

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

The founding of the  
Socialist Workers Party  
—PAGE 8

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 72/NO. 42 OCTOBER 27, 2008

## U.S. gov't seeks more allies inside Afghanistan

BY DOUG NELSON

As Washington intensifies its war effort with more troops in Afghanistan and the border region with Pakistan, U.S. generals responsible for the imperialist occupation are pursuing opportunities to forge a broader alliance against al-Qaeda, including within the Taliban. Although U.S.-led NATO forces in Afghanistan have sustained increasing casualties, these have been much higher for Taliban and other antigovernment forces.

According to press reports, more than 170 Taliban were killed in three battles during the last week alone.

By comparison, about 1,000 U.S.-led troops in Afghanistan have been killed since the war began in 2001. Almost half of these fatalities occurred since January 2007.

The U.S. military has stepped up its use of air strikes from aerial drones and fighter jets against the Taliban on both sides of the Pakistan/Afghanistan border.

Taliban attacks have increased 40 percent this year. U.S., NATO, and Afghan officials attribute this to growing instability in Pakistan and an

Continued on page 9

## Bailouts fail to halt capitalist world crisis

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Hoping to crack the grip of a credit freeze that has toppled some of the largest banks and financial institutions, U.S. government officials announced October 14 that they will immediately begin injecting \$250 billion of the \$700 billion bailout package directly into the banks prior to purchasing “distressed” assets.

Chief executives of the nine largest U.S. banks were called to the Treasury Department offices in Washington, D.C., where they agreed to the measures.

According to the *New York Times*, in response “the flow of credit, which has been choked for weeks, began to trickle through the financial system.” But the latest scheme does nothing to solve the underlying causes of the capitalist crisis, including the bursting of the housing bubble and the resulting collapse of the financial instruments based on it.

Under the new plan, the banks will sell preferred stock to the government along with the option to purchase some common stock. In addition, according to the *Times*, Washington

Continued on page 4

## ‘Workers need to take power in own hands’

SWP presidential candidate Calero speaks on worldwide capitalist crisis



Militant/Carole Lesnick

Róger Calero, SWP candidate for U.S. president, talks to carpenters and their supporters at October 9 picket line in Hunters Point, San Francisco. Carpenters there shut down the job site for more than two hours over unsafe conditions.

BY BETSEY STONE

SAN FRANCISCO—On October 9, as the stock market plummeted in one of its biggest drops ever, Róger Calero, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, spoke to thousands of listeners on a popular call-in show on Univision 1170 AM radio here.

“What would you do to get us out of this financial crisis?” asked Celina

Rodriguez, the show’s moderator.

“There is no solution inside the capitalist system,” Calero responded. “The financial and political crisis that has spread in the last few weeks to all corners of the globe shows what the capitalist system, and the handful of wealthy who profit from it, hold for working people.”

“It shows we need a revolutionary  
Continued on page 3

## The Crisis Has Barely Begun!

... and Workers’ Fight to End the Wages System Is Posed

Jack Barnes, National Secretary of the Socialist Workers Party

Reaching to the World:

Workers and Oppressed Nations Unite!

Mary-Alice Waters, editor of *New International* magazine and *Our History Is Still Being Written*, recently returned from Equatorial Guinea

Saturday, November 22 ↻ New York City

Reception 3 p.m.—Program 4 p.m.

Dinner, refreshments, talk, & dance 7 p.m. until ...  
Location to be announced

Activities the following day

Sunday, November 23

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- 10 a.m. Discussion on Saturday’s presentations with youth and workers interested in the program of the Young Socialists and Socialist Workers Party
- 1 p.m. National meeting of the Young Socialists
- Noon Join *Militant* sales teams for final week of subscription campaign
- 8:30 a.m.—1 p.m. Meeting of supporters of the communist movement (Location to be announced)

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Spanish and French translation will be provided

## High Court denies Troy Davis appeal, protests planned

BY CLAY DENNISON  
AND RACHELE FRUIT

ATLANTA—The U.S. Supreme Court on October 14 turned down Troy Davis’s appeal of his death sentence conviction. The decision, released without comment, ends a stay of execution granted less than two hours before he was to be executed on September 23.

On October 15, a judge in Chatham County, Georgia, signed Davis’s death warrant. The Department of Corrections immediately scheduled his execution for October

27 at 7:00 p.m.

Amnesty International has called for a rally at the Georgia State Capitol in Atlanta at 6:00 p.m. October 23, calling it a “Global Day of Action for Troy Davis.”

“I haven’t given up hope,” Davis’s sister Martina Correia told the press. “We’re going to fight until we can’t fight any more.”

Davis’s 1991 conviction for killing Mark MacPhail, an off-duty Savannah, Georgia, cop, was based on

Continued on page 11

## Economic crisis spurs interest in ‘Militant’

BY ANGEL LARISCY

As part of the *Militant*’s campaign to win 2,400 new and long-term readers, supporters worldwide are beginning to map out plans for a special effort October 25 through November 4. Supporters of the *Militant* in Des

Continued on page 4

## Also Inside:

N.Y. court threatens Pastors for Peace leader	2
Army unit for combat on U.S. soil is deployed	5
N.Y. Spanish TV hosts debate on Che Guevara	9
Is Russia a capitalist state?	11



# United Kingdom actions demand ‘Free Cuban 5’

BY PETE CLIFFORD

LONDON—Chanting “Ten years, too long!” and “Free, free, free the Five!” hundreds of people joined protests outside the U.S. Embassy in London October 7 and the U.S. Consulate in Edinburgh October 9. They were calling for the release of five Cubans, working-class fighters who for the past 10 years have been unjustly jailed in the United States.

The protests, called by the Cuba Solidarity Campaign, were part of activities around the world to mark the 10th anniversary of the imprisonment of Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, René González, and Antonio Guerrero, known as the Cuban Five.

They were arrested in 1998 on frame-up charges that included “conspiracy to commit espionage” and in one case, “conspiracy to commit murder.” The five had been keeping the Cuban government informed about rightist groups that have a long record of carrying out bombings and armed attacks against Cuba from U.S. soil.

Joining both actions were Olga Salanueva and Adriana Pérez, wives of René González and Gerardo Hernández respectively. Both have been denied the right to visit their husbands. In an extensive interview with London’s *Guardian* newspaper October 6, Salanueva described how she has “applied to see René nine times and been refused nine times.”

Pérez explained, “They have used the families as a sort of additional tool to blackmail them and weaken them.” Pérez was granted a visa in 2002 but on arrival

at the Houston airport, she was detained and denied entry into the country.

Salanueva said the five men are not broken. “They have good relations with the other prisoners. I think they have a lot of respect,” she told the *Guardian*. Other media coverage included an article in Glasgow’s *Herald*, an interview on BBC Radio Scotland, and a protest advertisement signed by prominent figures in a number of papers, including the *Independent*.

Three hundred joined the London action, with some coming from Sheffield, Manchester, and Birmingham. The speakers platform included Trades Union Congress general secretary Brendan Barber and Unite union general secretary Tony Woodley.

More than 40 participants from across Scotland joined the protest in Edinburgh. Elaine Smith, Labour Party member of the Scottish Parliament, reported to the crowd that some 30 other parliamentarians had signed a protest motion in support of the five. Other speakers included representatives of the Scottish Cuba



Militant/Jonathan Silberman  
**October 7 demonstration at U.S. Embassy in London for release of Cuban Five. Inset: Olga Salanueva (left) and Adriana Pérez, wives of prisoners René González and Gerardo Hernández respectively, joined protest.**



Solidarity Campaign, Communist Party, and Communist League. At an earlier meeting held at the Scottish parliament, Salanueva pointed to the appeal the five are making to the U.S. Supreme Court as a “window of time to intensify the campaign work and raise awareness.”

A high point of both protests was the reading of a message from Gerardo Hernández on the 10th anniversary

of their imprisonment. In it he says, “We know that right is on our side, but to win justice we need a jury of millions of people throughout the world and we need you, defenders of just causes, to make our truth known.” He finished by pledging “our firm determination to resist, with our heads held high, for as long as it takes.” (See full statement on page 10).

## N.Y. court threatens Pastors for Peace leader

BY BEN JOYCE

NEW YORK—Lucius Walker, a longtime defender of the Cuban Revolution and advocate of the right to travel to the island, is fighting a government attack for his alleged role in organizing a trip of high school students to Cuba. He is the executive director of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO) and Pastors for Peace, an IFCO ministry.

For nearly two decades Pastors for Peace has organized “Friendshipment Caravans” to take humanitarian supplies to Cuba and to oppose Washington’s ban on travel to the island.

On September 23, some 30 people came to support Walker at a New York County Supreme Court hearing on a pending motion to hold him in contempt of court for refusing to provide all the information requested by the Special Commissioner of Investigation for the New York City School District, Richard Condon.

Condon has been seeking records on permission slips, itineraries, and travel payments by students and school employees in relation to four trips to Cuba by students and teachers from the Beacon School since 1999. He alleges that the trips are in violation of federal law and that Walker and IFCO were “involved in arranging some of the trips,” including the most recent one during spring break in 2007.

On January 22 Judge Judith Gische

ordered Walker and IFCO to comply with a subpoena from Condon to testify about the trips. Subsequently Walker was interrogated by attorneys for the school district, but refused to testify about many of the individuals the school district claims were involved in the trips.

