Hostos Center for the Arts and Culture in Bronx, New York. A number of well-known artists are lending their talents to this important fight. Performances at the concert will include Puerto Rican singer Danny Rivera, Dominican *bachata* artist Victor Victor, and the Puerto Rican Golden Jazz All Stars, as well as an appearance by actor Danny Glover.

A campaign by opponents of the Cuban Revolution, spearheaded by Cuban musician Paquito D’Rivera, to boycott the concert has failed to intimidate Cuban Five supporters.

According to the Hostos Center, ticket sales are going well. The concert will be broadcast live by the Latin American TV station Telesur, based in Venezuela.

Other activities taking place during the September 13th weekend are in Los Angeles; Boston; San Juan, Puerto Rico; Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver, Canada; Amsterdam, the Netherlands; and many parts of Cuba. For more information, go to [www.freethefive.org](http://www.freethefive.org) or [www.thecuban5.org](http://www.thecuban5.org).

## ‘It’s not about money—we can’t be bribed’

**Continued from page 4**

a lien on any checks due her from the Internal Revenue Service. One party member said he did not receive a check because the government claims he is behind in paying off a student loan.

A total of \$109,300 was sent in—a big boost to the Capital Fund!

While the majority of the “stimulus” checks have

been sent out by the government, some continue to be received by those who filed their taxes after April 15. Several have pledged to send their checks when they get them.

While the special appeal is now complete, the Capital Fund is ongoing. We look forward to receiving future checks from workers who reject these bribes in whatever form they come packaged from the employers.

## Court moves to execute Troy Davis

**Continued from front page**

else committed the murder.

The prosecutors requested the death warrant before the U.S. Supreme Court goes back in session at the beginning of October. Davis has appealed for the court to take up his case.

The Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, signed into law by President William Clinton, has blocked Davis from getting a new trial. Correia explained that after his conviction Davis had no lawyer for five years because Georgia would not provide one for post-conviction appeals. “Troy was convicted in 1991, and the law didn’t become effective until 1996, but by being made retroactive 10 years, Troy’s case got caught up in it,” she said.

The Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles, which has the power to grant clemency, has decided to re-

view Davis’s case beginning September 12.

The same day the board announced Davis’s hearing, it decided not to hear an appeal from Jack Alderman, who, like Davis, is also sentenced to death in Chatham County. Alderman is scheduled to die on September 16.

### Correction

The article “SWP Senate candidate demands: Stop the raids!” in the September 15 issue incorrectly reported that Ellie García, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from Georgia, participated in an August 28 protest in Laurel, Mississippi, against the immigration raid at Howard Industries Inc. García arrived in Laurel to extend her solidarity to the arrested workers August 29.

## U.S. imperialism and Moscow’s Georgia invasion

**BY SETH GALINSKY**

In a letter to the editor in the September 15 issue, S.C. writes that the *Militant*’s September 1 editorial calling for Russian troops out of Georgia “fails to recognize the role of the U.S. in ensuring a client state” in Georgia, and “the role played by the U.S. and NATO in arming Poland.”

What our reader is referring to in part is that Washington gave the Georgian government about \$15 mil-

## REPLY TO A READER

lion a year in military aid and trained 2,000 Georgian troops to fight in Iraq. Like it does with many regimes around the world, Washington offered economic “aid” designed to enrich U.S. capitalists at the expense of working people in the region and to bolster U.S. companies against competitors. Taking advantage of Moscow’s invasion of Georgia, the U.S. and Polish governments announced that a permanent U.S. military site with 10 interceptor missiles would be placed in Poland.

The *Militant* is opposed to the presence of U.S. troops and bases in Poland, Georgia, and everywhere else in the world, from Iraq to Afghanistan and Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. However it’s Moscow’s army that invaded Georgia, not Washington’s.

S.C. echoes the mistake of many middle-class radicals who adopt a political position based on “the enemy of my enemy is my friend and the friend of my enemy is my enemy.” They don’t start with the concrete facts and how to advance the interests of working people.

The relationship between Moscow and Washington is not just a series of constant clashes; it is more complex and contradictory. Wannabe capitalists in the bureaucracy in Moscow compete with imperialist corporations for control of oil, natural gas, and other resources. At the same time Moscow has openly aided Washington in its war in Afghanistan; Washington mostly stayed silent when Moscow massacred 30,000 Chechens who sought independence for their homeland. It should also be noted that while Washington complains about the “disproportionate” Russian invasion and continues to seek to pressure Moscow by calling for sanctions, the U.S. government does not call for all Russian troops out of Georgia, only that they return to the positions they occupied prior to the recent outbreak of fighting.

Moscow’s government-run news site Russia Today says, “For years Georgia was part of the Russian empire. . . . The ancient ties between the two peoples are deep and exist on many levels.” The message is that Georgia should belong to the “empire.”

The reference to “ancient ties” are nothing less than an attempt to prettify the Russian chauvinist domination of Georgia and other oppressed peoples in the tsarist prison-house of nations. This domination was given a new lease on life with the victory of the Stalinist counterrevolution that overthrew many of the gains of the October 1917 Russian Revolution. Russian prime minister Vladimir Putin, trained in the school of KGB thuggery, wants to rebuild the old relations and exact tribute from Georgia and other oppressed nations in the region.

The Russian invasion had nothing to do with advancing the national rights of the people of South Ossetia and Abkazia. The “independence” of South Ossetia lasted just a few days before it was announced that the region would be merged with North Ossetia and “absorbed” by Moscow. The legitimate fights of the people of South Ossetia and Abkazia will not be advanced while they and Georgia are under Moscow’s boot.

Revolutionaries do not recognize the legitimacy of “spheres of influence” whether put forward by imperialists or bureaucrats. The line of march advanced by V.I. Lenin and the Communist International—“Workers and oppressed peoples of the world, unite!”—remains the starting point for revolutionaries today. That’s why the *Militant* continues to demand Russian troops out of Georgia. It is in the interest of working people in Georgia, Russia, and around the world.