

# THE MILITANT

**SPECIAL FOUR-PAGE FEATURE**

**Capitalism's long hot winter has begun**

**by Jack Barnes**

— PAGES 5-8

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 68/NO. 40

NOV. 2, 2004

## Vote Socialist Workers!

- U.S. out of Iraq! Support struggle for development in colonial world
- Organize and strengthen unions; for a labor party based on the unions that fights in the interests of workers and farmers worldwide



Militant/Lawrence Mikesh

Róger Calero (left), SWP candidate for president, talks with workers October 11 outside Point Blank Body Armor plant in Oakland Park, Florida, north of Miami. After two years of struggle, workers there won representation by the UNITE union and their first contract last year. The plant makes bullet-proof vests for U.S. armed forces, police.

## Fallujah: Iraqi government warns militias, as U.S. forces pound them

BY SAM MANUEL

The Iraqi interim government of Prime Minister Iyad Allawi is threatening a major offensive against opponents in Fallujah unless clerics and others hand over Abu

Musaba al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian leader of Tawhid and Jihad. This is a group that has taken responsibility for several kidnappings and beheadings of hostages, and bombings

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## SWP candidate for president starts final leg of campaign in Miami

BY LAWRENCE MIKESH AND ALEX ALVARADO

MIAMI—"We say, U.S. troops out of Iraq now!" said Róger Calero, Socialist Workers Party candidate for president, speaking October 12 at a meeting of Veye Yo, a Haitian rights organization here. Given the new brutal offensive by U.S. occupation troops and the Iraqi military in Fallujah and elsewhere in central Iraq that has resulted in mounting deaths, including many civilians, this demand has urgency, he said.

"We also stand with you and others fighting for the withdrawal of U.S. and United Nations forces in Haiti," Calero added.

"The SWP says workers and farmers need to have our own voice, a political voice," Calero said. "Every four years they tell us we have to vote for one of their candidates—the Democrats or Republicans. Regardless of who is elected, Bush or Kerry, the ruling class will continue its exploitation of working people worldwide," he said.

Many in the audience nodded their heads when Calero said, "If you have difficulty distinguishing between Bush and Kerry it's because they have no differences on the fundamentals. They stand for capitalism, the plundering of Iraq, Afghanistan, Haiti. Bush says, 'We're killing the terrorists.' And Kerry responds by saying, 'We'll do it better!'"

"We need to begin to think and act in-  
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## EDITORIAL

Vote Socialist Workers! Vote for the SWP candidates where they are on the ballot and write their names in where they've been excluded. That's what we urge our readers to do on November 2.

The *Militant*, as our masthead explains, is a socialist newsweekly published in the interests of working people. In asking you to vote Socialist Workers, we say working

**Róger Calero for President**  
**Arrin Hawkins for Vice President**

*See list of all 44 candidates, page 10*

people will be voting for themselves, for their interests.

Including its nominees for president and vice president, the Socialist Workers Party is fielding 44 candidates in 22 states and the District of Columbia who offer a working-class alternative to the twin parties of U.S. imperialism—the Democrats and Republicans.

The SWP presidential ticket of Róger Calero and Arrin Hawkins, and socialist candidates for state and local office across the country (listed on page 10), are presenting a revolutionary working-class program in the United States to reach out to our sisters and brothers around the world in order to strengthen the struggle against our common enemies—the imperialist aggressors and capitalist exploiters the world over.

The SWP campaign has been explaining that to resist stiffening assaults by the  
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**Sunday, October 31**

**New York City**

### Before the Vote: The Real Results of the 2004 U.S. Election Campaign

#### Speakers

**JACK BARNES**, Socialist Workers Party National Secretary

- The hidden centrality of the "union question": the transformation of the working-class vanguard that has begun and the political challenges before us
- The ongoing transformation of U.S. imperialism's global military posture and political world strategy that will advance regardless of which party wins control of the White House or Congress
- The slow but steady politicization and factionalization of the officer corps of the U.S. armed forces
- The implications for workers and farmers of the continued coarsening of bourgeois politics and militarization of the "homeland"
- The employers' continuing progress in pushing down wages, stretching out the workday, speeding up the line, and further weakening the unions—their answer to intensified interimperialist competition and the opening stages of a world depression
- The undermining of Social Security, the never-ending assault on social solidarity, and the bosses' drive to throw the young and the old of the working classes to the dogs

**ROBERTO VILLANUEVA**, on new stage of the Utah Co-Op miners' battle for a union, and the political fight against the mine owner's harassment lawsuit

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## Utah coal miners receive messages of solidarity with unionizing struggle

Support grows for fighting bosses' suit against UMWA backers

BY ANNE CARROLL

HUNTINGTON, Utah—Miners here fighting to win representation by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) at the Co-Op mine have received dozens of messages in solidarity with their struggle. Many of them, the miners report, include copies of letters sent by unions and other organizations to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) urging the government agency to set a date for a union election at the mine and rule in favor of the UMWA's demand to exclude members of the owners' family and other supervisory personnel from being

eligible to vote.

"I am writing to urge that the NLRB rule on the side of justice in these miners' efforts to join the United Mine Workers of America," wrote Charlie Flemming, president of the Atlanta Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO, in a letter to B. Allan Benson, regional director of the labor board.

A number of other messages have arrived from workers who have also been involved in union-organizing struggles. Many came  
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## SWP candidate for Senate in Pennsylvania campaigns in Utah for Calero, Hawkins

BY TERI MOSS

PRICE, Utah—Four coal miners from the Co-Op mine in Huntington, Utah, welcomed Brian Taylor, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate in Pennsylvania, at the airport in Salt Lake City on October 16. They accompanied him to a coffee shop where several young workers and a reporter from the *Salt Lake Tribune* were waiting.

Taylor thanked supporters of the socialist campaign for inviting him "to see the reality facing working people in Utah," explain the common threads with his experiences in Pennsylvania, and campaign for the SWP  
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# U.S. Navy deploys Aegis destroyers off Korean waters for 'missile shield'

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

At the end of September, the U.S. Navy deployed state-of-the-art Aegis destroyers in the Sea of Japan off the waters of north Korea. The ships, part of the Navy's Seventh Fleet, help lay the foundation for a U.S. "missile shield" that includes Japan. The purpose of the so-called missile defense system is to intercept ballistic missiles from adversaries, thus giving Washington and its imperialist allies first-strike nuclear capacity.