The investigation “is about trying to undercut and intimidate a movement,” Walker told the *Militant*, referring to those who defend the right for people in this country to travel to Cuba. “Defending this is important, and that’s what we’re trying to do with this case.”

Linda Backiel who, along with Palyn Hung of the New York Civil Liberties Union, represents IFCO and Walker, noted that the judge commented on the number of people present at the hearing. Walker’s defense case “is much bigger than just Lucius and IFCO,” she said. “It has repercussions for everyone.”

Some of the students from Beacon School on Manhattan’s Upper West  
**Continued on page 5**

## THE MILITANT

### U.S. troops out of Afghanistan now!

*Both the Democratic and Republican presidential candidates call for a substantial increase in the number of U.S. troops fighting in Afghanistan. Read in the ‘Militant’ why U.S. working people should instead demand their immediate withdrawal.*



U.S. troops in combat in eastern Afghanistan in August 2007.

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# Costs are rising, farmers tell socialist candidate

BY JOHN HAWKINS

CHICAGO—Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party vice presidential candidate, took the socialist program to workers, students, and farmers during her tour stops in Illinois and Wisconsin October 3–7.

A highlight of the tour was a discussion in Muscoda, Wisconsin, with farmers Randy and Kevin Jasper and Joel Greeno. Randy Jasper raises corn and soybeans, Kevin Jasper and Joel Greeno are dairy farmers. Greeno is vice president of Family Farm Defenders.

Randy Jasper explained how working farmers are affected by the capitalist economic crisis. “I farm around 2,000 acres, but we have to rent most of the land,” he explained. “Land rent has doubled, from \$100 to \$200 per acre for the good land, and rent for the poorer farm land has tripled from \$40 to \$120 per acre.” The higher prices farmers get for corn are offset by rising costs in land rent, fuels, fertilizer, seed, and pesti-

cides. “The demand for ethanol is displacing food crops, and causing food prices to rise. This is a problem not only here, but even more so in countries in Africa and Latin America,” added Greeno. He explained that farmers in many parts of Africa are forced to produce cotton and other non-food crops strictly for export. As a result they have to import expensive food. Randy Jasper pointed to Cuba as the one example where farm production is planned with the interests of the working classes as the main concern. “The Cuban government says, ‘We need x gallons of milk and x bushels of corn to feed the population. So what do you farmers need to produce more milk?’ And farmers will get it,” he said. Cuba was also a major point of discussion at the Black Politics class at Chicago State University the next day. “I agree 100 percent that it will take a revolution in the United States to change anything. But Cuba is a small country,



Militant/Betsy Farley  
SWP vice presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy with farmers Randy Jasper (left) and Joel Greeno (right) at Kevin Jasper’s dairy farm in Muscoda, Wisconsin, October 5.

could a revolutionary movement in the U.S. have a chance of winning?” asked one student. “Some people didn’t believe that slavery or Jim Crow segregation could be ended,” Kennedy answered. “It took a massive struggle of workers and farmers in the Civil War and the civil rights

movement. And we won those victories. It will take that kind of movement to overturn capitalism in the U.S. The fights that are beginning to develop today as workers face the devastation capitalism has in store for us are the beginnings of that kind of movement.” Kennedy also spoke at Northeastern Illinois University on a panel discussing the life and work of Ernesto Che Guevara on the 41st anniversary of his death in Bolivia. Seventeen students and faculty attended. She shared the platform with Jorge Ortiz and Juan Flores, two student leaders of the Latin American Cultural Movement (MCLA), the organization that sponsored the meeting.

Laura Anderson and Betsy Farley contributed to this article.

## ‘Workers need to take power into own hands’

Continued from front page  
change, that workers and farmers need to take political power away from the wealthy and reorganize society on the basis of our interests.”

As an immediate measure, Calero said the banks and key industries including coal mining and other energy industries should be nationalized and put under workers control. The financial books of these institutions should be made public and placed under the inspection of commissions of workers.

Calero began three days of campaigning in San Francisco October 9 at a construction site in Hunters Point, a mostly Black neighborhood here. He and other campaign supporters were there to support carpenters who shut down the site in a struggle to stop unsafe practices, extortion from the paychecks of immigrant workers, and the firing of two leaders of the struggle.

Over the past year carpenters at public housing renovation sites in Bayview/Hunters Point have carried out work stoppages and protests that won some concessions from the bosses, including the hiring of more Black workers. Now, the construction companies are trying to undermine these gains.

On October 10 Calero spoke to a meeting of some 50 workers at the San Francisco Day Labor Center.

“This economic crisis is caused by the billionaire rulers and their system,” Calero emphasized in his talk. “Our starting point is not saving their system, but what is needed to defend working people whose standard of living and rights are under assault.”

Pointing to the carpenters’ fight, where Black and Latino workers were able to unite against the bosses’ racist practices, and to protests against raids and deportations of immigrants, Calero said, “It’s through such struggles that we can move forward.”

“Does your view include some kind of ‘cadre formation,’ to train workers to take on issues like job safety?” asked one worker.

“We are the only ones who can effectively organize to protect ourselves on the job,” Calero responded. “The bosses divide us any way they can. They pit old against young, using young workers to set a faster pace on the job. They use unemployment to maintain unsafe conditions, saying ‘If you don’t want to work in these conditions, there is someone else out there who will.’ We have to organize on the job to protect each other and fight for the unions to enforce job conditions that are safe.”

How to fight for jobs was a topic of discussion when Calero spoke to a dozen students at the College of Behavior Sci-

ences Student Resource Center at San Francisco State University. One of the students asked Calero what he thought of Obama’s plan to counter unemployment through creating “green” jobs.

Calero, who calls for a massive public works program and shortening the workweek with no cut in pay, said, “The capitalists make their decisions based on what is profitable. If ‘green jobs’ are profitable, they invest. If they’re not, it’s just empty promises. Three years after Katrina they still have not rebuilt New Orleans.”

An article on the meeting at San Francisco State appeared in the school newspaper, the *Golden Gate Express*. At the invitation of one of the students who attended the meeting Calero later met with a new student group called Radical Students.

Calero’s tour here ended with a standing room only campaign meeting at the Militant Labor Forum, where Calero and Lea Sherman, Socialist Workers candidate for Congress in the 8th District, were featured speakers.

## SWP presidential campaign tour schedule
















Presidential candidate Róger Calero (foreground) at rally outside Georgia State capitol September 11 demanding freedom for Troy Davis, who faces death sentence.

**Presidential candidate  
Róger Calero**  
Oct. 21–22 Boston  
Oct. 23–24 Philadelphia  
Oct. 25, 27–28 New York  
Oct. 26, 29–30 Newark, NJ



Vice presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy (right) at demonstration May 1 in Chicago demanding legalization for undocumented immigrants.

**Vice presidential candidate  
Alyson Kennedy**  
Oct. 20–24 Washington, D.C.  
October 25–30 San Francisco

Socialist Workers on the ballot in:	
	NEW YORK
	NEW JERSEY
	WASHINGTON
	VERMONT
	MINNESOTA
	LOUISIANA
	FLORIDA
	DELAWARE
	COLORADO
	IOWA
	GEORGIA legal write-in status
	CALIFORNIA write-in status pending
	CONNECTICUT write-in status pending

## MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

TEXAS  
Houston  
Eighty Years of Communist Continuity, 1928–2008. Speakers: Tom Leonard, longtime SWP leader, and Amanda Ulman, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress. Sat., Oct. 25. Dinner, 6 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. 4800 W 34th St., Suite C-51A. Tel.: (713) 688-4919.



# SWP candidate Calero visits strikers in Montreal

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL—Rôger Calero, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, spoke to workers on picket lines and to students on campuses here during an October 5–7 campaign stop.

Calero visited striking hotel workers on their picket line at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel. The 700 strikers, members of the Confederation of National Trade Unions, are fighting for a new contract with better working conditions.

The socialist presidential candidate was also well received by locked-out Petro-Canada refinery workers, who have been resisting concession demands from the oil refinery bosses since November 2007.

Speaking at a Militant Labor Forum in downtown Montreal, Calero likened the deepening capitalist financial crisis to a “slow-moving train wreck.”

“The rulers cannot spend their way or regulate their way out of this crisis,” he said. “The root problem is not deregulation or specific policies or individuals. It is the normal workings of the capitalist system.”

“Some conservatives say that Washington’s bailout package for the Wall Street billionaires is socialism,” said Calero. “This is not socialism. We can only start to build socialism when workers and farmers have political power.”

Joseph Young, the Communist League candidate for St. Léonard/St. Michel in the October 14 federal election, also spoke. Earlier in the day, he and Calero distributed revolutionary literature and spoke to workers at a

demonstration here of 5,000, organized by Quebec’s union federations, and community, cultural, and student organizations.

The axis of the demonstration was a call for defeating the Conservatives, who currently head the government, in the upcoming elections.

“There is nothing in this perspective that strengthens the working class,” said Young. “It is not a step toward independent working-class political action because it is really a call for support to the other capitalist parties.”

Young pointed to the demand in the Communist League election platform explaining the need for a labor party, based on fighting unions, that defends the needs of all working people.

