

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

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Cuban gov't leader speaks in New York



Militant/Martin Koppel

José Ramón Machado Ventura, first vice president of Cuba, speaks September 22 at Church of the Intercession in New York City.

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK—Cuban vice president José Ramón Machado Ventura spoke to a meeting of more than 500 people at a Harlem church September 22. A guerrilla fighter of the Rebel Army, which led the 1959 Cuban Revolution, and a founding member and longtime leader of the Communist Party of Cuba, he was in New York for the opening of the 63rd General Assembly of the United Nations.

Machado Ventura led the highest level Cuban delegation since former president Fidel Castro was here eight years ago.

Earlier in the day Machado Ventura participated in a special UN session
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Calero visits workers hit by Ike

BY AMANDA ULMAN
AND JACQUIE HENDERSON

HOUSTON, September 20—Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate Róger Calero, visited neighborhoods in the Houston and Galveston area to learn the facts about the unfolding social disaster in the wake of Hurricane Ike, and to extend solidarity to workers there. Calero is the only presidential candidate to visit the area.

“They make it seem as if the worst has passed,” said Jorge Bahena, 37, a worker at a furniture warehouse, talking about the media and government officials. Bahena came to one of the emergency food distribution sites set up by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). “The economic crisis that follows the storm is the one that nobody talks about,” said Bahena. “Landlords won’t stop knocking on the door asking for rent payments, even though people haven’t been able to work for a week.”

At the distribution center, restaurant worker Silveria Juarez said she and her coworkers showed up ready to work only to find out that the restaurant where they’re employed was not open. “We don’t come here because we want to. We come here because we have nothing to eat,” said Juarez, as she protested the abuse by a cop who had yelled at her sons who were waiting for her to get
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U.S. gov’t prepares major bank bailout

New cuts in social services for workers

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

September 23—The federal government announced a plan September 19 to spend \$700 billion to buy largely worthless mortgage-related securities from banks in hopes of slowing down the most severe financial crisis facing the U.S. rulers since the 1930s.

The proposal comes after the federal government pledged \$200 billion September 7 to take over the giant mortgage firms Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. A week later, September 15, the fourth largest investment bank, Lehman Brothers, collapsed and Bank of America took over Merrill Lynch, the world’s largest brokerage firm. The next day the U.S. government seized control of American International Group, one of the world’s leading insurers, at a cost of \$85 billion.

The \$700 billion bailout package was precipitated by a threatened collapse of even more major banks and a credit



AP Photo/Richard Drew

Wall Street traders September 22. That day Dow Jones industrial average dropped 3.3 percent, led by a decline in financial stocks.

freeze on the world markets in which banks have been unwilling to lend to one another.

After a two-day rally of stock prices following the announcement of the bail-
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\$90,000 fund marks 80 years of building communist party

BY BEN JOYCE
AND NORTON SANDLER

The Socialist Workers Party this fall will be celebrating eight decades of unbroken continuity in building a communist party in the United States—1928 to 2008!

To mark this anniversary, the SWP is launching a \$90,000 party-building fund that will run for eight weeks beginning September 27. We urge readers of the *Militant* to contribute to making this fund a big success.

James P. Cannon, a leading cadre of the U.S. communist movement since its inception in 1919, was sent to the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International held in Moscow in 1928 to represent the American Communist Party. There, he accidentally stumbled upon a document by Leon Trotsky, a leader of the Russian Revolution, criticizing the counterrevolutionary course taken by the bureaucratic caste that was taking control of the Soviet Union and Communist International under the direction of

Joseph Stalin.

From there, Cannon and a small group of co-thinkers within the American Communist Party set out on the task of reconquering a Leninist course in building an international-
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‘Militant’ kicks off fall effort to win new readers

BY SETH GALINSKY

With this issue the *Militant* is launching an eight-week international campaign to win new subscribers. All new subscriptions and renewals sold starting September 27 will count toward our goal of 2,400.

In addition, anyone who subscribes
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Supporters of Troy Davis win temporary stay of execution

BY CLAY DENNISON

ATLANTA—On September 23, less than two hours before Troy Davis was to be put to death in Jackson, Georgia, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a six-day stay of execution.

In Jackson, Davis’s relatives and supporters who thought they had said their last goodbyes to him cried and broke into song when they heard the news. In Atlanta, 200 supporters of Davis celebrated as they gathered on the steps of the Georgia State Capitol for what many had thought would be a vigil for his execution.

Davis was convicted of killing an off-duty cop and sentenced to death in 1991 on the word of nine witnesses. Seven of them have since recanted, saying that police pressured them to testify falsely against him. There was no physical evidence tying Davis to the murder.

A judge in Chatham County had signed a death warrant for Davis on September 3 that allowed the state to
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Militant/Bill Arth

Martina Correia, sister of Troy Davis, speaks at rally at Georgia State Capitol September 11 demanding halt to execution of Davis who won a last-minute temporary stay September 23.

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people in wake of hurricanes 8

Pakistan: U.S. gov't claims 'right' to military action

BY SAM MANUEL

The U.S. government is taking advantage of a massive suicide bombing in Pakistan to press Islamabad to agree to wider U.S. military operations against Islamist militias inside Pakistan along the border with Afghanistan.

In recent months the U.S. military has stepped up air strikes and ground operations against the Taliban, often without informing the Pakistani government. Just ahead of a meeting with U.S. president George Bush, Pakistani president Asif Ali Zardari said that Pakistan would not tolerate continued violations of its sovereignty.

Agence France-Presse said that Pakistani troops had reportedly fired on U.S. helicopters that crossed the Pakistani border, although the U.S. military said it has no evidence of such an attack.

A truck bomb exploded just outside the Marriot Hotel in Islamabad September 20, killing at least 53 people and wounding hundreds of others. Pakistan's prime minister Yousaf Raza Gilani said the original target of the bomb was his residence where several top officials of the Pakistani government were gathered including Gilani, President Zardari, and head of the army Gen. Ashfaq Kayani.

The Pakistani government has said the bombing was likely the work of al-Qaeda.

Under former president Pervez Musharraf, Pakistan became a reluctant and unstable ally in Washington's "war on terror" following the overthrow of the Taliban in Afghanistan. The Musharraf regime had been a longtime sponsor of the Taliban.

Pakistani intelligence services have maintained ties with the Taliban and other Islamist militia groups—some as far back as al-Qaeda's fight against Soviet troops in the 1980s. They are a useful counterweight for Islamabad to the U.S.-backed government in Afghanistan.

Speaking before a Senate panel September 23, U.S. defense secretary Robert Gates reaffirmed what he called Washington's right to take military action inside Pakistan but also called on the Pakistani government to do more in fighting a common foe.

Gates praised the most recent offensive by the Pakistani military against Taliban and al-Qaeda-backed militias. He said the mere presence of Pakistani troops forces the Taliban to keep more of its militia members in Pakistan.

The Pakistani military said some 50 Islamist militia members have been killed in two days of fighting.



Marriot Hotel in Islamabad, Pakistan, after truck bomb exploded nearby September 20, killing at least 53 people and wounding hundreds others.

U.S. auto giants request billions in gov't bailout

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The "Big Three" auto companies—General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler—are seeking a \$25 billion loan guarantee from the federal government to cover their declining sales and profits. The request has won bipartisan support in Congress.

The auto barons first requested \$50 billion, but lowered that figure in hopes of getting approval by the end of September. Last December, Congress authorized \$25 billion in government-supported loans to the auto giants, but the money was never appropriated. The stocks of all three companies have been downgraded to junk-bond status.

"Fifty billion dollars is a drop in the bucket compared to the total cost to the government if one of these companies goes under," an auto analyst for Global Insight in Troy, Michigan, told the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* in arguing for the bailout.