Vice Admiral Jonathan Greenert, commander of the Seventh Fleet, said the new destroyers would provide long-range search and tracking of missile activity. Data from the ships will be transmitted to Ft. Greely in Alaska and Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. Interceptor missiles could then be launched from those bases.

Comprised of the radar and satellite network, sea-based missiles, and land-based Patriots, such a shield would advance the goal of Washington and its allies to be able to launch strikes without fear of retaliatory attacks from states such as north Korea, China, or Russia.

The Bush administration laid the foundation for this system two years ago by withdrawing from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty, which banned ship-based "missile defenses."

"I can't specify adversaries, but you're looking at rogue nations," said Greenert, according to a September 24 Associated Press article. The news agency said the country "best fitting" this description is north Korea.

"This week," the AP article said, "Japanese naval ships were dispatched to the waters off North Korea amid reports that Pyongyang was preparing to test launch a 'Nodong' missile, which can reach much of Japan—and the more than 50,000 U.S. troops stationed there—in just minutes. North Korea is believed to have at least 100 of the missiles."

The Japanese Diet, the country's national parliament, voted in late March to spend \$10 billion over the next decade on building such a "missile shield" around Japan. Tokyo plans to add U.S. Patriot and other missiles to its four Aegis destroyers. Guidance informa-

tion will be provided by U.S. satellites as well as a Japanese land-based radar network and command-and-control center. The step is part of the accelerating course by Tokyo to rebuild its military and deploy its forces abroad—as the dispatch of Japanese soldiers to Iraq as part of the U.S.-led "coalition of the willing" has shown.

Washington has also gained agreement from the governments of Australia and Taiwan to be part of the radar and missile ring in Southeast Asia. The shield is supposed to be fully operational by 2007. Meanwhile, talks are under way with the government of India, which has committed scientists to the research effort.

The governments of China and north Korea have condemned these moves, rejecting claims by U.S. and Japanese officials that the missile system is "purely defensive." Moscow announced in February that it was developing a missile capable of evading the radar and other detection and interception devices.

Government representatives of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), or north Korea, have called Washington's deployment of the Aegis destroyers "the most outright hostile act against the DPRK and a part of its unchallenged attempt to dominate the Asia-Pacific region."

## Baggage handlers strike at airport in London



LONDON—Six hundred baggage and cargo handlers at London's Gatwick airport began a series of 24- and 12-hour strikes September 25 backed by the Transport and General Workers Union. Earlier in the year their employer, Servisair, the second largest of four Gatwick handling agents, imposed new working practices that threaten health and safety and don't allow for adequate rest times between shifts. The union members' determination to strike was fueled by the company suspension of their senior shop steward. The four strike days so far were followed by 12-hour strikes October 13 and 15.

"This isn't just about pay and conditions. It's about defense of the union," one of the workers picketing told the *Militant*. "If they get away with the victimization of our shop steward, they'll walk all over us."

Workers from a large number of passing cars and work vehicles on the service road to the airport honked in solidarity. One woman stopped at the busy slip road to hand over cigarettes for the pickets. Servisair has been using management personnel to continue operations.

— CELIA PUGH

## GM workers walk out in Germany to protest layoffs

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

Up to 6,000 auto workers went on strike October 14 at the General Motors Opel factory in Bochum, Germany, after the company announced massive job cuts in its European division. That day, GM Europe chairman Fritz Henderson told reporters that the company would eliminate 12,000 jobs in Europe, one-fifth of its workforce there. Opel plants are projecting cutting 10,000 of 33,000 jobs in Germany by 2008. GM, the world's largest auto manufacturer, said the cuts were aimed at saving the company \$620 million per year by 2006.

Workers on the afternoon shift at the Bochum plant began the strike, making

use of their "right of information" from the union about the announcement of job cuts, a union official said. A company spokesperson had singled out the Bochum plant, located in western Germany, as having a "competitiveness issue." The evening crew then stayed off the job and the morning crew joined the strike the following day. Workers remained at work at the other Opel plants in Germany.

The social democratic government in Berlin called for workers to end their strike at Bochum and backed the company's actions. "It's clear this is also about Germany as a place to do business and it's clear that the reform process... has to go further," said Economy Minister Wolfgang Clement.

Berlin has carried out a series of measures that cut social programs. The latest, known as Hartz IV, cuts deeply into unemployment benefits for working people in Germany and will have the greatest impact in the East, where unemployment is at 20 percent. The national jobless figure hit 10.7 percent in September, the highest it's been in five years.

"Without a doubt so-called non-wage labor costs play a very important role. We have to do everything we can to free labor from additional costs," said Clement. "This process has to go further."

This "process" is advancing. Factory owners in Germany are taking advantage of workers' uncertain job prospects to push through concession contracts with their

unions. Department store giant Karstadt Quelle won concessions October 14 from the Verdi union in order to smooth the company's path to receive loans from its creditor banks. The bosses will chop 5,500 jobs from its payroll of some 100,000, and freeze wages for the next three years. Under a concession contract signed earlier this year, Siemens workers will now be working 40 hours per week instead of 35, with no increase in pay. DaimlerChrysler won \$600 million in wage cuts after threatening to shut down operations at its Stuttgart plants.

Workers in Germany face job losses at Volkswagen as well, where negotiations between the company and the IG Metall union have stalled over company demands for "cost reductions."

# THE MILITANT

## Find out about Utah miners' fight for union

After a 10-month strike, Co-Op miners in Huntington, Utah, returned to work July 12 and have continued the battle for the union from inside. From day one of the strike the 'Militant' has given weekly coverage to this important labor struggle. New subscribers can get two back issues of their choice to find out more about it. Don't miss a single issue!



Longshore workers from ILWU Local 10 drill team join rally to support the Co-Op miners February 7.

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## The Militant

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# In Romania, NATO OKs merging two military missions in Afghanistan

BY SAM MANUEL

Over the objections of Paris and Berlin, defense ministers of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) agreed in principle to a proposal by Washington that the two military missions in Afghanistan—one led by U.S. forces and the other by NATO—be combined into one under the direction of the Atlantic alliance.

Participants also resolved to step up the deployment of 330 military instructors to Iraq by the end of the year to train the Iraqi military. They also announced that a NATO rapid reaction force is now ready for deployment.