Calero encouraged everyone at the forum to join in campaigning for the Communist League candidates. In re-



Militant/Guy Tremblay

Rôger Calero, SWP candidate for U.S. president, speaking at October 5 forum in Montreal. To his right, Beverly Bernardo of the Communist League.

sponse, a garment warehouse worker participated in his first campaign table later that week.

At another event Calero addressed 13 students who turned out to a meeting organized by the science and law

students’ association at the University of Quebec at Montreal, one of Montreal’s major universities.

*Beverly Bernardo and Joseph Young contributed to this article.*

## Bailouts fail to halt world financial crisis

Continued from front page

will be able to appoint directors if a company misses six quarters of dividends.

The largest banks—J.P. Morgan Chase, Citigroup, and Bank of America—will each get \$25 billion in hopes that they will again start lending the money. A similar approach is being taken by London with \$63 billion being given to the Royal Bank of Scotland, Lloyds TSB and HBOS; by the German rulers with a \$675 billion bailout; and in Spain with \$135 billion.

The U.S. rulers over the past several weeks had failed to reverse the virtual shutting down of credit; banks are not loaning to each other and companies have been unable to secure short-term loans. Among the measures they took were an emergency Federal Reserve cut in interest rates to the banks from 2 percent to 1.5 percent; insuring deposits up to \$250,000 during the next year, an increase from the previous \$100,000 limit; an \$85 billion bailout to insurance giant American

International Group, followed with an additional \$37.8 billion tacked on three weeks later; and the \$700 billion bailout package.

Capitalist governments in the United States and other imperialist countries in Europe hope that by pouring billions into the banks they can loosen the worldwide credit freeze that over time threatens production, trade, and the entire economic functioning of the capitalist system.

### Instability

The instability of the world capitalist system was highlighted as stock markets rose sharply October 13 after having plummeted the previous week, and then plummeted again on October 15, dropping 733 points.

While the Dow Jones Industrial Average went up 11 percent October 13, the largest one-day gain since 1933, it remained 34 percent down from its October 2007 high point. The October 15 drop brings the Dow down to 8,577 points.

The previous week stock markets plummeted around the world. The Dow Jones Industrial Average declined 18 percent—the worst one-week decline in its 112-year history. Since the beginning of the year U.S.

stock prices are down 36 percent.

The FTSE-100 stock index in the United Kingdom fell 21 percent that week. In Japan the Nikkei 225 was down 24 percent.

In Russia, the stock market dropped 61 percent over the past three months, wiping out about \$1 trillion in value. Authorities shut the exchange there for several days. Accelerating the crisis is the drop in the price of oil, gas, metals, and other natural resources, which are the bedrock of Russia’s economy.

In Iceland, the government took control of the country’s three major banks as the government hovered on the brink of bankruptcy. The banks’ debts were equal to 10 times Iceland’s Gross National Product. Deposits from foreign investors are essentially wiped out, as the government will only guarantee domestic deposits. In response, the British government froze assets of Icelandic banks in the United Kingdom and threatened to use antiterrorist legislation to take over assets of other Icelandic companies in Britain, reported the *New York Times*.

In an October 12 article in the *New York Daily News*, Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama

Continued on page 10

'Militant' Subscription Drive			
Fall 2008 ♦ Sept. 27 – Nov. 23			
Week 2 of 8			
Country	Quota	Sold	%
UNITED STATES			
Twin Cities*	125	44	35%
Boston	60	20	33%
San Francisco	140	44	31%
Newark, NJ	125	34	27%
Des Moines, IA	125	30	24%
Philadelphia	90	22	24%
Washington D.C.	95	23	24%
Atlanta	200	38	19%
New York	315	56	18%
Miami	160	27	17%
Houston	90	14	16%
Los Angeles	100	15	15%
Seattle	80	11	14%
Chicago	100	7	7%
U.S. Total	1,805	385	21%
UNITED KINGDOM			
Edinburgh	40	14	35%
London	80	36	45%
UK Total	120	50	42%
CANADA	125	41	33%
NEW ZEALAND	70	21	30%
AUSTRALIA	55	25	45%
SWEDEN	30	18	60%
Int'l Totals	2,205	540	23%
Should be	2,400	600	25%
*Raised goal			

Continued from front page

Moines, Iowa; Twin Cities, Minnesota; and Chicago are organizing to step up selling subscriptions to the socialist newsweekly in the major meatpacking areas in the Midwest in the 11 days leading up to the U.S. elections.

“Many meat packers have shown interest in the fighting perspective presented by the *Militant*, particularly where they have fought for their rights on the job, including the right to organize unions,” reports Rollande Girard in Twin Cities. “Workers in these areas have also been part of protests against raids

and deportations.”

Twin Cities supporters of the paper have decided to raise their quota because of the response they are receiving. The international goals don’t yet add up to 2,400 so others are invited to increase their current quota.

The subscription drive is entering its third week and is a little behind schedule. Where partisans of the paper are engaging in discussions on the deepening financial crisis, its impact on the working class, and the platform of the Socialist Workers Party campaign, they are finding interest in subscribing to the paper.

Frank Forrestal, the SWP candidate for U.S. Congress in the 3rd District in Iowa, writes, “Campaigning in working-class neighborhoods in Des Moines

we got a good response to our local and presidential campaign, selling 14 subscriptions, including one copy of *New International* no. 14.”

*New International* no. 14 magazine includes the articles “Revolution, internationalism, and socialism: The last year of Malcolm X” and “The Clintons’ antilabor legacy: Roots of the 2008 world financial crisis” and is only \$10 with a subscription to the paper.

Campaigners in Canada sold 20 subscriptions this week on street tables in Montreal and Vancouver, campuses, at a young feminists conference, and at the closing rally for the Communist League federal election campaign.

To meet socialist campaigners and get involved in the subscription effort, contact local distributors listed on page 6.



# Army unit for combat on U.S. soil is deployed

BY CINDY JAQUITH

The First Brigade Combat Team of the U.S. Army's 3rd Infantry Division, fresh from Iraq, began a one-year tour of duty inside the United States October 1. The deployment of the brigade on domestic soil marks another step in the U.S. rulers' preparations to use troops—not just police—to respond to resistance by working people as economic and social conditions worsen.

The brigade consists of 4,700 troops based at Fort Stewart, Georgia. It is the first army unit to be assigned to the U.S. Northern Command, or NorthCom.

A military combat command within U.S. borders was first established by the William Clinton administration. In 2002 NorthCom was formally set up to deal with civil disorder within the United States, the first time the military has been charged with doing so—rather than just the police—since the aftermath of the Civil War.

The Posse Comitatus Act of 1878 prohibits use of the military to enforce domestic law. Posse Comitatus can, and has, been superseded by the Insurrection Act, which allows a president to use troops in a domestic disturbance. President George H. Bush invoked this law in 1992 to send U.S. troops to Los Angeles to put down an anti-police rebellion in the aftermath of the acquittal of the four cops who beat Rodney King.

An article in the September 8 *Army Times* said the brigade “may be called upon to help with civil unrest and crowd control.” A NorthCom spokesman, army Col. Michael Boatner, denied this was the case, claiming, “This response force will not be called upon to help with law enforcement, civil disturbance, or crowd control,” but rather in the event of natural disasters or “weapons of mass

destruction attacks.”

Col. Roger Cloutier, the brigade's commander, said it will also train in the use of a package of “non-lethal” weapons, some of which the troops used in Iraq. These include mobile roadblock equipment; spike strips to slow, stop, or control traffic; beanbag bullets; and Tasers. “I was the first guy in the brigade to get Tasered,” said Cloutier, describing it as “your worst muscle cramp ever.” Tasers have increasingly been used by police to incapacitate or kill workers.

The brigade carried out its first military exercise, “Vibrant Response,” in mid-September. As part of presenting its role to the public as disaster relief work, NorthCom sent troops to the Gulf Coast in the aftermath of hurricanes Gustav and Ike.

Capitalist parties in Germany are now discussing a similar move with their military. German Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union



Soldiers carry out training missions in Alaska in 2007 as part of “homeland defense” exercise led by U.S. Northern Command. A military command within U.S. borders was established by the William Clinton administration and put into operation in 2002.

has won the agreement of its coalition partner, the Social Democratic Party, to change the constitution to permit the deployment of the military on domestic soil. The constitution currently provides for use of the army if the country is at war or in cases of emergencies or natural disasters.

Merkel's cabinet also voted October 7 to send another 1,000 soldiers to Afghanistan and to extend their tour of duty to 14 months. With 3,500 troops currently on the ground in Afghanistan, Germany has the third largest imperialist force there, after the United States and the United Kingdom.

## New Zealand firm hid link to tainted milk

BY TERRY COGGAN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Executives of a New Zealand firm sat on information that the Chinese company in which it holds 43 percent ownership was involved in the distribution of tainted milk. The contaminated milk killed four Chinese children and sickened more than 50,000 others.

Fonterra is the world's largest dairy exporter and the flagship company for New Zealand capitalism. The company exports 95 percent of New Zealand's dairy production to more than 140 countries. Fonterra has a major holding in the Chinese company SanLu, which supplies nearly one-fifth of China's market with cheap infant formula.