The last major government bailout for U.S. auto companies was 30 years ago when Washington granted \$1.5 billion in loans to Chrysler to stave off bank-

ruptcy.

GM, Ford, and Chrysler have lost more than \$58 billion over the past two years, with GM alone losing \$51 billion over the last three years. Over the first eight months of 2008, sales of automobiles in the United States continued to decline. GM sales were down 18 percent, Ford's declined 16 percent, and Chrysler was down 24 percent. Sales of foreign autos also declined, although not as much. In August, U.S. yearly sales for Toyota dropped 8 percent.

In a drive to reverse their declining profits, the auto bosses have deepened their assault on auto workers and their union. They have driven through layoffs and plant closings. Membership of the United Auto Workers union has shrunk to one-third of the 1.5 million members it had in 1979. In 2006, GM had 113,000 hourly employees; that is now down to about 55,000.

The concession contract in effect at GM, Ford, and Chrysler since last year institutes a permanent two-tier wage system, with many new hires starting at half the pay of current employees. Retirees are no longer covered by company health insurance, and their benefits are

dependent on a trust fund invested in the stock market.

Democratic Party presidential candidate Barack Obama supports providing a full \$50 billion to the auto barons. Republican Party presidential candidate John McCain also backs a government loan. In an op-ed in the *Detroit Free Press* McCain wrote that just as the government had stepped in to help Wall Street it should help "our automakers." Speaking to assembly workers at a GM plant September 18, McCain said, "We are not going to leave the workers here in Michigan hung out to dry while we give billions in taxpayer dollars to Wall Street."

Roger Calero, Socialist Workers Party candidate for president, says working people need to advance a program that is in our interests. "The labor movement should fight for no wage cuts, no layoffs, and for a shorter workweek with no cut in pay to spread the available work around to all who need it," he said. "If the bosses in the auto industry, or from any other, can't pay union-scale wages with medical and pension benefits, and provide safe working conditions, then their plants should be nationalized under workers control."

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

Sept. 26–28 Des Moines, IA
Sept. 30–Oct. 1 Omaha, NE
Oct. 6–7 Montreal

Oct. 9–11 San Francisco
Oct. 13–15 Houston; Edinburg, TX

Vice presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy

Sept. 28–30 Los Angeles
Oct. 1 San Diego
Oct. 2–3 Albuquerque, NM
Oct. 5 Wisconsin

Oct. 6–8 Chicago
Oct. 10–13 Atlanta
Oct. 14–16 Miami

\$90,000 party-building fund

Continued from front page

alist communist party in the United States.

"Trotskyism is not a new movement, a new doctrine, but the restoration, the revival of genuine Marxism as it was expounded and practiced in the Russian Revolution and in the early days of the Communist International," said Cannon in a 1942 lecture on the history of the Socialist Workers Party.

Today, we are living through the worst capitalist financial crisis since the opening of the Great Depression of the 1930s, a crisis that takes a grinding toll on workers and farmers worldwide. As the world capitalist economic crisis deepens, the U.S. ruling class families and their government in Washington are deepening their assaults on the working class.

This offensive is sparking inevitable resistance by workers. A vanguard of the working class has been strengthened over the past three years. The party-building fund will boost the ability of the Socialist Workers Party to take advantage of revolutionary opportunities that come its way, where

ever they may be.

For the next couple of months, the *Militant* will celebrate the SWP's unbroken communist continuity with articles that document major accom-

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—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

FLORIDA Miami

Equatorial Guinea: Changing Economic and Social Relations Highlight Realities Facing Millions in Africa. Speaker: Omari Musa, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress and part of a recent *Militant* reporting team to Equatorial Guinea. Fri., Oct. 3. Dinner, 7 p.m.; program, 8 p.m. 6777 NW 7th Ave., Suite 5. Tel.: (305) 757-8869.

NEW ZEALAND Auckland

Proposed New Immigration Law: Attack on Workers' Rights. Speaker: Annalucia Vermont, Communist League candidate for parliament, Manukau East electorate. Fri., Oct. 3, 7 p.m. Donation: \$3. Suite 3, 7 Mason Ave., Otahuhu. Upstairs, above Laundromat. Tel.: (09) 276-8885.

SWP vice presidential candidate speaks at N.Y. colleges, high schools

BY WILLIE COTTON

NEW YORK—Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for vice president, visited this city September 16–20 and spoke at seven college and two high school classes, campaigned among garment workers in Queens and Brooklyn, and joined the picket line of striking bakery workers in the Bronx.

At Borough of Manhattan Community College Professor Chuck Mohan invited Kennedy to speak to three of his classes. Dan Fein and Ben Joyce, SWP congressional candidates in the 10th and 7th Districts, respectively, also participated.

“How would legalization work?” asked one student.

“We say that any worker who comes here can work and live without fear of raids or deportation,” Kennedy said. “Legalization would put all workers in a better position to fight.”

“How will your proposal to shorten the workweek with no cut in pay help the economy?” asked another student.

“Our starting point is not helping the capitalist economy,” Kennedy responded, “but protecting the working class from devastation. We call for a public works program to provide millions of jobs at union-scale wages.”

“If elected, would you sign the various international trade agreements?” Kennedy was asked when she addressed a class at Hunter College. She was invited to speak by Professor Greg Morris.

“These trade agreements exist to maintain the stranglehold of the imperialist powers over the world economy,” Kennedy said.

“When we are elected, we will elimi-

nate all tariffs aimed against nations oppressed by imperialism, and cancel the Third World debt to U.S. banks.

Campaign supporter Harry D’Agostino invited Kennedy to speak at his school, Elisabeth Irwin High School. Sixteen students and several faculty came after school to hear Kennedy, who took up the ongoing attack on public education. Kennedy noted that she learned while campaigning in New Orleans that only five public schools had been reopened and that many were being opened as charter schools.

“It’s also an attack on the unions,” a history teacher said. “Charter schools are a growing problem in New York, too.”

Kennedy spoke along with D’Agostino and Martin Koppel, Socialist Workers candidate for Congress in the 15th District, at a campaign rally here September 19. The meeting opened with the airing of a five-minute interview Kennedy had done earlier that day with WBAI radio



Adam Louie
Socialist Workers Party vice presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy speaks at Elisabeth Irwin High School September 16. Student and campaign supporter Harry D’Agostino is at right.

on the financial crisis.

D’Agostino told the audience that a construction worker, Yuri Vanchytskyy, fell to his death near his school as many of his classmates looked on. “I never again want to hear a capitalist politician say that a worker’s death on the job is a fact of life,” he said. “I support the SWP campaign because it puts working people and their lives first.

Kennedy joined the picket line at the

Stella D’Oro bakery in the Bronx (see story on page 5) and also campaigned outside Brooks Brothers tie factory in Queens, where she had once worked as a sewing machine operator.

She and Fein also visited Greenfield Clothiers, where they walked through the plant at lunchtime talking with workers, several of whom took their pictures with the vice presidential candidate.

Kennedy meets day laborers in New Jersey

BY NANCY ROSENSTOCK

NEWARK, New Jersey—Socialist Workers Party vice presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy spoke with some 50 day laborers outside the Centro de Jornaleros Unidos (United Day Laborers Center) in Passaic, New Jersey, September 13. She explained the socialist campaign’s opposition to the criminalization of immigrant workers. “We must fight for strong unions and legalization for all immigrants,” Kennedy said.

Questions were quick to come from the mostly Mexican workers assembled: “How can we help?” asked one. “We can’t vote here.”

Kennedy responded, “You can find other workers and solidarize with their struggles. And you can come out and campaign with us.”