The meeting was held October 13–14 in Romania, the newest NATO member. It registered the degree to which Washington is making progress in reshaping imperialist armies in Europe to match the changes being carried out in the U.S. military aimed at speedier deployments and greater maneuverability.

Nicholas Burns, the U.S. ambassador to NATO, said the NATO “security instructors” would be on the ground in Iraq before the end of the year. NATO secretary general Jaap de Hoop Scheffer added, “Speed is of the essence here, and it’s what the Iraqis want.” There are now about 40 NATO instructors in Baghdad, working with Iraqi generals, reported the October 14 *International Herald Tribune*.

Paris and Berlin, the central leaders of what U.S. defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld has referred to as “Old Europe,” initially objected to NATO’s training of Iraqi military personnel inside Iraq citing “security concerns” and proposed instead that it be carried out outside the country. Underneath this dispute is the conflict between Paris and Berlin, on the one hand, and Washington on the other, over their competing imperialist interests in the Middle East.

As in every other significant turning point regarding the war in Iraq, U.S. imperialism prevailed once again. The total number of NATO troops to be sent to Iraq could go as high as 3,000. Washington has largely been responsible for training Iraqi army units, while London has taken the lead in training new Iraqi national guard forces. All training of Iraqi armed forces will be under the command of U.S. Army Lt. Gen. David Petraeus, the *Tribune* said.

At the NATO meeting, German defense minister Peter Struck said that although sending German troops to Iraq in the foreseeable future is excluded, he could “think of other times in years to come when there could be a German role,” according to the *Financial Times*. A spokesperson for German chancellor Gerhard Schröder denied any change in Berlin’s opposition to sending troops to Iraq. “There will be no German soldiers in Iraq,” the spokesperson said.

Christoph Bertram, chairman of the German Institute for International Politics and Security, told the big-business London daily that some members of the German government have for some time been “trying to find elegant ways of not being without options when the need arises” in Iraq.

In an October 14 editorial subtitled “Germany prepares to reposition itself on Iraq” the *Financial Times’* editors advised Berlin, France, and other European governments opposed to the U.S. course in Iraq that with impending elections in that country next year and the possible reduction of U.S. forces the new Iraqi government may well ask other countries for military aid. “Germany—as well as France and other EU members such as Spain—would do well to start preparing their answers now,” the editorial said.

The NATO defense ministers decided to draft options for the integration of the U.S.-led and NATO military missions in Afghanistan. Some 15,000 U.S. troops, along with 5,000 from 19 other countries, are in Afghanistan as part of “Operation Enduring Freedom” (OEF), ostensibly hunting for Osama bin Laden and other leaders of al-Qaeda. NATO has a force of 9,000 troops in an “International Security Assistance Force” (ISAF), which is sup-

posedly only involved in “peacekeeping” and assisting Kabul in training and setting up its military and police forces.

Paris and Berlin objected. “There are two operations with two different missions—the OEF is fighting terrorism, the ISAF is an operation for securitization,” argued French defense minister Michele Alliot-Marie, according to Reuters.

“We are against the merger of the two mandates,” added German defense minister Struck. Berlin is one of the largest contributors to the ISAF mission with 2,500 soldiers.

“Most countries that spoke today, including our country, said the goal should be one NATO mission,” said Burns, confident Washington’s proposal would carry the day.

In his opening remarks, NATO secretary general Scheffer announced that the alliance’s rapid reaction force was up and running, reported the BBC. Scheffer said the NATO Response Force, which consists of warships and fighter planes, gives the alliance the capability to intervene in “crises” anywhere in the world within five days. “This is an important milestone in our quest for more usable and deployable forces,” Scheffer said, “but more needs to be done.” The current force includes



Reuters/Susan Walsh

Romanian defense minister Ioan Mircea Pascu (left) tours U.S. defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld October 11 at air base in Constanta, on Black Sea coast. Washington is preparing to take control of base as part of repositioning its troops toward east.

17,500 soldiers and is projected to reach full strength with 24,000 troops in 2006.

The Iraqi deployment is another step toward expanding NATO’s jurisdiction beyond Europe and around the world. The first was the ISAF mission in Afghanistan, which was sanctioned by the United Nations in October 2003.

According to the *Washington Post*, Burns told reporters the defense ministers spent hours talking about how to limit government restrictions on the

deployment of the 2.5 million European troops outside their home countries. “There has been some movement, but there is enormous room for change,” said the U.S. ambassador to NATO. He also said there was discussion about increasing military spending in Europe in order to bring it in line with that of the United States. Washington budgets an estimated \$417 billion for its military compared to \$200 billion by all the other NATO members combined.

## U.S. Congress authorizes doubling of U.S. troops in Colombia to 800

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

The U.S. Congress decided to double Washington’s military presence in Colombia October 9, to back Bogotá’s war against opponents of the country’s right-wing regime, including the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Congress voted to double the cap on U.S. military personnel stationed in Colombia to 800 and increase from 400 to 600 the number of “private contractors” the U.S. government may hire for military operations in the South American nation.

The State Department said the troops were necessary to aid the “high tempo and overall progress” of Colombian president Álvaro Uribe’s campaign against “narcoterrorists.” The U.S. troops will participate in a range of military and police operations, including “intelligence support,” upgrading Colombian aircraft, and training of Colombian forces.

U.S. forces have trained a growing number of troops and police in Latin America—more than 22,000 in 2003, a 52 percent jump over the previous year. The majority—nearly 13,000—were from Colombia, double the number of Colombian forces trained the previous year.

The U.S. government has sent \$3.3 billion to Bogotá since 2000 under Plan Colombia, initiated by the Clinton White House. President George Bush expanded on Plan Colombia with the 2002 Andean Regional Initiative. Justified under the pretext of fighting the “war on terrorism” and the narcotics trade, this military buildup is being carried out in anticipation of sharper resistance by workers and farmers to the economic catastrophe that is gripping Latin America.

Confirming bipartisan support for U.S. military intervention in Colombia, Democratic presidential hopeful John Kerry stated October 15, “As a Senator I have consistently supported Plan Colombia; and as President, I will work with President Uribe to keep the bipartisan spirit alive in support of Plan Colombia.”