China's dairy industry is being shaken by a scandal over the contaminated infant formula. Governments of dozens of countries have announced bans or restrictions on the import of Chinese dairy products. Popular pressure has forced Beijing to begin acting to deal with the crisis. On October 6 the Chinese health

ministry announced new limits on the trace amounts of the chemical melamine allowed in dairy products.

The chemical is used to bamboozle government milk quality monitors by boosting protein readings of watered-down milk. It is harder to detect than rice porridge, which has also been used. As melamine accumulates in the child's body, it can damage the functioning of the kidney, commonly leading to kidney stones. In the worst cases it leads to kidney failure and death.

According to the *Dominion Post*, Fonterra found out about the contamination in the milk on August 2. The company reported its concerns, without details, to the New Zealand embassy in China on August 14. It did not inform the Chinese government until September.

Bloomberg news agency reported September 24 that Chinese officials had pulled 7,000 metric tons of milk products from store shelves, and had begun inspecting dairy farms nationwide. To date, authorities have

arrested 18 people, including dairy company bosses and owners of milk collection stations.

Wang Xuening, deputy chief of the health ministry's inspection and supervision department, said the new limits on melamine levels allowed in foods refer only to seepage from packaging or other unintended results. “Deliberately adding the chemical to food items is prohibited,” Wang said.

An editorial in the September 21 *New Zealand Herald* noted that Fonterra claims a code of “moral courage and leadership.” It went on, “One has to wonder where those qualities were for the 40 days and 40 nights between August 2, when the company first became aware that the milk powder . . . was contaminated by a lethal chemical, and September 11 when it saw fit to disclose the matter.”

On September 24 Fonterra officials announced the company would write down by 70 percent the value of its SanLu holding.

## N.Y. court

Continued from page 2

Side who participated in the latest trip were present at the hearing to support Walker. One student, who asked not to be named, told the *Militant* that he opposes the travel ban. “They [the U.S. government] don't want us to know about Cuba,” he said. “They want us to believe what we're told in the textbooks. I think we should be able to see for ourselves what Cuba is like.” The school has previously organized student trips to France, Spain, South Africa, Venezuela, and Mexico, reported the *New York Post*.

Walker's supporters explain that the school district should have no jurisdiction in the case because the trip was not organized by the school and took place during spring break. Teachers at Beacon were told by the city's Education Department that the school could not sponsor any trips to Cuba. While one teacher accompanied the students last year, the school faculty and administration as a whole did not back the trip, school officials said.

Washington has maintained the travel ban and a harsh economic embargo against Cuba for decades. U.S. residents are forced to obtain a permit from the Treasury Department, which is rarely granted, before traveling to the island. Cuban Americans with family members there are permitted to go once every three years.

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



October 28, 1983

The National Black Independent Political Party (NBIPP) is holding its third national party congress November 10–12 in Jersey City, New Jersey. The congress will evaluate the current state of the party and outline its perspectives for the coming year.

The issues to be discussed are important both to NBIPP members and supporters and to activists in the Black and labor movements seeking ways to defend and advance the political interests of Blacks.

The congress takes place in the context of growing political ferment in the Black community and among working people in general. This ferment is a result of the deepening employer-government offensive against wages, working conditions, democratic rights, and quality of life for all working people, especially for Blacks.



November 10, 1958

The American Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born has announced it will hold its 26th annual national conference Dec. 6 and 7 in New York. Representation from at least 14 national groups is expected.

Commenting on the importance of the conference, committee secretary Abner Green said that despite recent Supreme Court rulings bolstering the status of naturalized citizens, and the right of non-citizens to remain in the U.S., the anti-foreign-born Walter-McCarran law still remains the law of the land.

“If the human and civil rights of the more than 15 million foreign-born Americans are to be truly safeguarded,” Green declared, “the Walter-McCarran Act must go and the immigration and naturalization policy of these United States rewritten from beginning to end.”



October 28, 1933

Philadelphia—For the past few months Antonio Bellusi, a militant Italian worker, has been held in the Gloucester Immigration Station awaiting deportation.

He has been in the labor movement ever since 1918. He was a member of the Italian Socialist Party and later joined the Italian C.P. In 1924 he took a ship and came to the United States, where he immediately became a member of the C.P.U.S.A. from which he was later expelled.

Antonio Bellusi was arrested in July of this year in Wilkes-Barre on the charge of distributing the *Militant*. His home was raided and books were found which gave documentary proof that this worker had been an active fighter, for 15 years, in behalf of the toiling masses.



# How capitalist media maligned 1877 labor uprising

Printed below is an excerpt from The Great Labor Uprising of 1877 by Philip Foner, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month in October. In July 1877, after the United States had endured five years of economic depression, railroad workers in Martinsburg, West Virginia, went on strike against another wage cut. Despite the intervention of the state militia and U.S. Army, the strike spread quickly to rail lines throughout the country. Within a few days, 100,000 workers were on strike in the first nationwide labor upheaval. In St. Louis the strike developed into a complete shutdown of all industry. Copyright © 1977 by Philip Foner. Reprinted by permission.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

### BY PHILIP FONER

The Great Strike of 1877 occurred six years after the Paris Commune—the working class—led revolution which took power in that city on March 18, 1871, and, for the seventy-two days of its existence, established a new type of state. The news of the “Revolution of March 18” produced a wave of fear throughout the established circles in



Assault by troops on strikers in Baltimore in July 1877 as depicted by *Harpers Weekly*

both Europe and the United States. It soon became the practice to blame the social tensions in the United States on foreign influence, and this technique was employed with increasing frequency during the economic crisis of the 1870s. During the troubles on the railroads in 1873–74, there were some references to the fact that the strikers were determined to establish a Commune in the United States. But it was in the Great Strike of 1877 that a large portion of the press came to view the outbreaks as the “long-matured concerted assertion of Communism throughout the United States.”

This theme did not emerge immediately. Indeed, at first even those newspapers that denounced the strike still found it possible to express sympathy for the strikers. They insisted that it was impossible to equate the situation of workers, whose entire livelihood had been threatened by the wage cuts, with that of the railroad stockholders, whose dividends may have been reduced. And they ridiculed management’s defense that its salaries, too, had been cut 10 percent, along with the wages of the workingmen. As one newspaper replied:

The officials can build palaces, the laborer can rent a hovel. The one can roll along in the bustling splendor of a four-in-hand, the other cannot hide

the burnt and frost-bitten foot. These railroad authorities can afford salaries that will secure the costliest luxuries but cannot grant enough to the beggared, starving, crushed laborer and his family to meet the commonest necessities of life.

Even though these newspapers urged the strikers not to resort to violence in the justifiable redress of their grievances, several added the observation that in the face of management’s “arrogant impudence,” violent, and even revolutionary measures might be in order. “Certainly, rebellion against lawful authority is never lawful,” one paper put it, “but the principle that freed our nation from tyranny will free labor from domestic aggression.” The *Missouri Republican*, published in St. Louis, declared that “if the laboring men of this country must choose between revolution and abject submission to the heartless demand of capital, they will certainly not be condemned by this journal if they prefer war to starvation.”

But once the strike got under way, such expressions were no longer heard, and even before the great upheaval at Pittsburgh, the note of “Communism” was being injected into news and editorial columns alike. From the very outset of the strike in

Martinsburg, the fear was voiced that if the “great mobs” succeeded in imposing their terms on the railroads by violence, “communism would be established in America.” Thus, as early as July 19, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* warned that the strike was endangering American society, and that it had to be dealt with as if it were an “insurrection,” and not just a “labor dispute”:

It is not pleasant to think of men being mowed down by soldiers, but it will be a much worse spectacle for the country to have a mob triumphant in a state like West Virginia than to have the life blown out of men who refuse to recognize the right of every American to control his own labor and his own property. This is the nearest approach we have yet had to communism in America, and if we are to be saved from the darker horrors of that system, our authorities must act with unmistakable vigor in the present emergency.

The Pittsburgh massacres were viewed by the labor press as a prime example of corporate and military brutality. But the commercial press unleashed a veritable barrage of editorials blaming the events of July 22 and 23 entirely on the communists. Some newspapers bluntly accused the Pittsburgh strikers of being communists (a fact which, according to the *New York Tribune*, “does not need demonstration”), and reprinted the editorial in the *Pittsburgh Leader* which concluded that “the workingman in Pittsburgh is really a communist, and there is no doubt that communistic ideas have widely spread.” Most papers, however, insisted that it was not the strikers themselves who were responsible for the violence in Pittsburgh and other railroad centers, but rather a group of men who were neither railroad strikers nor their sympathizers. They were the “destructionists,” who had been unleashed by a powerful, secret, oath-bound central organization headed by men who saw in the Great Strike a “golden opportunity to establish the Commune in the United States.”

October

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6 The Militant October 27, 2008



# Capitalist crisis and rising unemployment

The following excerpt is taken from "What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold," a resolution of the Socialist Workers Party published in issue no. 10 of New International, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory. The resolution was discussed and adopted by delegates to the SWP's national convention in August 1988, following a report by SWP national secretary Jack Barnes. Copyright © 1994 by New International. Reprinted by permission.