One worker asked, “What can we do to build a movement?”

“We need to continue the example for all working people of the mobilizations for legalization on May 1.



Militant/Ruth Robinett
Alyson Kennedy addresses day laborers in Passaic, New Jersey, September 13.

And we need to protest the raids and deportations,” Kennedy said.

During her tour of northern New Jersey, Kennedy addressed a meeting of Casa Freehold September 16. The meeting was attended by some 50 workers, most of them day labor-

ers who have fought there for several years for the right to assemble and organize free of harassment from the police. “Our campaign is looking for fighters like you,” Kennedy said. “What you are doing here sets a real example for all working people.”

Socialist Workers on the ballot in:

	NEW YORK
	NEW JERSEY
	WASHINGTON
	VERMONT
	MINNESOTA
	LOUISIANA
	FLORIDA
	DELAWARE
	COLORADO
	IOWA

Calero discusses U.S. financial crisis with students

BY JANICE LYNN

WASHINGTON—“The financial crisis we are living through is not the consequence of special policies,” Róger Calero, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, told a class at the University of Maryland, College Park, September 15. “It is the normal workings of the capitalist system.”

That morning the financial firm Lehman Brothers announced it was filing for bankruptcy and the Bank of America announced it would buy failing investment bank Merrill Lynch. “This follows the government takeover of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac in an attempt to bring stability and restore investors’ confidence,” Calero said. “This is the biggest crisis since the 1930s and we see the beginning of the devastating consequences for the working class—6.1 percent official unemployment and 19 percent among young people.”

“We need legislation that says when

the cost of living goes up our wages go up,” he said. “We need to shorten the workweek to 30 hours, but with 40 hours pay in order to spread the work and combat unemployment. And we need a federally funded public works program to rebuild roads, bridges, schools, and hospitals.”

In the discussion, one student asked about the Patriot Act. “These laws are designed to shut down the space working people have to fight for our rights,” Calero said. He reminded the class that these laws did not begin under the Bush administration, but that many were put in place under William Clinton. “We are for the repeal of the Patriot Act and against the use of secret evidence, indefinite detentions, and electronic espionage,” he said.

Calero pointed to the example of Cuba where a living socialist revolution offers the only example for workers around the world.

Another question addressed the issue of students being denied college aid when their parents are undocumented. Calero spoke about the need for education to be a lifetime endeavor for all, the importance of affirmative action to ensure equal access to education, and the need for the immediate legalization of all the undocumented.

Calero was also interviewed on WPFW Pacifica radio. In response to questions about what distinguishes the SWP campaign from other campaigns, such as the Green Party, Calero said, “Alyson Kennedy, my vice presidential running mate, and I are workers who are involved in workers’ struggles—from protests against police brutality, to defense of abortion rights, to marching with the tens of thousands who didn’t go to work on May Day in defense of immigrant rights, to union-organizing campaigns, to rallying against racism in Jena, Louisiana.”

ON THE PICKET LINE

Stella D'Oro Biscuit workers strike in New York

BRONX, New York—One hundred and thirty-six workers have been on strike here against Stella D'Oro Biscuit Co. since August 13, maintaining a 24-hour picket line.

According to Bakery, Confectionary, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union Local 50, which represents the workers, the company is trying to impose a new contract that would cut wages and vacation and holiday pay, eliminate paid sick days and Saturday premium pay, and increase health-care co-payments.

Joyce Alston, president of Local 50, reported to the *Riverdale Press* that “the five-year contract would slash some workers’ salaries by \$1 per hour for each year of the contract,” with some immediately losing as much as \$2.32 per hour.

Striker Alex Nardella, 51, told the *Militant* that earlier this year the company laid off all of its truck drivers and security personnel. Before the strike began, the company had been running production

six days a week with 12-hour shifts.

According to picketers, the company has been hiring strikebreakers and held a job fair on September 13. Angelo de la Cruz, 49, said he and other strikers tried to explain to those attending the job fair why they should support the strike. “The majority entered the plant, but about 25 turned around and left after we talked to them,” said de la Cruz.

“Many of the workers have been here 25–35 years. I have been here 20. We want to work, but not under these conditions,” stated de la Cruz.

“Their goal is to get rid of the union,” said Michael Flippou, a mechanic and union representative. “With the contract they’re proposing, the company is trying to pit skilled workers against unskilled.”

Nardella, an assistant maintenance engineer who has worked for Stella D'Oro for 30 years, explained that under the new contract he would not face a wage cut. “I could go back in and get the same wage, but how could I do that when my fellow coworkers’ wages will be cut?”

—Maura DeLuca



Militant/Becca Williamson

Picket line at Grain Processing Corporation in Muscatine, Iowa, September 9. The workers have been locked out since August 22.

Grain workers are locked out in Iowa

MUSCATINE, Iowa—Grain Processing Corporation, one of this small town’s biggest employers, has locked out its 360 production employees since August 22.

Second-shift workers were escorted out of the plant hours before the

contract between United Food and Commercial Workers Local 86D and the company expired. The union had requested a two-week extension of the pact with the manufacturer of corn-based products.

“We have got to get rid of the B-scale and reestablish seniority,” Brad Blaser, a worker on the picket line told the *Militant*. He explained that five years ago workers accepted a concession contract that established a substantially lower pay scale for new hires and gave the company the ability to assign jobs regardless of seniority.

Day and night, dark clouds of smoke billow from the 50-year-old plant’s smokestacks, giving evidence of the company’s efforts to keep production going with around-the-clock 12-hour shifts of management employees and temporary workers.

Terry Grime, a shop steward, doesn’t believe the company will succeed in maintaining production. “Several workers have been taken out in ambulances in the last two weeks,” he said.

Grime noted that the spirits of the locked-out workers have been bolstered by acts of solidarity from area unionists and community members. He said firemen, electrical workers, steelworkers, and others have visited the picket line and made donations of food and money. Many homes throughout the town have signs and red ribbons supporting the workers’ fight.

—David Rosenfeld
and Becca Williamson

Workers jailed in Chicago for misdemeanors, but kept incarcerated by immigration police

BY JORGE LERTORA

CHICAGO—Sixty people participated in a September 9 public forum in the Pilsen neighborhood to hear testimony about workers arrested by the Chicago police and then placed on immigration hold.

The forum was sponsored by the March 10 Coalition.

Authorities kept 59 people in jail, some for as long as five months. They had been detained for traffic violations and other misdemeanors. “So far we have won the release of around 20 people,” reported Jorge Mújica, leader of the March 10 Coalition. “This shows it’s possible to fight and to win.” The detainees’ families and fighters for legalization of the undocumented have been organizing marches, vigils, and picket lines in front of city hall to demand the workers’ freedom.

José Herrera, 25, was arrested for driving without a license and speeding. Herrera addressed the meeting, explaining he was released as a result of the protests, but with an electronic ankle bracelet. “If it wasn’t for what

happened to me I wouldn’t know this fight so close. Now I am ready to help others, the ones who are still in jail,” he said.

Luis León was taken into the Cook County jail in February. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) placed a hold on him and he was moved to five different jails during his six-month incarceration. His wife, María León, had been marching with other relatives of people in jail. At a court hearing on September 11 a judge granted León a temporary work permit.

ICE spokesperson Gail Montenegro said that the agency has three agents stationed at the Cook County courthouse who review the arrest records each day and look into any cases involving individuals born outside of the United States. “ICE does not racially profile,” Montenegro told the *Chicago Tribune*.

But in at least one case authorities placed a U.S. citizen, Salvador

Contreras, on immigration hold because the arresting officer identified him as Mexican. Arrested in April on firearms charges, Contreras is still being held in the Robinson Correctional Center.