Popular opposition to Uribe’s course was demonstrated by mass marches October 12 in major Colombian cities. About 300,000 unionists, farmers, and others rallied in Bogotá, Barranquilla, Bucaramanga, Cali, Cartagena, and Medellín. The labor-organized actions protested Uribe’s brutal “war on terrorism,” his efforts to change the constitution to allow him to run for reelection, and rising unemployment.

This spring 5,500 oil workers waged

a successful 37-day strike to prevent the state-run oil industry Ecopetrol from being sold off to foreign capitalists. The unionists said that privatization would likely mean layoffs and reduced benefits. Despite “anti-terrorist” measures by the police

that included the deployment of troops to oil facilities and the firing of 248 union militants, the strikers forced the government to back off its privatization plans. It was the first strike by the union against Ecopetrol since 1977.

## Caracas ups royalties for investors in extra-heavy crude from 1% to 16%

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez announced in an October 10 radio broadcast that companies with extra-heavy crude oil contracts will pay royalties of 16.7 percent, up from the 1 percent they had paid for a decade. “We are no longer going to give our oil away for reasons that no longer exist,” said Chávez. Venezuelan government officials said the additional \$770 million raised would be used for social programs such as schools and hospitals.

Previous governments in Caracas had signed sweetheart contracts with oil companies in the 1990s to develop four extra-heavy crude (syncrude) projects—known as Petrozuata, Cerro Negro, Sincor, and Hamaca. The government at the time justified contracts providing for the meager 1 percent royalty payments on the basis of needing to attract investors to production in these fields. “However, refining concerns have since been surmounted,” notes the *Business News Americas* news service. “The market has welcomed syncrude and the partners in these projects are making handsome profits with oil at US\$53 a barrel.”

U.S. oil giants ChevronTexaco and ConocoPhillips each have a 30 percent stake in Hamaca; the balance is held by PDVSA, the Venezuelan state oil company. Other international oil companies that will have to pay the increased royalty are ExxonMobil, France’s Total, Norway’s Statoil, and British Petroleum.

With the largest known oil reserves in the Western Hemisphere, Venezuela is the fifth-largest oil producer in the world. Generating \$46 billion in yearly sales, PDVSA provides 80 percent of Venezuela’s export revenue. More than 50 percent of exports go to the United States and Canada.

In addition to government programs, PDVSA has budgeted \$1.7 billion in 2004 for public works projects such as sinking wells for potable water and irrigation, and piping natural gas to working-class neighborhoods

that had previously gone without. The management before 2003 had allocated only \$40 million per year for social programs. That year, the Chávez administration installed a completely new management at PDVSA after company officers joined other capitalists in a two-month “strike” aimed at bringing down the government. The lockout failed, even though it did succeed in curtailing oil production for months, because of large-scale defiance by oil and other workers.

Weighty sections of the capitalist class, with Washington’s backing, have tried unsuccessfully to unseat the Chávez administration three times since 2001. That’s when the government passed measures that would cut into the profits of many capitalists and landlords, if implemented. The employers’ failed efforts have included the April 2002 military coup, the bosses’ “strike” seven months later, and a presidential recall referendum this summer. The measures in dispute included a hydrocarbons law that increased most production royalties payable by local capitalists and international companies investing in oil and natural gas exploration and extraction from 16 percent to 30 percent.

Earlier government increases in royalty payments in oil angered most of the capitalists in Venezuela and their imperialist allies. But as it became clear prior to and after the defeat of the August 15 recall referendum, international capital in oil, and a minority of Venezuelan capitalists, act on the hope they can continue to do business with the Chávez administration and profit from their operations.

“We haven’t pulled the plug on anything based on this,” said one ChevronTexaco official after Chávez’s October 10 announcement. “But we have to see what the longevity of the royalty change is and how it affects our long-term plans. Anytime you go from 1 percent to 16 percent in royalties, that comes right off your bottom line.”

# Subscription drive extended by two weeks

BY PAUL PEDERSON

The *Militant* editors have decided to extend the international subscription campaign by two weeks until November 21 to allow partisans of the socialist newsweekly and its Spanish-language sister publication *Perspectiva Mundial* more time to campaign with the socialist press.

"We invite everyone selling subscriptions to the *Militant* and *PM* and campaigning for the Socialist Workers Party candidates to come to New York and attend the meeting on October 31, 'The World Important Results of the 2004 Election Campaign,'" said *Militant* editor Argiris Malapanis. "We don't want anyone to worry while building this meeting or when they are in New York about losing a weekend of campaigning, so we're extending the drive. When campaigners return to their cities they can use the more than two weeks after the meeting to make sure we go over the top on the circulation effort.

"The socialist campaign doesn't end on election day," Malapanis added. "We will continue to campaign for socialism regardless of what party occupies the White House."

A total of 162 *Militant* subscriptions and 53 *PM* subscriptions were sold in the past week. With the extension, the cir-

ulation drive is now ahead of pace. Pat Miller from Price, Utah, sent in the following note on the reception that the socialist campaign has been getting in the Western coal fields:

BY PAT MILLER

HUNTINGTON, Utah—"I've always told myself if I ever saw a copy of the *Communist Manifesto*, I'd buy it," said Dale Brackett as he walked up to a Socialist Workers Party campaign table at a Salt Lake City flea market a few weeks ago. "I'm registered to vote SWP," he told the socialists as he signed up for a subscription to the *Militant* and picked up his copy of the pamphlet.

Over the past month supporters of the SWP campaign in Utah have been busy getting out the socialist campaign platform. They are visiting the homes of many previous subscribers to the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* to see if they would like to renew their subscription and talk about the working-class alternative to the parties of capitalism in the 2004 elections.

During a recent trip by campaigners to three mines in Farmington, New Mexico, nine miners and power plant workers signed up for *Militant* subscriptions. One woman stopped to talk to the socialists. She said she was happy to see that socialist candidates were running nationwide. "I'm glad someone is doing what your candidates are doing," she said, giving a \$2 donation to the campaign.

A longtime subscriber to the *Militant* in the Price area,



Militant/Michael Ortega  
Abby Tilsner (left) campaigning at October 17 rally of thousands in support of striking workers at seven casinos in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

introduced one of her neighbors to supporters of the socialist ticket at the campaign table at the October 2 solidarity rally for the Co-Op miners (see article on front page). "He'll be interested in the *Militant*," she said. Sure enough, he signed up right away for a subscription and thanked the socialist campaigners for getting him the paper.