The capitalists' falling average rate of profit results not only in "surplus" plant, "surplus" food, and other "surplus" capital and commodities, but also in what Marx described as a "relative surplus population." The layoffs of waged workers and dispossession of agricultural producers proceed at an accelerating pace and outstrip capitalism's capacity to absorb this surplus labor power into new employment. The expanding reserve army of the unemployed becomes a source of pressure used by the capitalists to intensify the labor and hold down the wages of employed workers, and to increase competition among all workers.

"The over-work of the employed part of the working class swells the ranks of its reserve," Marx explained, "while, conversely, the greater pressure that the reserve by its competition exerts on the employed workers forces them to submit to over-work and subjects them to the dictates of capital. The condemnation of one part of the working class to enforced idleness by the overwork of the other part, and *vice versa*, becomes a means of enriching the individual capitalists."<sup>1</sup>

This process has accelerated not just in each imperialist country but worldwide since the onset of the capitalists' accumulation crisis in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In the United States, Washington boasts about having reduced unemployment to under 6 percent from its peak of more than 10 percent in 1982, the highest level since 1938. What government spokespeople fail to mention is that this "low" figure remains substantially higher than the average of 4.8 percent for the entire quarter century between 1948 and 1973. Since 1973 joblessness has aver-

aged 7.3 percent. While the annual unemployment rate went above 6 percent only twice between 1948 and 1973, it has dipped below 6 percent only twice for the fifteen years since 1973.

Moreover, the "official" government jobless figure that makes its way into the headlines does not include either the growing numbers of part-time workers seeking fulltime employment or the so-called discouraged workers who have given up hope of ever finding a job. The government does issue such figures, however; as of December 1987 unemployment measured in this way was 8.8 percent according to government sources. Adding in immigrant workers, layers of women and young people who would look for jobs if the prospects were better, and others overlooked in government figures, the true unemployment picture at the top of the "Reagan boom" is much grimmer than portrayed in official statistics.

Laid-off workers today are also condemned to spend more time off the job than in the past. The average duration of each spell of unemployment rose from eleven weeks during the twenty-seven years prior to 1974; to thirteen

## "The most devastating effects of capitalism's production of a relative surplus population is in the Third World"

weeks from the 1974-75 world recession through 1981; and to sixteen and a half weeks since the 1981-82 recession. Today more than a quarter of those counted in government jobless figures are out of work more than fifteen weeks, compared to only 15 percent in 1967; and nearly 15 percent today are out work more than half a year, compared to only 6 percent in 1967. Even these figures on the average duration of each spell of unemployment understate the evolving picture, since in recent years workers more frequently have several bouts of unemployment over the course of a single year. Of the 10.8 million workers laid off between January 1981 and January 1986, nearly one-third were still jobless at the end of that period and another 30 percent were working for 80 percent or less of their previous wage.

The official unemployment rate for



Job seekers line up to attend a national career fair in New York City, February 2004. Capitalists use reserve army of unemployed to intensify labor, hold down wages of employed workers, and increase competition among all workers.

Japan was 2.6 percent in April 1988, well below that of most other imperialist powers. But when part-time workers looking for full-time jobs and the so-called discouraged workers are added in, the figure jumps to more than 8 percent, the same as for the United States. Moreover, in Japan the legal workweek remains forty-eight hours.

Prior to the 1974-75 world recession unemployment was below 5 percent in Spain, below 4 percent in Italy and Britain, below 3 percent in France, and below 1 percent in West Germany. In stark contrast, throughout the *upturn* in the capitalist business cycle since 1982 joblessness across Europe has hovered around 11 percent. In April and May 1988 official jobless figures stood at 19.9 percent for Spain; 15.6 percent for Italy; 13.9 percent for the Netherlands; 10.8 percent for Belgium; 10.3 for France; and 8.8 percent for Britain. In Canada, New Zealand, and Australia unemployment is running at more than 7 percent.

The most devastating effects of capitalism's production of a relative surplus population is in the Third World. Official unemployment rates, while themselves very high, conceal the true enormity of the numbers of human beings who live on the knife-edge of existence without any way to make a living. Major cities throughout the semi-colonial countries are surrounded by makeshift neighborhoods of peasant families who have been driven off the land and eke out a meager existence as vendors or doing odd jobs when they can get them. These dispossessed toilers are both peasants who would pour back to the countryside in their millions if arable land and cheap credit were available to them, but at the same time are unemployed workers in the growing ranks of capitalism's relative surplus population.

In India, for example, there are 25 million employed wage-workers, and tens of millions are officially registered as unemployed. But this is out of a population of 800 million! The immensity of unemployment and underemployment in India, both in countryside and city, is completely obscured by official statistics, since the vast majority of its toilers are not even counted in government employment figures.

In Latin America official unemployment across the continent rose by nearly 50 percent between 1980 and 1987, from 47 million to 70 mil-

lion out of a population of 400 million. According to the International Labor Organization, the percentage of Latin America's toilers who are not even counted on the jobless rolls and scrape by on the margins of economic life jumped from 29 percent in 1980 to 39 percent in 1985.

Given unemployment levels already at a post-1930s high during an upturn in the business cycle, the next international recession will have grave economic and social repercussions throughout the capitalist world. Interimperialist rivalry for dwindling markets will intensify. Price competition will sharpen. Capitalist overproduction and excess capacity will be exacerbated, leading to a new wave of plant closings and layoffs. Investment

## "No alternative economic policies followed by the employing classes . . . can avert these consequences"

in expansion of plant and equipment will drop even more steeply than over the past decade. With government and private indebtedness already at an all-time high, bank and business failures will accelerate and defaults on mushrooming corporate and Third World debt will increase. Finance capital will be pushed to greater borrowing and speculation in an effort to pull out of the trough.

Government intervention in this destabilizing process will grow by leaps and bounds. But no alternative economic policies followed by the employing classes or by their states and political parties can avert these consequences of the evolution of the falling average rate of industrial profit. The capitalists are not refraining from major new capacity-expanding investment because they are choosing to divert too much capital into securities markets, real estate speculation, loan sharking, and speeding up production in outmoded factories. The cause and effect are the other way around. The exploiters are sinking their capital into "labor-saving" retooling and speculative paper claims on values because they can get a better rate of return there than from investments in building new factories, installing major new technologies, and hiring on large amounts of additional labor power.

1. Capital, vol. 1, p. 789.

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# The founding of the Socialist Workers Party

## Forging a proletarian party on the eve of the second imperialist world war

BY BEN JOYCE

On Jan. 1, 1938, the Socialist Workers Party was founded at a national convention in Chicago. The emergence of the new party registered the consolidation of the gains of the previous two decades and the opening of the road forward along the same lines of communist continuity.

In the years leading up to the founding convention, the cadre of the communist movement made a series of organizational shifts along the way to take advantage of timely political openings. In late 1934, the Communist League of America had just come out of the tremendous experience of the Minneapolis Teamsters strikes earlier that summer and was taking advantage of openings in the mass movement as the labor radicalization deepened. Seeing the new opportunities opening up in the U.S. class struggle, the Communist League made a proposal for fusion with the American Workers Party (AWP), led by A. J. Muste.

The AWP was not a homogenous organization, but a section of the rank-and-file membership were genuine militant workers recruitable to the communist movement. A major contribution of the AWP to the mass movement was the Auto-Lite strike in Toledo, Ohio, in the spring of 1934, one of the most powerful in the strike wave that year. It showed



The founding of the Socialist Workers Party in 1938 and its first two conventions codified two decades of experiences of the communist movement. Right: Ruben Plaskett addresses the second SWP convention June 30, 1939. Left: Union Defense Guard, organized by Minneapolis Teamsters Local 544 to defend workers from fascist attack.

for the first time the great role the organization of the unemployed can play in militant labor battles. The fusion of working-class militants from both the Minneapolis Teamsters and the Toledo Auto-Lite strikers presented a uniquely powerful opportunity for class-conscious proletarian leadership to advance in the United States.

Muste, who was the national secretary of the AWP at the time, represented the majority sentiment that favored unity with the Communist League. The two organizations were then fused in a

joint convention on Dec. 2, 1934, as the Workers Party of the United States.

The Workers Party had barely begun its political work when a new left-wing in the Socialist Party began to take shape under the impact of developments in the international class struggle. In the United States, militant labor battles were on the rise and the Congress of Industrial Organizations went through two massive upsurges. In France, a pre-revolutionary situation arose in the form of mass sit-down strikes throughout the country. The Spanish civil war had brought new prospects of proletarian victory to Europe. The rise of fascism in Germany put additional pressure on the workers movement worldwide. Under these conditions, the left-wing of the SP grew in numbers.

Leaders of the WP, particularly James P. Cannon and Max Shachtman, took particular notice and explained that this new left wing represented a layer that had no continuity with the betrayals of the SP during the first world war and were looking for genuine revolutionary leadership. Despite initial resistance and eventual split by some of the leadership in the WP, the new party seized upon the recruitment opportunities and entered the Socialist Party in June 1936.

The comrades joining the SP went up against a right-wing leadership and presented a line of revolutionary struggle for political power. They printed and distributed their own press, *Socialist Appeal*. Eventually, the conservative leadership persecuted them, expelling a number of branches in which the communists had influence. Over the course of the year and a half within the SP, the communists had doubled their forces. In late December a convention of the expelled SP branches was held in Chicago and culminated in constituting the Socialist Workers Party on Jan. 1, 1938. A second convention was held July 1–5, 1939.