José Landaverde, of the Anglican Mission of Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic church in the La Villita neighborhood, announced three other people had just been released: Ramferi Velázquez, Raúl Martínez, and Teodoro González.

Severa Avilés explained how the police arrested her husband, Jacobo Avilés, for parking over the yellow line on the street. He was released after they paid \$5,000 in legal fees.

Other speakers at the forum addressed issues of discrimination and police abuse, including Nancy Flores, whose brother Miguel was killed last year by an off-duty cop, and Paula Carballido, whose brother is serving a 35-year sentence at Stateville prison for a crime he did not commit.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



October 7, 1983

Next month a new Medicare payment plan will go into effect. The plan changes fundamentally the way that the government pays for the health care of the 26 million retired and 3 million disabled persons covered by Social Security.

Congress quietly adopted the plan last April as an amendment to the Social Security “reform” package that raised taxes and lowered benefits for millions of U.S. workers.

The government will pay a fixed amount for every Medicare patient with the same category of illness.

The new Medicare payment plan, in addition to lowering government benefits, is a license for hospitals to kill old and sick working people who cannot afford to pay for their health care.



October 6, 1958

NEW YORK—Still in the thick of a legal battle to block the Democratic Party from keeping it off the ballot, the Independent-Socialist ticket is energetically organizing its next two major activities. Supporters of the ticket are now ringing doorbells and using the telephone to assure a packed hall for its campaign rally Tuesday, Oct. 7.

Meanwhile, a decision is expected in the next several days from the Department of State on challenges of the Independent-Socialist nominating positions. The hearing also considered the challenge made by the same people against the Socialist Labor Party.

The challenge against them now boils down to 27 disputed signatures—and all of these disputed on the flimsiest of technicalities.



October 7, 1933

Fifty thousand silk workers are entering their sixth week of strike with their ranks bigger and more solid than ever. The mills remain closed, the looms idle and every attempt of the bosses to reopen has been frustrated by huge picket lines of angry workers.

As testimony to the fighting spirit that is catching on everywhere under the impetus of the silk strike is the decision of the silk truck drivers not to handle scab silk.

The monster demonstration of more than 20,000 silk dye workers on Monday, October 2 in the Hinchliffe City Stadium marks the high point of the great textile battle. By this great demonstration the silk workers of Pater-son and vicinity have given heart and hope to the workers everywhere.

For Further Reading

Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay

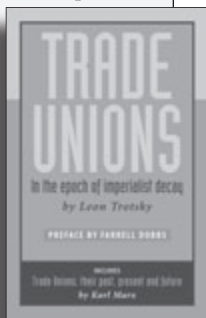
by Leon Trotsky

Food for thought—and action—from leaders of three generations of the modern revolutionary workers movement.

Preface by Farrell Dobbs

Also Includes:
“Trade Unions: Their Past, Present, and Future” by Karl Marx. \$15.00

WWW.PATHFINDERPRESS.COM



Independence fighter from Western Sahara speaks in New Zealand

BY TERRY COGGAN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—The people of Western Sahara are continuing their fight for independence despite efforts by the French- and U.S.-backed government of Morocco to maintain control over the region.

A public meeting here in late August about the Western Sahara struggle heard Mohamed Beissat, minister in charge of African affairs for the Polisario Front, which is leading the independence fight.

Beissat said the regime in Morocco, which maintains an army of occupation in Western Sahara, has stalled UN-sponsored negotiations begun in 2007 by insisting that autonomy can be the only option for the region. “We say that, in accordance with its resolutions, the United Nations must organize a referendum that allows Saharawis to choose between all alternatives—autonomy, incorporation into Morocco, or independence,” Beissat explained.

The Polisario leader was in New Zealand en route to the Pacific Islands Forum meeting on the island of Niue, where he hoped to win diplomatic recognition from Pacific Island nations for the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), which controls 30 percent of the territory of Western Sahara. Diplomatic relations were established July 31 between the Republic of Vanuatu and SADR.

Spanish colonial domination

Beissat told the audience that the struggle of the Saharawi people for independence dates back to the 1970s when the Polisario Front led wars, first against Spanish colonial domination, and then, after Madrid was forced to quit the territory, against invasions from Morocco and Mauritania. The invaders forced many Saharawis from their homes. Today about 170,000 still live in refugee camps in southwest Algeria.

“Mauritania withdrew in 1979, and we reached a cease-fire with Morocco in 1991,” Beissat said. “But since then Morocco has sabotaged every chance of agreement.” He added that the Polisario Front has not ruled out resuming armed struggle, given the failure of the United Nations to organize a promised referendum.

Beissat explained how the Moroccan regime organized settlers to move to Western Sahara and demanded they be able to vote in any referendum. Settlers have spent 17 years living in squalor camps in Laayoune, the capital city. When the Moroccan king visited in 2006, they staged protests over these conditions. “We are confident many of them will support us,” the Polisario leader said.

Independence demonstrations

Since 2005, Saharawis in the occupied zone of Western Sahara, and Saharawi students at universities in Morocco, have demonstrated for independence, Beissat said. The protesters face harsh repression, such as prison sentences of five or six years for distributing pamphlets or displaying the Saharawi flag.

Asked about the attitude of imperialist powers, Beissat said the govern-

ments of the United States and France now support the “autonomy” position of Morocco. In many ways “Morocco is still a French colony,” he said. Recent privatizations of state assets there were in fact “Francifications,” so when Paris supports the Moroccan regime, “it is actually defending its own interests.”

To a question from a member of the audience who asked whether an independent Western Sahara could be anything but “a failed state,” Beissat responded that telling peoples they were incapable of ruling themselves was “a racist, colonial argument.”

He pointed out that Morocco itself is an impoverished country, 147th on the UN index of social development,

U.S. gov’t prepares major bank bailout

Continued from front page

out plan, the Dow Jones industrial average September 22 dropped 373 points, 3.3 percent, led by a decline in financial stocks.

With a massive bailout being made available to the nation’s banks, New York State and city governments are moving swiftly to impose new spending cuts to social services affecting working people the most. Gov. David Paterson said that he may call the legislature back for an emergency budget-cutting session. A similar session in August approved \$1 billion in cuts. Paterson told Fox Business News that there will need to be more cuts “in areas that we never thought we would.” Massachusetts governor Deval Patrick said that he may also ask the state legislature there to take similar action.

New York mayor Michael Bloomberg September 23 ordered city agencies to eliminate \$1.5 billion in spending over the next two years. This would include cutting \$185 million from schools, \$11.9 million from the Department of Transportation, \$7.8 million from the Department of Homeless Services, and \$6.7 million from the Parks Department. He also called for rescinding a 7 percent property tax cut.

‘Distressed assets’

The \$700 billion proposal allows the government to buy banks’ “bad debt” over the next two years. Under the plan the government buys these securities and holds them for several years in the hopes that they will regain some value. The scheme would cover U.S. banks and all other banks with “significant operations” in the country, states a U.S. Department of the Treasury fact sheet. The Treasury Department will purchase “distressed assets,” in particular mortgage-backed securities and loans, but it may also buy “other assets, as deemed necessary to effectively stabilize financial markets,” the fact sheet states.

The U.S. government’s national debt level will be raised from \$10.6 trillion to \$11.3 trillion to cover the purchases. The debt ceiling had previously been raised prior to the takeover of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

The only limitation on the bailout is that purchases can’t exceed \$700 billion at any one time. However, Republican



Map of northern Africa. Western Sahara, on the northwest coast of the continent, has been fighting against domination by Morocco since the 1970s.

and that the Moroccan people had a proud history of struggling for democracy, “deeply rooted and enshrined in the fisheries, fields, factories, schools, and universities.” He cited “peoples committees” recently formed in Sidi

Ifni, Morocco, and other cities in the country to protest the rising prices of food and fuel.