"We definitely need a revolution in this country," said a retired miner who has been a staunch supporter of the Co-Op miners' battle as he put down his money for a *Militant* subscription during a visit by campaigners at his home. He also picked up a book and a pamphlet that address that very question: *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* and *The Working Class and the Transformation in Learning*.

Eight Co-Op miners brought food and other donations to an SWP campaign fund-raising barbeque held over the Labor Day weekend. In all \$150 was raised for the socialist campaign.

## Militant/Perspectiva Mundial Fall Subscription Drive Aug. 28–Nov. 21: Week 7 of 12

Country	Militant			PM	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold
SWEDEN	30	25	83%	5	2
ICELAND	30	23	77%	2	0
UNITED KINGDOM					
London	50	38	76%	12	4
Edinburgh	25	16	64%	2	0
UK total	75	54	72%	14	4
AUSTRALIA	55	31	56%	8	4
NEW ZEALAND					
Auckland	45	26	58%	1	1
Christchurch	35	19	54%	1	0
N.Z. total	80	45	56%	2	0
UNITED STATES					
Craig, CO	50	47	94%	20	5
Houston	75	68	91%	20	8
Detroit	40	30	75%	10	7
Birmingham	40	29	73%	8	3
Price, UT	50	35	70%	20	12
New York	180	125	69%	70	31
Newark	90	62	69%	25	15
Seattle	55	37	67%	12	8
Des Moines	65	43	66%	25	18
Omaha	55	34	62%	45	16
Atlanta	80	45	56%	20	10
Twin Cities	105	58	55%	40	18
Boston	100	54	54%	40	13
Cleveland	40	21	53%	10	4
Tampa	40	21	53%	10	6
Philadelphia	95	47	49%	10	0
Washington	115	56	49%	21	8
Chicago	100	47	47%	40	22
Los Angeles	150	70	47%	50	32
Pittsburgh	65	30	46%	4	1
San Francisco	125	45	36%	35	13
NE Pennsylvania	55	19	35%	15	10
Miami	100	32	32%	50	5
U.S. total	1870	1055	56%	600	265
CANADA					
Montreal	32	19	59%	12	3
Toronto	85	36	42%	18	4
CANADA total	117	55	47%	30	7
14-day campaign*	-	179	-	-	31
Int'l totals	2225	1467	64%	668	313
Goal/Should be	2300	1335	58%	550	330
*14 days of campaigning in New York Aug. 21–Sept. 3 at protests and events leading up to and during the Republican convention					
IN THE UNIONS					
	Militant			PM	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold
AUSTRALIA					
AMIEU	8	4	50%		
NEW ZEALAND					
MWU	2	1	50%		
NDU	2	1	50%		
Total	4	2	50%		
SWEDEN					
Livs	2	1	50%	1	0
UNITED STATES					
UNITE HERE	50	26	52%	40	14
UFCW	135	64	47%	150	61
UMWA	30	11	37%	15	5
Total	215	101	47%	205	80
CANADA					
UFCW	6	3	50%	3	2
UNITE HERE	2	0	0%	1	0
Total	8	3	38%	4	2
ICELAND					
Hlif	2	1	50%		
Efling	2	0	0%		
Total	4	1	25%		

AMIEU—Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Union; Livs—Food Workers Union; MWU—Meat Workers Union; NDU—National Distribution Union; UFCW—United Food and Commercial Workers; UMWA—United Mine Workers of America. Hlif—Union of Unskilled Workers in Hafnarfjörður. Efling—Union of Unskilled Workers in Reykjavík.

## Calero enters final leg of campaign in Miami

Continued from front page

dependently from the capitalists and build our own party," the socialist candidate continued. "We have to break from the parties of the bosses in this country and around the world."

Third parties like the Libertarians or the Greens are also for upholding capitalism, Calero said. The Ralph Nader/Peter Camejo "independent" campaign does the same thing by serving as left pressure on the Democrats.

"The only thing we've got is ourselves, but we are the vast majority," Calero said. "We say, if you don't have a union, organize one. If you have one, make it more effective. Our unions are weak today, but it's what we've got. What we need to do is transform them." The socialist campaign, he said, is for a labor party based on the unions that fights in the interests of workers and farmers.

"Why do you come so late to the elections?" one worker in the audience of 50 asked. "Can you help us organize a union here?"

"We don't come late to the elections," stated Calero. "They try to keep us out. The parties of the rich have a virtual monopoly on the airwaves, television, and the newspapers. The last thing they want is working-class candidates on the ballot. Our campaign doesn't end in November because the fight doesn't end in November. I know that among you there are many who know how to begin to organize unions."

"Are you representing one union or many?" another worker asked. "I am part of a union. I need to be in it to protect myself. It costs to be in the union. I am thinking about withdrawing from it to put my money in a fund, because the union is often not there for me."

Calero responded, "Our unions are weak today. There are many obstacles placed in front of us. But, it is up to us to change that. We must organize on the shop floor and use the structures of the union to fight the bosses. We must keep our fire on the employers who are the source of the problems we face."

Three people in the audience approached campaign supporters after the meeting to purchase one of the new SWP campaign T-shirts.

This final day of a two-day visit here that began with campaigning at 5:30 a.m. outside the International Longshoremen's Association hiring hall near the docks of the Port of Miami. Calero was joined by Lawrence Mikesh, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress in Florida's 21st District, and other campaign supporters. This was followed by a talk at Florida International University's north campus and a public meeting at the Miami campaign hall.

"Internationally," the socialist candidate said at the FIU meeting, sponsored by the Africa New World Studies department, "Washington and its imperialist allies use their economic dominance and military threats to prevent semicolonial countries from being able to develop. About 2 billion people worldwide—one-third of humanity—have no access to modern energy. We support the right of countries from Iran to north Korea and Brazil to decide what energy sources they want to use, including nuclear power. Electrification is a prerequisite for economic and social advances, and it's an elementary step to the advancement of the working class here and around the world," Calero said.

"The debates between George Bush and John Kerry," he continued, "are absent of almost any content about the real conditions and problems facing working people today in

this country and internationally. We urge everyone here to break with the parties of capitalism and vote for the SWP in this election," the socialist told the 20 people present, mostly students.