The founding conventions

of the SWP discussed and adopted many resolutions based on the continuity and experience of the working-class movement internationally and developed a genuine Marxist program. A resolution on the Russian situation was adopted, calling for a political revolution against the bureaucracy and affirming the unconditional defense of the Soviet workers state. Another resolution was passed on the Spanish civil war. This resolution condemned the class-collaborationist tactics of the Stalinists and Social Democrats, who sold out the working-class fight against fascism for a bloc with the liberal wing of the bourgeoisie, leading to a bloody defeat of the workers and the rise of fascism.

Other resolutions were passed that included a demand for Puerto Rican independence, a demand for allowing Jews persecuted by the Nazis to emigrate to the United States, and a resolution on the Black struggle in the United States, explaining the vanguard role that Black workers will undoubtedly play in the coming American revolution.

Collaboration with the international movement was central to the forging of the party's program. *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution* was a document drafted by Leon Trotsky, principal leader in the fight to maintain Lenin's communist course. It outlined strategic demands to win mass consciousness to the camp of proletarian revolution. The document was approved by a national party referendum and reaffirmed at the SWP's second convention.

Through the following year and a half, the SWP continued along the course laid out by the founding conventions. It continued to build the party through its trade union work and other aspects of the mass movement. However in August 1939, shortly after the second convention, a factional struggle began to emerge that would become the most

Continued on page 10

## SWP Party-building Fund is off and running, slightly behind

BY BEN JOYCE

The Party-building Fund of the Socialist Workers Party is off and running, but slightly behind target after its first week.

Nationally, contributions collected for the fund currently stand at \$7,596, falling short of this week's target of \$10,000. Pledges to the fund today add up to \$84,050, which is \$5,950 shy of the fund's \$90,000 goal.

Crucial to the success of the fund will be organizing steady weekly

collections.

Meetings celebrating the 80-year history of communist continuity of the Socialist Workers Party are being held in cities across the country to raise money for the fund. In Philadelphia, 22 people including five youth turned out October 11 to hear a presentation on the importance of the party's unbroken communist continuity and pledged some \$1,700. The previous night, supporters of the Socialist Workers Party in New York contributed \$2,496 at a similar meeting and raised the total local pledges to \$11,400.

The SWP Party-building Fund allows the party to fully take advantage of the new opportunities opening up in the class struggle today. As the capitalist crisis deepens and the bosses accelerate their assaults on our class, the ability of the party to respond to the inevitable resistance by the toilers becomes more decisive. To find out how you can contribute to the Party-building Fund contact a distributor on page 6.

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Los Angeles	\$8,500	\$1,100	13%
Newark, NJ	\$3,500	\$290	8%
Twin Cities	\$4,000	\$320	8%
Des Moines, IA	\$2,000	\$125	6%
Houston	\$2,500	\$150	6%
Seattle	\$6,500	\$375	6%
Philadelphia	\$3,500	\$100	3%
Atlanta	\$7,000	\$20	0%
Boston	\$2,800	\$0	0%
Chicago	\$8,000	\$0	0%
Miami	\$3,200	\$0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$84,300</b>	<b>\$7,596</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>Should be</b>	<b>\$90,000</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>11%</b>

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# N.Y. Spanish TV hosts debate on Che Guevara

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK—“Che Guevara: From a Legend to Recovering His Identity as a Human Being” was the title of the October 9 program on *Diálogo de Costa a Costa* (Dialogue from Coast to Coast), a nationally broadcast daily show on HITN, a Spanish-language cable TV station based in New York. The show is hosted by Malín Falú, a well-known Puerto Rican radio and TV figure in New York.

The program took place on the 41st anniversary of the death of Ernesto Che Guevara, a central leader of the Cuban Revolution.

With Falú in the studio was Martín Koppel, managing editor of the *Militant*, who was introduced as having interviewed close collaborators of Guevara who remain leaders in revolutionary Cuba today, including Víctor Dreke and Harry Villegas. The other participants in the debate were two right-wing opponents of the Cuban Revolution: Jesús Marzo Fernández, a former Cuban government official who left the island in 1996; and Humberto Fontova, author of a book called *Exposing the Real Che Guevara and the Useful Idiots Who Idolize Him*. The latter two were connected through phone hook-up from Miami and New Orleans, respectively.

Falú began by noting that Guevara is known around the world as “an Argentine doctor who left his profession and his native land to seek the emancipation of the wretched of the earth.” While some look at Guevara as a hero, she said, opponents of the Cuban Revolution view him as an “open wound.”

“What is your opinion of who Che really was,” Falú asked the panelists.

“Che was a revolutionary,” said Koppel, “who together with Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro, and other leaders, organized workers and peasants in Cuba to take power out of the hands of the ruling rich and carry out a socialist revolution that has benefited the great majority.”

Guevara “had a scientific understanding of the world,” Koppel noted, “one that can explain the capitalist financial crisis we are living through today. Che’s political perspective is needed by working people today who are resisting the attacks on our wages, jobs, and living standards.” He mentioned workers who demonstrated across the United States over the last two years to demand legalization for undocumented immigrants as an example.

Marzo stated that Che “refused to recognize the laws of economics and wanted to return to the ideas of 1917 [referring to the Russian Revolution], ideas totally obsolete in the world we live in.” Fontova claimed there was no civil war in Cuba prior to the overthrow of Batista, that hardly any guerrillas were killed, and that the revolutionaries won only because the army of the dictatorship would not fight.

Koppel noted that the revolution led by the Rebel Army and July 26 Movement was “a massive struggle by workers and peasants that succeeded in removing a government that had the support of the most powerful empire in the world. For the past 50 years they have successfully defended their socialist revolution against U.S. aggression. That is the example Washington hates.”

Koppel pointed to the mobilization of young teachers that wiped out illiteracy



Institute of Cuban History

**Ernesto Che Guevara in Cuba in the early 1960s. Guevara helped lead the revolution that succeeded in removing U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship and replaced it with a government of workers and farmers that carried out land reform and a literacy drive.**

in Cuba in one year, the land reform that has guaranteed land for peasants—compared to debt-burdened farmers in the United States who continue to be driven off their farms—and measures to outlaw racist discrimination, as well as the nationalization of capitalist property.

Marzo asserted that there was no racism against Blacks during the Batista years of the 1950s.

That claim, Koppel replied, “is contradicted by the reality known by millions in Cuba and around the world, and proves that these gentlemen’s [Marzo and Fontova’s] disagreements are with the facts of history themselves.”

Asked by Falú why Guevara went to the Congo and later to Bolivia, Koppel said it was part of the Cuban

Revolution’s internationalist solidarity, which also included sending hundreds of thousands of Cuban volunteer combatants who helped defeat the South African invasion of Angola and contributed to the downfall of the apartheid regime. He noted that the revolutionary column that Guevara led in Bolivia in 1966–67 was “not a utopian adventure” but a recognition of the class struggle that was brewing in the region and that exploded in revolutionary upsurges in South America in subsequent years.

Guevara’s revolutionary perspective is attractive to many workers and youth in the United States and worldwide, Koppel said, “because it is needed in the world we live in today.”

## U.S. military seeks more allies in Afghanistan

**Continued from front page**  
influx of Islamist militia that have fled Iraq.

Civilian deaths have also risen. According to UN figures, 1,455 civilians were killed by both sides in the first eight months of 2008, compared to 1,500 in all of 2007. The United Nations attributes slightly more than half of these deaths to the Taliban, which has carried out 142 summary executions so far this year.

According to Afghan government and UN reports, U.S. strikes August 22 killed about 90 civilians, including 60 children. Washington initially claimed there were no more than seven civilian deaths but revised the figure to 33 on October 8 when an aerial photo was released showing more than 30 dead bodies.

Total U.S. and NATO troops in Afghanistan currently number between 62,000 and 64,000. Washington is in the process of sending an army brigade of 5,000, and 3,500 marines by early 2009, according to AP. General David McKiernan, top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, has requested as many as 15,000 more troops in addition.

Both Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama and his Republican rival John McCain call for increased troops in Afghanistan.

Applying their experience from Iraq, top U.S. military commanders are now discussing political tactics to augment their military offensive and deal with growing instability in the region. This includes the possibility of negotiating with sections of the Taliban and forces allied with it.

“There has been very, very tough fighting this year, and it will be

tougher next year unless we adjust,” Adm. Michael Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters October 9. Gen. McKiernan made similar statements a week earlier.

Some aspects of this course were described in the October 9 editions of the *New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times*. The articles cited parts of a draft National Intelligence Estimate scheduled to be released after the November elections. The report’s assessment is that the Afghan central government is weakening.

### Lessons from Iraq

Gen. David Petraeus, incoming commander of the U.S. Central Command, and Defense Secretary Robert Gates both said they are open to “reconciliation” at some point with the Taliban and other antigovernment forces. Gates underscored there would be no talks with forces linked to al-Qaeda.

At a meeting of the Heritage Foundation October 8, Petraeus said that in Iraq U.S. military officials sat down “with some of those that were shooting at us” and identified those “who might be reconcilable.” Washington worked closely with London in this effort, he explained, with the implication the two powers would likely do the same in Afghanistan.