Steve Parfitt contributed to this article.

Richard Shelby, a member of the Senate Banking Committee, estimates that the amount could rise to \$1 trillion or more.

The plan would give “sweeping powers” to the treasury secretary, notes the *Wall Street Journal*. “Aside from requiring periodic reports to Congress, the bill provides no oversight of the bailout’s management—and specifically bars any court or agency from reviewing it.”

Both Republican presidential candidate John McCain and Democratic candidate Barack Obama have sought to cast themselves as defending working people in the midst of the bailout talk, saying that executives at firms receiving these funds should not be rewarded with higher salaries.

Obama asserted that the plan can’t just be “for Wall Street, it also has to be a plan for Main Street” that “will put money in the pockets of working families.” His running mate Joseph Biden said, “If we’re gonna bail you out . . . then you better damn well open your books to us and let us see exactly what you have.” McCain said he was undecided how he would vote on the \$700 billion package.

Róger Calero, presidential candidate of the Socialist Workers Party, said the bailout plan “will not solve the capitalists’ financial crisis, which is not a product of ‘bad’ regulation or overpaid executives, but a result of the wages system. The Democrats and Republicans are trying to socialize certain losses of the capitalists. They’ll only ‘open the books’ to a select few to the extent it helps the employers stabilize their system.

“The socialist campaign calls for opening the books of the corporations to workers, their unions, neighborhood associations, and price committees, so we can see how they exploit us and organize to defend our standard of living, safety on the job, and conditions of work. In the process we’ll learn how to control and manage production, as a step toward taking state power and ending capitalist exploitation.”

Run on money market funds

The Federal Reserve has stretched its reserves quite thin as a result of its lending programs and bailouts. In mid-2007 the central bank had reserves of about \$800 billion in Treasury securities. By mid-September this year it had fallen to

just over \$300 billion.

The Federal Reserve has also pumped tens of billions of dollars into halting a bank run against money market funds. According to Crane Data, an agency that covers money market and mutual fund news, total deposits in these funds fell September 17 by at least \$79 billion. The \$3.4 trillion of money market funds are worth more than half the value of U.S. bank deposits.

In response, the Treasury Department announced September 19 it would temporarily use \$50 billion from the government’s Exchange Stabilization Fund to insure existing money-market fund customers against losses. This fund was created in 1934 to provide support for the dollar.

On September 21 the Federal Reserve approved the conversion of Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley, the two remaining large investment firms on Wall Street, into bank holding companies that will function more like commercial banks. The move gives both banks greater options in borrowing funds from the Federal Reserve and expanded access to bank deposits.

New International

A magazine of Marxist politics and theory

Issue no. 14

- **Revolution, Internationalism, and Socialism: The Last Year of Malcolm X**
- **The Clintons’ Antilabor Legacy: Roots of the 2008 World Financial Crisis**
- **The Stewardship of Nature Also Falls to the Working Class**
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End the embargo against Cuba!

The devastation caused in Cuba by hurricanes Gustav and Ike makes it all the more urgent for working people around the world to demand an end to Washington's decades-long criminal embargo against that nation. The island suffered billions of dollars in damage and losses, including homes, power stations, and crops.

An appeal to unions around the world by Cuba's trade union federation, the Central Organization of Cuban Workers, states that an end to the embargo is the most important aid that can be given to the working people of Cuba.

For nearly 50 years the capitalist rulers in Washington have tried to bring the working people of Cuba to their knees—to punish them for making a socialist revolution and setting out to build a new society based on human solidarity. The embargo has included blocking Cuba's access to medicines; industrial, farm, and transportation equipment; and cultural and sports exchanges.

According to Cuba's report to the United Nations last year, the U.S. embargo has cost the Cuban economy more than \$200 billion. Despite this hardship and Cuba's legacy of underdevelopment, the Cuban Revolution has extended solidarity to working people in the places where it is needed the

most.

Thousands of Cuban medical personnel provide otherwise unavailable medical care throughout Africa and Latin America. Cuban internationalists played a decisive role in the struggle by African nations for independence from their colonial oppressors and in the defeat of the apartheid regime in southern Africa.

It is that solidarity that is the source of the capacity of Cuba's working people to respond to the recent storms by evacuating millions to safety while providing for medical care and other needs. There were no deaths on the island during Hurricane Gustav and only seven resulting from Hurricane Ike. That number stands in stark contrast to the 84 deaths in the United States.

As Cuba's vice president José Ramón Machado Ventura explained speaking in New York September 22, the evacuations and low number of deaths is possible "because of the attention the revolutionary government gives to every citizen of the country."

It is that example that the billionaire families and their government in Washington fear, an example that is also becoming a greater inspiration to working people around the world facing the consequences of the opening of a deepening world capitalist crisis.

Georgia SWP: 'Free Troy Davis!'

ATLANTA—Socialist Workers Party candidates in Georgia released a statement September 17 demanding "Free Troy Davis" and "Abolish the Death Penalty."

"We condemn the decision of the state of Georgia to kill Troy Davis on September 23rd, and we demand that this decision be reversed," the statement said. "We urge everyone to join the protests to stop the execution. . . .

"The Troy Davis case illustrates once again how the death penalty is a weapon the ruling class uses

to terrorize working people. The death penalty is part of the arsenal of weapons used by the owners of capital to try to deal blows to the rising resistance, confidence, and increased combativity among growing numbers of workers in the United States."

The statement was signed by Eleanor García, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate, and three candidates for U.S. Congress, Loretta Van Pelt, running in the 3rd District; Jacob Perasso, 4th District; and Jeanne FitzMaurice, 5th District.

\$90,000 fund marks 80 years

Continued from page 3

plishments in the movement's history, beginning with the fight described above to maintain Lenin's internationalist course in the face of the counter-revolution led by Joseph Stalin in the Soviet Union. Subsequent articles will chronicle the rich history of the party's participation and leadership in the U.S. class struggle and programmatic milestones conquered along the way—part of the foundation for which the party bases its strategy and tactics in the class battles unfolding today. Along with each article, the *Militant* will point readers to a variety of books published by Pathfinder Press that illustrate the history of the communist movement since 1928 and its theoretical conquests.

Branches of the Socialist Workers Party have be-

gun to take on local goals for the drive and will put up attractive displays in the halls where the weekly Militant Labor Forums are held that chronicle this continuity and the SWP's participation in the class struggle today. A chart tracking the progress of the fund drive will be featured weekly in the *Militant*, along with information on how readers and supporters of the paper can participate. Early this fall, SWP branches across the United States will be hosting meetings celebrating this history and raising funds toward the goal, making possible the party's response to the political opportunities ahead.

Ben Joyce and Norton Sandler are the cochairmen of the 2008 Socialist Workers Party-Building Fund.

Supporters of Troy Davis win stay

Continued from front page

kill him six days before the U.S. Supreme Court ended a summer recess. On the day set for the execution, the Supreme Court met in emergency session to rule on Davis's appeal for a hearing.

The stay is through Monday, September 29, when the Supreme Court will decide whether they will hear his case. If they decide not to hear it, the stay will be lifted immediately and Davis may be executed. If the court decides to take the case up, the stay will remain in force until the final ruling is handed down. On September 18, six days after the Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles turned down Davis's appeal for clemency, more than 300 people marched from downtown Atlanta to a rally at the Ebenezer Baptist Church.