"Our campaign offers a real working-class alternative. We say let's mobilize the collective power of workers and farmers to fight effectively against the employers and their parties. If we mobilize union power we can have safer working conditions and a way to fight back. And we need our own party, a labor party based on the unions, that will fight for our interests 365 days a year."

Workers in this country face a daily grind because of the employers' offensive to increase their profits, Calero said. "We see the results of this in a faster pace at work, deteriorating safety on the job, a longer work-week, a longer working year, and a longer working life. Working people have less and less access to affordable health-care and the parties of the employers have our Social Security pensions in their sights."

"You kind of touched upon it earlier, but could you discuss factors that cause limitations of electricity in Third World countries?" asked one student.

"It has to do with the world economic system, imperialism," said Calero. "We live in a class-divided society. There are those who own the factories, mines, mills, and banks, and there are those of us who have to work for them. The world is carved up by a handful of imperialist powers. In this system there are large contradictions. Semicolonial nations that have fuel and resources are prevented from using their national wealth to develop. Paraguay is a major exporter of electricity, but the toiling majority of that country is not allowed to use it."

Another student asked, "What would you do about health care?"

"We should fight for universal health care for all and it should come under a federally funded and protected program," Calero replied. "There is absolutely no reason why workers shouldn't have free access to health care." Calero pointed to the example of what was accomplished by Cuba after 1959, when workers and peasants toppled a U.S.-backed dictatorship and opened the first socialist revolution in the Americas. Cuba, Calero said, has the largest number of doctors serving around the world. "How is it possible for a Third World country to do this? It's because workers and farmers took power in Cuba. We need to do the same here."

That same evening Calero spoke at a public meeting at the national headquarters of the 2004 Socialist Workers Party campaign along with Nicole Sarmiento, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate in Florida. Twenty-five people attended, including a young worker who came to the FIU North meeting earlier that day. Pablo, a young worker attending the event, had first been introduced to the SWP campaign when he ran into local candidates soap boxing at the Government Center transportation hub in downtown Miami.

The previous day, about 15 garment workers gathered after work across the street from the Point Blank Body Armor plant in Oakland Park to speak with Calero. Several of the workers wanted to discuss the current situation in the plant, which was recently unionized after a two-year struggle. The campaigning took place under a banner hung from the trees that read in English and Spanish, "It's not who you're against, but what you're for! Vote Socialist Workers Party in 2004!"

# Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun

## U.S. rulers confront sharpening political, military conflicts, as imperialism enters opening stages of a world depression

Below are major excerpts from "Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun" by Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes, the full text of which will appear in issue no. 12 of the magazine *New International*. The article is the edited transcript of the political report and summary adopted by delegates to the July 2002 SWP national convention.

The portions printed here complement a statement by the SWP National Committee entitled "Their 'Transformation' and Ours" that will be published in the same issue of the magazine. That statement deals with the post-Cold War changes in the military posture and political world strategy the U.S. ruling class is pursuing—and will continue to pursue, regardless of which party occupies the White House or organizes Congress following the November 2 election. It points to the convergence of Washington's accelerated militarization drive with the inter-imperialist economic conflicts being deepened by the opening stages of a world depression. And it explains the transformation of the vanguard of the working class that has begun as resistance grows to the social consequences of these world capitalist crises.

"Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun" is copyright © New International 2004. Reprinted by permission.



Reuters/Marcos Haupa (right)

"Few people today have lived, as political people, through a world depression," says Jack Barnes. "Conditions of that kind, which have stalked the most vulnerable parts of the colonial world over the past decades, will become widespread and devastating. We're living through the opening stages of such a depression." Above, left: Bread line in Manhattan, New York, February 1932, during Great Depression. Right: Thousands lined up outside banks in Buenos Aires, Argentina, June 2002, hoping to buy U.S. dollars as value of the peso, the local currency, plunged during financial collapse. For the first time in decades, deaths from malnutrition began spreading in that South American country.

are "natural" (to capitalism) to restart a miserable but real revival of production and trade. They will continue dominating the earth and threatening the very survival of civilization. So long as they don't lose state power, the

occurred five years later, launch a murderous war aimed, unsuccessfully, at conquering the entire country. Cuba did not threaten or invade the United States in 1961, nor in

Continued on next page

### BY JACK BARNES

Many members of the communist movement today have never lived through a ground war launched by the imperialist rulers, one involving large numbers of soldiers from the ranks of the American working class and resulting in many thousands of deaths on all sides. We are going to see wars of that kind not just in the decades ahead, but in the years, possibly even months ahead.

Only a couple of participants at this convention, those close to eighty years old, have lived, as political people, through a world depression. Some of us have experienced two or three deep-going slumps since the mid-1970s. In one or another of these downturns stock prices dropped sharply over a number of years, unemployment shot into double digits in several imperialist countries, and there were sudden bursts of inflation. That's different, however, from a deflation of such magnitude that the financial backbone of world capitalism—its debt structure and dominant financial institutions—buckle, production plummets, long-term joblessness spreads worldwide, and the great mass of humanity is hit by economic contraction or bouts of ruinous price explosions—sometimes both together. Masses of people lose faith in capitalism, but at first they just lose hope. Conditions of that kind, which have stalked the most vulnerable parts of the colonial world over the past decades, will become widespread and devastating. We're not predicting such a world depression; we're living through its very opening stages today.

To function effectively as communists in the world situation that is developing, we have to internalize an understanding of imperialism—the stage of world capitalism reached early in the last century and continuing up to today. Until the contradictions of that exploitative and oppressive social system are resolved—and that can be achieved only by the proletariat taking power from the capitalists and landlords in the imperialist countries and joining in the worldwide struggle for socialism—humanity has no sure future.

As Lenin helped us learn, for the imperialist rulers "there is no such thing as an absolutely hopeless situation," even when capitalism is in profound crisis.<sup>1</sup> There is no hopeless situation for the bourgeoisie so long as state power is not wrested from it by the proletariat, led by a revolutionary movement that will not, at the decisive moment, fear the awesome responsibility of assuming power and shrink from taking it. And holding it.

Without such a revolution—without the insurrection that opens the road to workers power—the capitalist state and the employers will wreak devastating enough defeats on the working class through fascist terror, and will destroy enough agricultural and industrial productive capacity through wars as well as economic means that

### Two New Issues Coming in December

New International no. 12

#### CAPITALISM'S LONG HOT WINTER HAS BEGUN

by Jack Barnes

"None of the underlying contradictions of world capitalism that are pushing toward depression and war began with 9/11 and its consequences. Some were accelerated by those events, but all have their roots in the downward turn in the curve of capitalist development a quarter century ago and the interrelated collapse of the Stalinist apparatuses in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe at the opening of the 1990s."