Petraeus also spoke favorably about a late September meeting backed by the United Kingdom and hosted by King Abdullah in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. The meeting included Abdullah, two Afghan government officials, 11 representatives of the Taliban, and a representative of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, leader of the Islamic Party of Af-

ghanistan (HIA).

The HIA claimed responsibility, along with the Taliban, for an April 27 attempt to assassinate Afghan president Hamid Karzai. The Afghan government began its efforts to negotiate with Hekmatyar at least as far back as September 2007, including overtures to him about possibly joining the government.

The Mecca talks were part of attempts by Karzai’s government to negotiate peace with Mullah Mohammed Omar, former head of the Taliban government in Afghanistan, in exchange for his return to Afghanistan and, presumably, a share of power in the country. Wakil Ahmed Muttawkil, a former official of the Taliban, said the group could cut ties with al-Qaeda as part of a peace agreement with Kabul.

Around the same time Sherard Cowper-Coles, British ambassador in Afghanistan, was quoted in the French press saying an “acceptable dictator” would be the best possible outcome in Afghanistan.

Up to now the U.S. strategy has been centered around a stepped-up military offensive against al-Qaeda and the Taliban forces in Afghan villages. The increased killing of civilians as a result of that course has fueled popular hatred for the occupation and revenge. Coalition forces “are not going to be able to kill our way to victory,” Admiral Mullen said in explaining the new strategy.

### For further reading: Che Guevara Talks to Young People

Che Guevara speaks as an equal with youth of Cuba and the world. He challenges them to work. To become disciplined. To read and to study. To fearlessly join the vanguard on the front lines of struggles. To become a different kind of human being. \$15

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Why Washington’s ‘Cold War’ Against Cuba Doesn’t End by Ernesto Che Guevara, Fidel Castro



In historic speeches before the UN General Assembly and other UN bodies, Guevara and Castro explain why the U.S. government fears the example of the socialist revolution in Cuba and why Washington’s effort to destroy it will fail. \$17

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# Gerardo Hernández: ‘With our heads held high’

*Below is a message written by Gerardo Hernández, one of five Cuban revolutionaries arrested by FBI agents in Miami on Sept. 12, 1998, convicted on frame-up charges, and imprisoned in the United States ever since. (See article on page 2.) Hernández sent the statement to his supporters around the world to mark the 10th year the Cuban Five have been in jail.*

*A three-judge panel of the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled unanimously in August 2005 that the five should be granted a new trial because of a “perfect storm” created by the coercive atmosphere fostered by right-wing forces opposed to the Cuban Revolution in Miami, extensive unfavorable publicity, and “improper” prosecution conduct.*

*A year later the full court in a split vote overturned the August 2005 decision. In June and September of this year the court turned down the remaining appeals and upheld the convictions although it did rule that Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, and Fernando González were given excessive sentences.*

*Lawyers for the five plan to file an appeal with the U.S. Supreme Court by December 1.*

*In his message Hernández mentions that Washington protects “infamous terrorists.” This is a reference to rightists like Luis Posada Carriles, who organized the bombing of a Cubana Airlines plane in October 1976 that killed 73 people. Posada currently lives in Miami. Washington has refused requests to extradite him to Venezuela, where the attack originated.*



Dear compañeras y compañeros:

We arrive at the 10th anniversary of the arrest of the Cuban Five at a crucial moment of our legal process. (That is what they call it, although perhaps “illegal process” would be more appropriate.) The 11th Circuit Court of Appeals, based in Atlanta, has just ended

our appeal.

That is to say, if it were up to them, things would stand as is, and some day my bones would be sent to Cuba, after death frees me from two life sentences.

The court in question has given unmistakable signals of the type of “justice” that the Five can aspire to in this country. When there was a decision 3–to–0 in our favor, with 93 pages of solid arguments in which the three-judge panel characterized our trial as “The Perfect Storm,” the full panel, against all predictions, not only agreed to review the decision, but reversed it without much explanation. The “perfect storm” quickly became simply a drizzle.

Yet, this time, when the decision was 2–1 against the Five, with obvious legal errors, with a judge arguing in 16 pages that the prosecution presented absolutely no proof that sustains the charge of conspiracy to commit murder, and with a judge who—although voting against us—recognized that it is a “very close case,” and with several defense arguments that were not even seriously analyzed, the 11th Circuit categorically refused to review it.

As we say in Cuba: “Not even water is as clear.” We have said time and again that this is a political case, and those who do not see it as such, choose not to see it.

Someone recently mentioned that now the Supreme Court has the last word. I would say, the second-to-last word. The final word in the case of the Cuban Five rests with you, our sisters and brothers of Cuba, the United States and the whole world, who throughout all these years have been our principal source of encouragement. Our hopes are not placed in any court. Ten years are more than enough to have cured us of any such naïve notion.

You are our hope, who through sacrifice and swimming against the current, have succeeded in making people on all continents aware of the injustice

extensively clarifying the Marxist position and explaining the class basis of the factional struggle. Trotsky and Cannon explained at great length that the alien class pressures being transmitted into the party through a petty-bourgeois layer could only be fought by incorporating more workers into party ranks and deepening its orientation to the industrial working class. The political fight that erupted is contained in two volumes: Cannon’s *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party* and Trotsky’s *In Defense of Marxism* (See ad on page 8).

The internal party conflict continued until early 1940 when the minority group split from the party. Though a substantial portion of the membership left with the split, the party’s proletarian integrity and Marxist program was preserved, allowing the party to strengthen itself and advance along the lines of genuine communist continuity. Over the course of the following decades, the firm adherence to the party’s proletarian Marxist principles was vindicated through concrete experience in the class struggle.

## March in Spain demands Free the Cuban 5



Militant/Matilde Zimmermann

MADRID, Spain—Some 300 people demonstrated here October 4 to demand freedom for the five Cuban revolutionaries—Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, René González, and Antonio Guerrero—who have been imprisoned in U.S. jails for the past 10 years on frame-up charges of “conspiracy to commit espionage” and in one case “conspiracy to commit murder.”

—MATILDE ZIMMERMANN

committed against the Five. You are the ones who are not taking time out or resting in your homes but instead are honoring us with your presence in different activities, commemorating the 10th anniversary of our imprisonment. You continue struggling to unmask the double standard of a government that invades other countries to supposedly fight terrorism, at the same time that it harbors and protects infamous terrorists, and imprisons those who are trying to stop those criminal acts.

We have confidence in you to expose the hypocrisy of the corporate media and of certain international organizations, which portray mercenaries—who betray our people for a handful of dollars or a visa—as suffering political prisoners. Yet they are disgracefully silent in the case of two women who have been deprived for a decade of the basic right to visit their husbands in prison.

We know that right is on our side, but to win true justice we need a jury of millions of people throughout the world, and we need you, defenders of just causes, to make our truth known.

The injustice committed against the Five has kept us away from our homeland for ten years, but it has not kept us from accompanying our people through joyful times and also the suffering. A few days ago Hurricane

Gustav caused great damage in Cuba, mainly on the Isle of Youth and in Pinar del Río, two territories from which we have received many expressions of support and love all these years.

We are certain that all the people of Pinar del Río and Isle of Youth, together with local and national leadership, with the solidarity of all dignified Cubans and many friends of the world, will become stronger in these difficult moments and—as is characteristic of revolutionaries—will convert the setbacks into victory. Although it is not possible for us to be there physically, today more than ever the Cuban Five are with you in our hearts, with our brothers and sisters in the Isle of Youth and Pinar del Río, who have done so much to support the struggle for our liberation.

Compañeras y compañeros: Ten years after that September 12, 1998, we thank you once again for walking this long and rough road together with us. We know, that to continue this march, we can keep counting on you, and you can also always count on our firm determination to resist, with our heads held high, for as long as it takes.

¡Hasta la Victoria Siempre!

Gerardo Hernández Nordelo

Federal Prison

Victorville, California

September 2008

## Founding of the SWP

Continued from page 8

programmatically decisive factional struggle in the history of the SWP.

Under the pressure of the Stalin-Hitler pact and the beginning of the second world war, a petty-bourgeois section in the party began to reject the theoretical foundations, political principles, and organizational methods that form the basis of the communist movement. An unprincipled combination led by James Burnham, Martin Abern, and Max Shachtman began an attack on the party’s position concerning defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack. Bending to bourgeois public opinion, they subsequently went on to combat many of the party’s long-standing Leninist principles—from the question of party democracy and democratic centralism, to the dialectical method of thought and political practice.

Cannon became the principal leader of the proletarian majority around these questions and countered the revisionist attacks from the petty-bourgeois opposition. Leon Trotsky aided the side of Cannon and the majority,

## Bailouts fail to halt crisis

Continued from page 4

made clear that, if elected, he will implement deep cuts. “I’ll go through the entire federal budget and eliminate programs that don’t work and aren’t needed,” he wrote. “We will all need to sacrifice . . . we are all in this together.”

Republican presidential candidate John McCain says he will “create jobs for Americans in the most effective way a president can do this—with tax cuts.” Both McCain and Obama voted for the \$700 billion bank bailout law.