At the meeting after the march, Rev. Raphael Warnock called Davis's threatened execution "an

act of state murder." He, as well as Davis's sister, Martina Correia, referred to the song "Strange Fruit," written about lynching. "When Billie Holiday was talking about strange fruit, she was talking about Black bodies hanging on trees in Georgia. And let me tell you something, if you're poor, you could be hanging from that same tree," she said.

She stressed that no matter what would happen on September 23, there is a fight that has to continue. "I want to make sure that you understand that this does not stop with Troy. There are a whole lot of other Troy Davises around the country."

Former U.S. president James Carter called on the parole board to reverse its denial of clemency for Davis. "Executing Troy Davis without a real examination of potentially exonerating evidence risks taking the life of an innocent man and would be a grave miscarriage of justice," Carter said.

'Militant' effort

Continued from front page

or renews during the drive can purchase a copy of *New International* magazine no. 14 for just \$10, a substantial savings from the \$14 cover price.

The first issue of the *Militant* rolled off the presses dated Nov. 15, 1928, 80 years ago, and has covered the struggles of working people around the world ever since.

As the current world financial crisis unfolds, partisans of the socialist newsweekly are finding interest among workers and youth in reading articles that start with the interests of working people in explaining key political and economic events.

Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. vice president Alyson Kennedy visited the picket line at the Stella D'oro Biscuit factory in Bronx, New York, September 17 to talk to strikers. In the course of discussions two striking workers bought subscriptions.

A taxi driver taking Kennedy to her next speaking engagement wouldn't take her fare after finding out about the Socialist Workers Party platform that calls for legalizing immigrants and shortening the work-week with no cut in pay. He also bought a subscription to the *Militant* and asked to be kept informed of campaign events.

Mary Martin of Seattle reports that "supporters of the Socialist Workers campaign in Washington State attended a protest of 150 people in Port Angeles, Washington, on September 20 that was called to protest the 'anti-terrorist' Border Patrol checkpoints set up on the Olympic Peninsula. A dozen immigrant workers have been arrested for alleged lack of documents." Three subscriptions were sold to the *Militant* at this protest.

The discount on *New International* no. 14 is timely. The lead article, "The Clintons' antilabor legacy: Roots of the 2008 world financial crisis," explains how the Clinton administration "consolidated an anti-working-class shift in Democratic Party domestic policy that increased the *political convergence* of the two leading parties of the employing class. The most important elements of domestic and foreign policy alike widely attributed today to the Bush administration had their origin during the Clinton-Gingrich-Rubin years."

The article also takes up how laws signed by Clinton accelerated and magnified the results of the workings of the laws of capital.

The *New International* also includes the article "Revolution, internationalism, and socialism: The last year of Malcolm X," and "The stewardship of nature also falls to the working class: In defense of land and labor."

Partisans of the *Militant* will go door-to-door in working class communities and in college dormitories, set up street tables, and sell subscriptions and copies of *New International* at factory gates, immigrant rights and Black rights demonstrations, and at a wide variety of political events. They will also set up meetings with current subscribers to talk to them about renewing and becoming long-term subscribers of the paper.

If you would like to help out with this effort, please contact one of our distributors listed on page 10. For your area to be included on the scoreboard, please get subscriptions into our office by Monday evening each week.

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The recent three-part *Militant* series on changing economic and social relations in Equatorial Guinea and the role of revolutionary Cuba's internationalist cooperation with that Central African nation is now available for purchase. To order a set of the three articles, send \$5 to the *Militant*, 306 W. 37th St., 10th Fl., New York NY 10018. Please specify whether you want the articles in English or Spanish.



Government of Cuba mobilizes population in wake of hurricanes

BY SETH GALINSKY

In the face of widespread damage caused by the double blow of hurricanes Gustav and Ike, the Cuban people have already begun cleaning up the damage, rebuilding homes, planting crops to replace those that were destroyed, and organizing to be more prepared for future storms.

According to the Cuban government, the storms—the most devastating in the history of Cuba—caused at least \$5 billion in damage across the country. This includes: 444,000 homes damaged, 63,249 totally destroyed; 150 transmission towers toppled and 4,500 electrical posts knocked down in the hard-hit western part of the country; all electric lines down on the Isle of Youth, which like Pinar del Río, was hit by both hurricanes; and large parts of the tobacco, coffee, rice, beans, sweet potato, and banana crops wiped out.

“It is impossible to resolve the magnitude of the catastrophe with the available resources,” Gen. Carlos Lezcano Pérez, president of the National Institute of State Reserves, told the Cuban daily *Granma* September 12. All of the reserves of food, fuel, construction materials, medicine, and all types of equipment, including those of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, are being used to meet the needs of “our people, which is the number one priority,” he said.

Washington had the audacity at first to “offer” Cuba an insulting \$100,000 in aid if Cuba allowed a U.S. team to do its

own damage assessment. When Havana rejected that pittance, the U.S. government upped its offer to \$5 million and said it didn’t need to send anyone to see the hurricane’s effects firsthand because it already had the information. The Cuban government also rejected the \$5 million.

Fidel Castro: ‘Dignity has no price’

“If instead of five million they had said one billion, they would receive the same answer,” wrote Cuban leader Fidel Castro in a September 17 column. “It’s obvious that the government of that powerful country cannot comprehend that the dignity of a people has no price.”

A front-page article in the daily *Juventud Rebelde* printed the position of the Cuban government.

“If the government of the United States really wanted to help Cuba,” the article said, “it should authorize, at least for six months, the purchase of indispensable construction materials from U.S. companies, as well as authorize normal credit for commercial transactions. A true demonstration of solidarity would be the definitive lifting of the blockade that was imposed on Cuba almost 50 years ago.”

Washington has maintained an economic embargo of Cuba since 1960, in an attempt to punish Cuba for making a revolution that nationalized U.S.-owned industries and distributed land to peasants. Washington prohibits most U.S.



Reuters/Claudia Daut

A town in Cuba’s Pinar del Río province September 11 in the wake of Hurricane Ike

businesses from selling or trading with Cuba. In 2001, Washington made an exception for some food items, but requires that Cuba pay up-front in cash.

One example of the difference a socialist revolution makes in facing natural disasters is the number of deaths due to hurricanes Gustav and Ike. In Haiti more than 500 died in the course of three hurricanes. In the United States, the death toll has reached at least 84. But in Cuba, due to the mobilization of mass organizations, including the country’s civil defense network together with the armed forces, no one died during Hurricane Gustav; only seven people died during Ike.

3 million people evacuated

More than 3 million people were moved to safer locations in the course of the storms, most of them staying with neighbors and relatives.

Even before the last effects of the storm were over, the Cuban government began putting into place recovery measures. Steps are also being taken to save

as much of the current crops as possible and to plant crops with a short growing season immediately.

In the central mountains of Cuba, where Hurricane Ike affected almost half the production of coffee for export, volunteer brigades were immediately organized to salvage coffee beans tossed to the ground by the high winds.

Seventy brigades with the ability to build 100 houses a year each are being created, two each for the 35 most affected municipalities. Construction equipment for these brigades still needs to be imported.

Land distribution

In response to the hurricanes, the Cuban government moved up a program to distribute idle land to those who want to work it. On September 17, less than a week after Hurricane Ike left Cuba, 5,515 people turned in applications to farm or raise livestock on idle land.

While the efforts to salvage crops, repair damage, and replant fields is the priority, the Cuban government has also organized musicians and theater troupes to visit the most affected areas and raise morale.

The National Union of Farm and Forestry Workers announced a campaign to make up for the storm damage by using the workday to the fullest extent, including working extra hours and organizing volunteer work on Saturdays and Sundays from September 11 through January 2009.