One of capitalism's infrequent, long winters has begun, Jack Barnes explains. "Now, with the acceleration of imperialism's drive toward war, it's going to be a long, hot winter. More importantly, slowly but surely and explosively, it will breed a scope and depth of resistance not previously seen by revolutionary-minded militants in today's world."

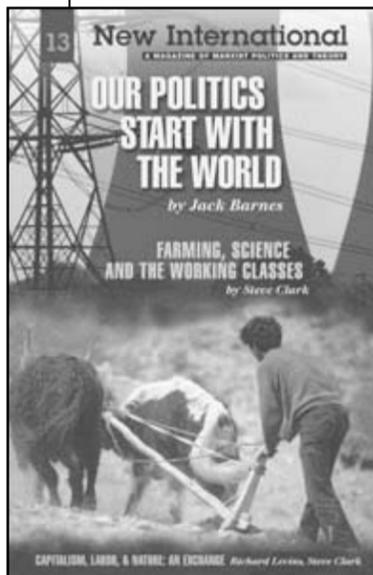
Also in NI no. 12

#### Their "Transformation" and Ours

Socialist Workers Party National Committee Statement

#### Crisis, Boom, and Revolution

1921 Reports by V.I. Lenin & Leon Trotsky



New International no. 13

#### OUR POLITICS START WITH THE WORLD

by Jack Barnes

"Our job is to make a revolution in the country where we live and work. To do so we must understand—and understand thoroughly—politics and the class struggle within those national boundaries. But we can do that only as part of an international class that has no homeland—the working class. As part of an international alliance with exploited and oppressed toilers throughout the world. That's not a slogan. That's not the result of an act of will. It is the class reality of life in the imperialist epoch."

Also in NI no. 13

#### Farming, Science, and the Working Classes

by Steve Clark

#### Capitalism, Labor, and Nature: An Exchange

Richard Levins, Steve Clark

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<sup>1</sup> Notes appear at the end of article, on page 8.

Continued from Page 5

1962. Neither the assault by U.S.-backed mercenaries at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961, nor the U.S.-provoked "missile crisis" of October 1962 was an act of "self-defense." Vietnam did not hurl weapons against American cities or territories, provoking a massive escalation of U.S. bombing and troop deployments in the mid- and late 1960s. These actions that defined the "American Century" were all "preemptive" assaults by the U.S. rulers.

So, too, were the bloody twentieth century wars among the imperialist powers—World War I and World War II. In the years leading up to both of these slaughters, the rival powers instigated incidents and provocations they knew would inevitably hand them a pretext to declare war and advance their national interests.

At least as early as President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Quarantine the Aggressor" speech in October 1937, for example, the Democratic administration had set a course toward building up U.S. military power in order to take on Japan in the Pacific, establish itself as a dominant imperial power in Europe, and hopefully preside over the subordination if not the destruction of the Soviet workers state in the process. According to the history we're taught in school and see in the big-business dailies and on TV, it was Tokyo's "preemptive" bombardment of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, that drew the United States into World War II. Since that "unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan," Roosevelt told Congress the very next day, "a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese empire."

What usually goes conveniently unmentioned by apologists for the allied powers is the Roosevelt administration's "preemptive" act against Japan six months earlier imposing a total embargo on Japanese oil imports (as well as an embargo on scrap metal imports and the freezing of all Japanese assets in the United States). Washington knew that act of economic war, designed to starve Japan and stop the wheels of industry from turning, would force Tokyo to respond militarily. The only surprises were the unexpected audacity of the Pearl Harbor attack, the reach of Japan's naval fleet, and the skill and boldness of "the little yellow" pilots from Asia.

In reality, what was noteworthy for class-conscious workers about Bush's West Point talk was not his comment about "preemptive action" but the ease with which he slid back



Photo courtesy José Ramón Fernández (right)

**"All military assaults by Washington have been 'preemptive,'" Barnes says. "The U.S. armed forces weren't under attack by Korea in 1945 when Washington ordered them to occupy the southern part of the country. Cuba did not threaten or invade the United States in 1961 or 1962. Vietnam did not hurl weapons against American cities, provoking a massive escalation of U.S. bombing and troop deployments in the 1960s." Above: U.S. Marines land at Inchon, Korea, 1950, at start of Korean War. Right: Cuban revolutionary troops at Bay of Pigs, April 19, 1961, after defeating U.S.-organized mercenary invasion.**



Reagan administration, resumed during the later Clinton years, and now being pressed forward by Bush, is to restore Washington's ability to use its massive nuclear arsenal to blackmail governments such as these in the colonial world, as well as their "friends," the fickleness of one or two of whom might be revealed in an ever-changing future.<sup>2</sup>

We must act on the assumption that the Pentagon plans for a multifront invasion and war against Iraq "leaked" earlier this month are the initial steps to prepare a massive U.S.-organized military assault. Within days [British prime minister Anthony] Blair weighed in, pledging complete support and participation. "Leaked" documents detailed the use of depots for war matériel in Uzbekistan and plans for air, sea, and land operations staged from bases in Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Turkey, Diego Garcia, and elsewhere. There are great hopes among sections of the Turkish bourgeoisie that in return for their cooperation imperialism will offer some relief from the growing debt burden and economic crisis gripping that country. And the U.S. rulers will make sure their royal highnesses in Saudi Arabia and Jordan also come around before the shooting starts.

Washington is determined to accomplish what it could not try to do as part of the "Free Kuwait" coalition during the 1990-91 war. The U.S. rulers aim to fight a major war to the finish—and are gathering a coalition accordingly. With one foot in Tel Aviv and another in Baghdad—and new military bases to the north, east, and south of Iran—they believe, U.S. imperialism will then be able to recoup some of what it lost with the revolutionary overthrow of the U.S.-backed shah of Iran in 1979. Above all, Washington is confident it can redivide military and political influence over the region at the expense of its rivals in Europe and Japan and assert its domination over oil and other resources. Some 65 percent of the world's oil reserves are in that region—more than 10 percent in Iraq, and a quarter in Saudi Arabia alone.