The financial crisis is aggravating the declining sales in the auto industry. Sales of new vehicles dropped in September to levels not seen in almost 20 years. Sales at Ford fell 34.5 percent compared to September 2007; Chrysler, 32.8 percent; Toyota, 32.3 percent; and GM, 15.6 percent. “JD Power and Associates reported that

the global auto industry may experience an ‘outright collapse’ in 2009,” said the *Washington Post*. Seeking to avert bankruptcy, GM is currently negotiating with Chrysler over a possible merger. GM stocks have plunged 89 percent over the past year to below \$5 as of October 10, its lowest level since 1950. Ford stock was selling October 9 for just \$2.08.

Pension funds that are invested in the stock market, have declined sharply, threatening the retirement of many workers. In the past 15 months, about \$2 trillion of pension funds and 401 (k) investments have been lost, according to Peter Orszag, director of the Congressional Budget Office.

The impact on industry is just at the beginning. PepsiCo, the soft drink manufacturer, said it plans to close six plants and eliminate 3,300 jobs.



# Stop the execution of Troy Davis!

The labor movement should condemn the Supreme Court's refusal to hear the appeal of death-row inmate Troy Davis. His case is a powerful illustration of how the death penalty is a class-biased, racist weapon aimed at working people.

Davis, an African American, was sentenced to death in 1991 for the shooting of a white cop. Since then, extensive evidence has emerged showing the police pressured witnesses to identify Davis as the killer in order to frame him up. But he was denied the right to a new trial at every turn.

The United States is one of the five countries that carried out 88 percent of executions around the world in 2007. According to the Department of Justice, there were 3,228 prisoners on death row at the end of 2006. Of these, 42 percent were Black, although Blacks make up less than 13 percent of the population. One in 99 U.S. adults is in prison today, the highest incarceration rate in the world.

Beyond the workers and farmers put to death by court order, a far higher number are executed on the streets by cops who rarely—if ever—do a day of time in jail.

It is no accident that the number of prisoners on death row has risen sharply in the last three de-

CADES, as the employers' assault on workers' wages, job conditions, benefits, and unions has accelerated. The bosses' offensive is meeting growing resistance from working people. The rulers wield the death penalty to try to instill fear and submission in us, and to sap our combativity and self-confidence.

The capitalists' use of the death penalty is part of a broader package of anti-working-class measures—from stepped-up immigration raids and deportations, to loosening restrictions on spying against political organizations, to the deployment of federal troops on U.S. soil—that are justified by the government with claims they are needed to prevent “terrorism.” They have been adopted with the bipartisan support of Democrats and Republicans, including the law adopted under the William Clinton administration, the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, which places severe restrictions on the ability of death-row prisoners to get their cases reviewed. That law blocked Troy Davis from getting a new trial when witnesses began to retract their court testimony.

We urge our readers to join with the many others demanding: Stop the execution of Troy Davis! Abolish the death penalty!

## High court denies Troy Davis appeal

Continued from front page

the testimony of nine witnesses. Seven have recanted or changed their testimony. Several said they had been pressured by the cops to say they saw Davis shoot MacPhail. Of the two remaining witnesses, one could not identify Davis at the time of the killing, but changed his story at the trial.

Witness testimony was the backbone of the prosecution case. The gun used in the killing was never found; nor is there any physical evidence or DNA linking Davis to the shooting.

The case has attracted wide attention. Archbishop

Desmond Tutu of South Africa and former U.S. president James Carter have lent their support to Davis. Supporters from around the world have sent messages to the Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles asking that the board grant him clemency. Rallies have been held in front of the state capitol in Atlanta, and supporters have marched in Savannah.

In March 2008 the Georgia State Supreme Court voted 4–3 to refuse to grant Davis a new trial. In September the parole board refused to grant him clemency. Twice, once in July 2007 and again in September 2008, he came within 24 hours of execution.

## Help us get ‘*Militant*’ out to prisoners

BY ANGEL LARISCY

“Your paper is a wonderful way to stay informed of all the news that truly interests me, yet it is hard to get in here,” writes a Mississippi prisoner asking the *Militant* for a subscription renewal.

The *Militant's* Prisoners Fund makes it possible to provide discounted subscriptions to fellow workers behind bars—\$6 for six months or \$12 for a year. We urge you to contribute. So far in 2008, close to \$1,400 has been contributed.

The *Militant* also appeals to its readers to help expand the number of prisoners who take advantage of the fund to get the socialist newsweekly. The

United States has the highest rate of imprisonment of any country in the world—1 in 99 adults—and it has nearly tripled in the last 20 years. Workers behind bars are interested and need the coverage and analysis the *Militant* provides of resistance by workers worldwide, of the capitalist financial crisis, and how workers can defend themselves.

We invite you to win new readers among those behind bars and to contribute to the fund. Let your coworkers, friends, and others know about the fund. Send your request for a subscription or your contribution to the *Militant* at 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

## LETTERS

### ‘Wannabe capitalists’

I wish the *Militant* could write a detailed article explaining the nature of the Russian state, 15 years after the fall of the Stalinist USSR, as it looks today under the leadership of

Putin and Medvedev.

You keep referring to them as “wannabe capitalists.” Please explain what you mean by that, and if Putin is moving Russia towards capitalism or not.

*Per Leander*  
*Stockholm, Sweden*

### Pathfinder in prison

I've purchased a number of books advertised in your paper in the past regarding philosophical and economic issues. How can I get an updated catalogue of these books? Can you also reinstate my donor subscription to the *Militant* as it is read by many here as an additional/alternative source of info? Thank you.

*A prisoner*  
*California*

*In reply*—We are happy to renew your subscription, which our Prisoner Subscription Fund subsidizes. On obtaining a catalogue of Pathfinder books, you can write to Pathfinder Press, P.O. Box 162767, Atlanta, GA 30321–2767.—*Editor*

### Prisoner gets subscription

Enclosed is the \$12 for a subscription. Thank you.

*A prisoner*  
*Florida*

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

# Is Russia a capitalist state?

BY SETH GALINSKY

*Militant* reader Per Leander asks about the nature of the Russian state today, whether or not it is moving toward capitalism, and why we refer to the bureaucrats there as “wannabe capitalists.” (See letter below.)

Since the fall of the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union in 1991, Moscow has accelerated the opening of Russia to the world capitalist market.

The bureaucratic caste that rules there no longer puts forward the false claim that it is communist or for revolution. Russian president Dmitry Medvedev says the government's priority is to guarantee “stability and prosperity to private businesses.”

The bureaucratic caste does not represent a new capitalist class. Instead it derives its material privileges from the state property foundations of the workers state. Most of them don't own companies they can sell or their families can inherit. While they ape bourgeois life styles and promote bourgeois values, they cannot be sure which of them, if any, will become the owners if state property is replaced by capitalist property. Thus the *Militant* sometimes refers to them as “wannabe capitalists.”

Mikhail Gorbachev, Boris Yeltsin, Vladimir Putin,

## REPLY TO A READER

and now Medvedev, have accelerated the use of capitalist methods, the penetration of the capitalist market, and the conversion of many state enterprises into capitalist-owned companies.

By the end of 1999 more than 140,000 former state-owned companies were sold off or converted into private enterprises. Some of the new owners were part of the old Stalinist apparatus.

This process is continuing. The state-owned Unified Energy System, which produces more than 70 percent of Russia's electricity, is currently being broken up and sold off to private investors.

Russia now has 101 billionaires—more than any other country in the world, except for the United States—and 88,000 millionaires. Many of them gained their wealth not through investing in factories or the exploitation of natural resources, but speculation in real estate and the stock market or ties to the bureaucracy.

While there are many capitalist-owned companies, the largest, most important sectors of the Russian economy—oil, natural gas, and aerospace—are still in state hands.

Some 11.5 percent of the state-controlled Gazprom, which produces and sells natural gas and operates as a joint stock company, is held by foreign investors.

After years of decline following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the Russian economy had begun to grow again, in large part due to the rising price of oil. Russia's international currency reserves are now the world's third largest. And Russia is the world's biggest oil producer and the largest oil exporter outside of OPEC.

But this seeming strength is actually a reflection of its weakness. The Russian state is dependent on oil and gas, which accounted for two-thirds of export revenues last year and nearly half of the federal budget—risky business in an era of widely swinging commodity prices in the opening stages of a worldwide depression. It imports more than \$260 billion a year, mostly in machinery, medicine, meat, and sugar, and more than 40 percent of its food.

This integration into the world capitalist market has another side to it: working people, who had been driven out of politics by the Stalinists, can no longer be kept out. They are part of the world and able to join the resistance that is already developing to the international capitalist economic crisis.

In September 1,000 truck drivers protested in Moscow against the high price of fuel. Russian trade unions say that 470,000 workers were involved in “labor disputes” in 2007, according to the Interfax news agency.

This bodes well for building an international movement of workers that can take power out of the hands of the capitalists and kick out the bureaucratic regimes that seek to emulate them.

### Correction

The October 13 *Militant* contained two errors. The article “UK actions to demand freedom for Cuban Five” incorrectly identified the wives of two of the Cuban Five. Adriana Pérez is married to Gerardo Hernández. Olga Salanueva is married to René González.

The article “Classes at Spelman College discuss Cuba” stated that Mary-Alice Waters was interviewed on WGRB radio. The station is WRFG.