The Association of Revolutionary Combatants and the Committees in Defense of the Revolution are postponing conventions that had been scheduled to take place later this year so that their members can participate to the maximum in the rebuilding work.

Granma has initiated a discussion on ways to more effectively withstand storms of this magnitude. The paper noted that some buildings resisted high winds better than others.

In some areas, like Ciénaga de Zapata and Pinar del Río, *Granma* said, people learned the lesson of previous hurricanes and built roofs that resisted the high winds. It pointed to the schools in Jagüey Grande. “Not a single computer was damaged,” *Granma* reported. “Workers, students, and territorial authorities” took preventative measures. But this was not the case everywhere.

“We need to think about what happened because there will be other hurricanes and we have to get used to living with them. The important thing is to learn from the experience left by both hurricanes,” the paper said. “We can do much more to minimize the misfortunes.”

Cuban vice president speaks in New York

Continued from front page

on African development, where he demanded that imperialist governments cancel Africa’s foreign debt and grant aid with no strings attached to help overcome the poverty and underdevelopment of the region.

Lucius Walker, director of Pastors for Peace, chaired the meeting at Harlem’s Church of the Intercession. Referring to the UN meeting on Africa, Machado Ventura noted that officials of wealthy governments are now talking about problems like world hunger, the energy crisis, and the environment. “They throw out statistics,” he said, “but they do not issue any real prescriptions that can solve the problems.”

“The countries that have enriched themselves with the plundering” of Africa, Machado Ventura explained, are debating what limits to impose on aid as a way to continue the exploitation of the African continent and the entire planet.

Revolutionary Cuba’s approach is the opposite, he said. Some 33,000 African youth have studied in Cuba on scholarships provided by the revolutionary government over the last 50 years. Close to 2,000 Cuban doctors and health professionals worked in 35 African countries in 2007 alone, providing close to 7 million medical exams, assisting in 100,000 births, and performing 200,000 surgeries.

“We share what we have, not what we have left over,” the Cuban leader said,

pointing to what would be possible if instead of squandering resources, the wealthy governments followed Cuba’s example.

“Our speeches are not well received” by the imperialists, Machado Ventura noted, “but the African representatives appreciate them.”

Machado Ventura denounced Washington’s hypocrisy on human rights for carrying out torture at the U.S. military base on Guantánamo, Cuban territory held against the will of the Cuban government and people.

After reiterating Cuba’s solidarity with the Bolivian and Venezuelan governments in the face of U.S. pressure, he expressed support for the Puerto Rican independence struggle saying, “Puerto Rico, its day will come.”

Machado Ventura also talked about how Cuba’s response to hurricanes Gustav and Ike has made an impression around the world. “They ask us how is it possible” that so many people were evacuated and so few died?

“It is possible because of the attention the revolutionary government gives to every citizen of the country,” he said. The strength of the revolution is also seen in “genuine solidarity.” Machado Ventura pointed out that most of the people who were evacuated stayed with neighbors and relatives.

“They were taken in like brothers and sisters because this is rooted in our people; it is how they have been educated by

Socialist candidate: 'Lift the embargo on Cuba!'

BY MAGGIE TROWE

MIAMI—"My campaign calls for unconditionally ending the criminal U.S. embargo against Cuba, a position my party has taken for decades," Omari Musa, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Congress in Florida's 21st District, said September 15. "Everyone in the United States should have the right to travel to Cuba if they want to do so. The damage wreaked on Cuba by Hurricane Ike and two previous storms only makes the case for lifting the embargo stronger."

Musa, a garment worker, and his supporters have stepped up campaigning in the district, which extends from Kendall through Hialeah in Miami-Dade County into Miramar and Pembroke Pines in neighboring Broward County, areas with a substantial Cuban American population.

The incumbent, Lincoln Diaz-Balart, a Cuban American attorney, has held the seat since 1993.

Diaz-Balart is part of a Florida congressional trio strongly opposed to the Cuban Revolution. It includes his brother, Mario Diaz-Balart, who has represented the 25th District for five years, and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, representative in the 18th District since 1989. The three are all Republicans.

They are being challenged by Democrats who are also opponents of the Cuban Revolution. Democrat Raúl Martínez, a Cuban American businessman and former mayor of Hialeah, is challenging Lincoln Diaz-Balart. A July poll showed Martínez only four percentage points behind Diaz-Balart, while Democrat Joseph García trailed Mario Diaz-Balart by only five percentage points. Colombian-born businesswoman Annette Taddeo is challenging Ros-Lehtinen.

Debate on embargo, travel ban

Last week, after Hurricane Gustav wreaked massive destruction on Cuba, a debate among South Florida capital-



Omari Musa, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Congress in Florida's 21st District, distributes the *Militant* newspaper in Miami.

ist politicians broke out on whether and how to modify the embargo and travel restrictions. Martínez and García called for a temporary easing of travel and remittance restrictions to the island, as did Ramón Saúl Sánchez, head of the so-called Democracy Movement, a Miami group that actively organizes provocations against the Cuban Revolution.

In response to the broad questioning of the embargo, Ninoska Pérez Castellon, director of the Cuban Liberty Council, trying to shore up support for U.S. policy, attacked Cuban Americans seeking a way to send money and aid and visit their relatives in Cuba.

Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama said he agreed with Martínez and García, emphasizing that he was not for ending the embargo. "This is a time when the Cuban people—not Castro—need and deserve American compassion and assistance," Obama said.

Lincoln and Mario Diaz-Balart, Ros-Lehtinen, and Republican U.S. senator Melquiades Martínez an-

nounced in a joint statement that they continue to oppose lifting restrictions, and that the U.S. government should instead directly help hurricane victims.

The debate reflected the growing sentiment among Cuban American workers and others against Washington's severe trade and travel restrictions.

Musa explained that capitalist politicians of the Democratic and Republican parties share a common hatred of the Cuban Revolution and that their tactical differences represent different assessments of how best to carry out U.S. imperialism's goal of overturning the Cuban Revolution and its government of workers and farmers.

"Neither Obama, McCain, Martínez, nor García have called for the freedom of the Cuban Five—Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González, and René González," Musa said. The five Cubans were arrested in 1998 in Miami, convicted and railroaded to prison on frame-up charges of "conspiracy" to commit espionage. They

have been in U.S. prisons for 10 years.

"None of my opponents are part of the fight against government actions to intimidate immigrant workers," Musa continued. "None support legalization for all."

"Our campaign calls on working people to break with the Democratic and Republican parties and to organize a labor party based on a fighting union movement," Musa continued.

Cuban American workers

The political space here to discuss the Cuban Revolution has been changing for some time. Musa noted that he and his supporters have participated this year in a number of caravans opposing the travel restrictions to Cuba that have driven through Hialeah and other largely Cuban workers districts with placards demanding the right to travel. "We always get a largely positive response," Musa said, "with many waving and giving a thumbs up reaction."

Campaigning outside the Winn-Dixie grocery store in Hialeah's Flamingo Plaza, Musa and his supporters found many, including workers born in Cuba, who agree with or are open to discussing the Socialist Workers platform.

Olidi Rodríguez, a Cuban American, told a Musa supporter, "I'm against the U.S. embargo and for the right to travel to Cuba. The embargo is difficult. It limits what Cubans here can do to help the people of Cuba eat." Others said the embargo should stay until the government changes. A woman born in Cuba said, "The embargo is necessary. I'm for individuals being able to send money."

Calero visits Texas workers hit by Ike

Continued from front page through the line at the distribution center. "We don't come here to be humiliated for a bottle of water," she said.

Observing the damage, Calero said it is obvious the government did not make adequate preparations for the storm. "They spend billions of dollars to prevent a collapse of the financial system, so the bosses can maintain their system of capitalist exploitation," he stated. "At the same time they tell us that they are doing everything they can and nothing more can be done," to help those affected by the storm.

FEMA announced that those with damaged homes who have filed claims with their insurance companies can apply for federal aid. Applicants, however, are required to have a Social Security number and other documentation, disqualifying undocumented immigrants and others without appropriate documents.

Sonia Davis, 45, a resident of a predominantly Black, working-class neighborhood on Houston's northwest side, said that she couldn't evacuate because she didn't have transportation. She has not been able to go to the distribution center either. "We just all stuck together

and helped each other," she said, pointing to her neighbors. A tree knocked down in the storm just missed her bedroom, landing on the street and blocking it. Several days after the storm most of the fallen trees in the area remained untouched.

CenterPoint Energy boasted that power has been restored to 941,000 households in Houston as of September 19, yet more than 1.2 million of their customers have no electricity going into the second week after the storm. Entergy Texas, the other main electric company in the outlying areas, reports 50 percent of its 392,600 customers are without power. Texas-New Mexico Power Co. and the Sam Houston Electric Cooperative companies have a combined total of 81,800 customers without power.

Juan Pablo Guerrero, a day laborer who normally stands for work just north of Interstate 10, described how he saw a caravan of 20 CenterPoint Energy trucks on their way to restore power lines in the Memorial area of Houston. "They go to where people have money. On the north side where I live we are still without power. I am an electrician, I know how to do all of this work and I haven't worked for five days."

Guerrera was very favorable to the demand by the Socialist Workers candidate for a federally-funded public works program that can immediately put millions of people to work to build badly needed infrastructure.

José Ortiz, a maintenance worker at Galveston College, and Johalma Ortiz, who works in housekeeping at a Galveston hotel, share a home on the east end of the island, not far from the seawall. Their neighbor's house collapsed into its garage, they said. They lost everything and there is no running water to clean anything up.

Texas authorities admit to 23 hurricane-related deaths, including a couple who died because they had no access to dialysis, and a woman who lost power to her oxygen system. A woman in Huntsville, 65 miles north of Houston, died when a tree fell into her house. At least five deaths are attributed to carbon-monoxide poisoning from poorly ventilated generators individuals used to get some electricity. The official death toll from the storm is 57 around the nation so far, with an untold number of people washed into the Gulf during the storm. Several people died working to remove debris left by the storm.

Books on the Cuban Revolution

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The right to farm and the overthrow of apartheid

Below is an excerpt from Apartheid's Great Land Theft, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month in September. It tells the story of the dispossession of Africans from the soil and the struggle against this massive land theft. In so doing it also explains a great deal about the origins of apartheid and the revolutionary movement that emerged to overthrow it. Copyright © 1986 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



To you, the sons and daughters of the soil, our case is clear. The white oppressors have stolen our land. They have destroyed our families. They have taken for themselves the best that there is in our rich country and have left us the worst. They have the fruits and the

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

riches. We have the back-breaking toil and the poverty. . . .

Over 300 years ago the white invaders began a ceaseless war of aggression against us, murdered our forefathers, stole our land and enslaved our people. Today they still rule by force. They murder our people. They still enslave us. . . . They have declared war on us. We have to fight back!

ANC LEAFLET, 1968

September

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Militant/Margrethe Siem

These farm workers in a cornfield in Transvaal, South Africa, March 1990 were denied access to land and farming while serving as a cheap source of labor for capitalist farmers.

BY ERNEST HARSCH

From the time of the first colonial land wars, South African Blacks have fiercely resisted every move by the white authorities to take their land and cattle. Though Blacks were militarily defeated and deprived of most of their land rights, their struggle for land has continued. It takes varying forms, from informal occupations of unsupervised white-owned lands through sporadic peasant rebellions in the Bantustans.

The struggle for the land has not lost its force or importance over the decades. It remains a vital issue for all Blacks. The white monopoly over most land is a cornerstone on which the entire apartheid structure rests and without which it could not have been created and maintained.

Despite South Africa's extensive industrialization and the growth in the number of Blacks living in the urban centers, land is still an immediate concern to a significant part of the Black population. Because of the regime's massive forced resettlements, more than half the entire African population live in the Bantustans. Several million more live and work on white-owned farms.

A considerable number of African wage workers still have one foot in the

countryside. They are not yet part of the hereditary proletariat, who view themselves as belonging to a distinct, permanent working class with no further perspective of returning to the land.

There are some 2 million African migrant workers—nearly a third of all African workers—who labor for periods of time in the cities and must periodically return to the Bantustans, where their families live. Most migrant workers still have access to some land, even if it is only a minimal amount, and they have repeatedly shown their determination to hang on to it.

In addition, many nonmigrant workers in the cities are only recent arrivals and retain family and other social and cultural ties in the rural areas. Even working-class families that have lived in the cities for several generations are affected by the poverty, hunger, and disease of the Bantustans. These conditions drive down the living standards of all Blacks.

Demands and struggles relating to the land have been part of every major period of mass opposition to white minority rule. The upsurge that has been rocking South Africa for the past year and a half has been no exception.

“The black rebellion, which began

in the big city ghettos like Sharpeville, Crossroads and Soweto, then spread to small-town South Africa, has now reached the pastoral backwaters of what the South African government calls tribal ‘homelands’ [the Bantustans],” prominent South African journalist Allister Sparks noted in the October 26, 1985, *Washington Post*.

The United Democratic Front (UDF), the 2-million-member anti-apartheid coalition that has led many of the protests, has called for the scrapping of the Bantustan system and of all laws restricting Black land rights. Other groups have raised similar demands. Supporters of the African National Congress (ANC)—the political vanguard of the struggle to bring down the apartheid regime—have been popularizing the slogan, “The land shall be shared among those who work it!”

The fight of Blacks today to reconquer the land is a central aspect of South Africa's unfolding national, democratic revolution. The demand for land—for a sweeping and deep-going agrarian reform that will overturn the racist and unjust system of land ownership—is one that elicits an immediate response from millions of Blacks.

Many areas of the Bantustans have long traditions of rebellion and opposition to the regime's racist agrarian policies. Between 1940 and 1963, major peasant revolts swept a number of them.

These rebellions were provoked by the regime's drive to push even more Blacks off the land, a drive that accelerated with the coming to power in 1948 of the National Party. The new government institutionalized apartheid as official state policy and drastically extended the repressive and discriminatory measures of earlier regimes.

In the countryside this involved kicking millions of Blacks out of farming areas in order to tighten the whites-only monopoly over land ownership and rental. The expelled Blacks were forced to settle in the Bantustans, making the Bantustans even more overcrowded, reducing the size of farming plots, and increasing the number of landless.

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TEXAS: Houston: 4800 W. 34th St., Suite C-51A. Zip: 77092. Tel: (713) 688-4919. E-mail: swp.houston1@sbcglobal.net

WASHINGTON, D.C.: 3717 B Georgia Ave. NW, Ground Floor. Zip: 20010. Tel: (202) 536-5080. E-mail: swp.washingtondc@verizon.net

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AUSTRALIA

Sydney: 1st Flr, 3/281-287 Beamish St., Campsie, NSW 2194. Mailing address: P.O. Box 164, Campsie, NSW 2194. Tel: (02) 9718 9698. E-mail: cl_australia@optusnet.com.au

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Paris: P.O. 175, 23 rue Lecourbe. Postal code: 75015. Tel: (01) 40-10-28-37. E-mail: milpath.paris@laposte.net

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ENGLAND: London: First Floor, 120 Bethnal Green (Entrance in Brick Lane). Postal code: E2 6DG. Tel: 020-7613-2466. E-mail: clondon@onetel.com

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