**U.S. spreads military deployments**

The United States is bolstering its military presence elsewhere as well. It used the war in Afghanistan to establish bases not only there but across former Soviet Central Asia, in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. Last December Congress approved the so-called Andean Initiative, which builds on the existing "Plan Colombia" to expand the presence of U.S. armed forces across Latin America in the guise of "fighting drug trafficking." The 1,200 U.S. military "trainers" in the Philippines, scheduled to complete their mission there in a few days, may prove to have been just a foot in the door, as indicated by talks already under way between Washington and Manila about reestablishing permanent U.S. military storage facilities there. At least it will be the opening wedge

in stepped-up Filipino-American cooperation in the war against "terrorism" and Islamic extremism in the Pacific region.

Two processes are taking place unevenly but in tandem: U.S. imperialism's war preparations abroad and ongoing militarization on the home front, anticipating increased resistance by workers and farmers down the road. The Bush administration and Congress are advancing along the bipartisan trail blazed by the Clinton administration and Congress during the previous eight years. Reinforcement of the so-called homeland defense command structure; centralization of intelligence operations; use of "secret evidence," "preventive detentions," and curtailment of review and appeal rights, targeting noncitizens and prisoners first and foremost; bolstering of commando and SWAT-style squads on the federal, state, and local levels—none of this began in the closing months of 2001.

**A 'homeland' command**

The Northern Command will formally stand up later this year. The prototype for this homeland command was established in October 1999, tagged with the Clintonian Pentagonese euphemism "Joint Task Force Civil Support." It is undergoing a slight metamorphosis, to emerge as the (more Rumsfeldian) Northern Command on October 1. Under the banner of combating "terrorism," this new military command will be charged with maintaining "law and order" as needed within the boundaries of the United States when there is a threat of civil disorder.

Currently, the U.S. military command structure consists of nine Unified Combat Commands—the European Command, Pacific Command, Southern Command, Central Command, and so on. The chain of command goes directly to each of them from the president of the United States, through the secretary of defense. The new Northern Command will be headquartered at Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado and will be headed by Air Force Gen. Ralph Eberhart, currently commander of the U.S. Space Command. NORTHCOM, as it will be called for short, will encompass NORAD—the North American Aerospace Defense Command—whose U.S. commander has the ultimate power by treaty, without prior consultation, to put the Royal Canadian Air Force under his command. When NORTHCOM stands up a few months from now, Mexico, in the eyes of Washington, will for the first time fall under the responsibility of a U.S. combat command.

If you simply add up figures on economic output, arms budgets, and conventional and strategic weaponry, then U.S. imperialism is the strongest power in world history, towering above its closest rivals on every front. But that's a snapshot lifted out of time as well as political and economic context and direction of development. The course we've been describing here is that of an imperialist power that is



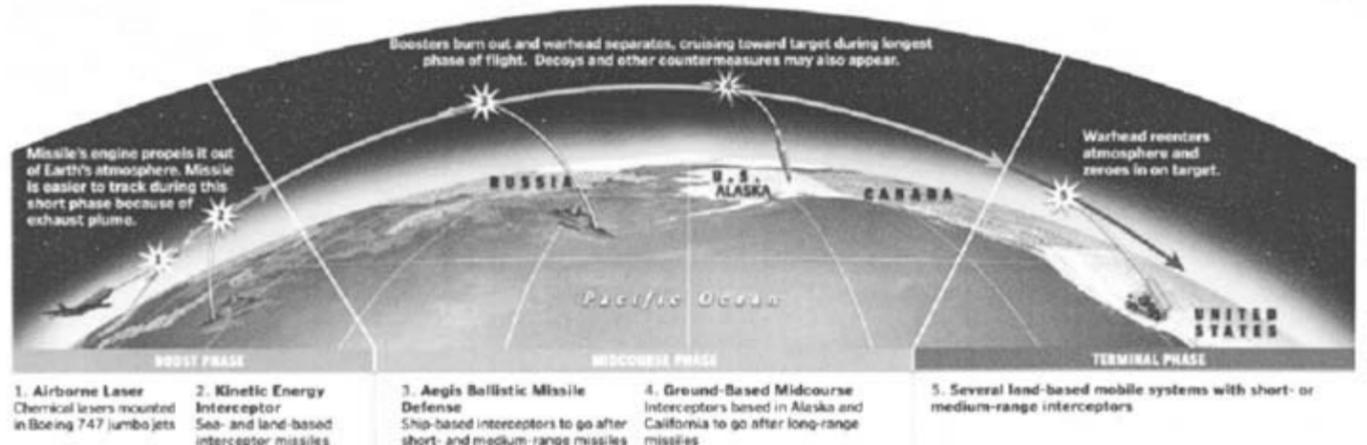
U.S. Air Force/Tim Vining

**U.S. troops at Karshi-Khan airfield, Uzbekistan, February 2. "Washington is moving to bolster its military presence elsewhere in the world," Barnes says. "It used war in Afghanistan to establish bases not only there but across former Soviet Central Asia, in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan."**

and forth between proposals for strikes against "enemies" at home and "enemies" abroad. "Our security," Bush said, "will require the best intelligence to reveal threats hidden in caves and growing in laboratories. Our security will require modernizing domestic agencies such as the FBI, so they're prepared to act, and act quickly, against danger."

**Washington's 'axis of evil'**

More important than the West Point talk was Bush's "axis of evil" speech to Congress four months earlier—his State of the Union address in late January 2002. We take seriously the threats issued in that talk. The White House did not simply pick Iraq, Iran, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea out of a hat as a representative sample of Clinton's many "rogue states." And the "axis of evil" is not simply three oppressed countries whose governments the U.S. rulers would like to overturn. They are three such governments that have the economic, engineering, and technical capacities to someday soon place weapons—including nuclear warheads—on ballistic missiles whose range could at least prevent Washington from attacking those countries with impunity. In fact, the most immediate aim of the U.S. rulers' drive for an Anti-Ballistic Missile System, reinitiated during the



**"The most immediate aim of the U.S. rulers' drive for an Anti-Ballistic Missile System, reinitiated during the Reagan administration, resumed during the later Clinton years, and now being pressed forward by Bush, is to restore Washington's ability to use its massive nuclear arsenal to blackmail governments such as Iran and north Korea in the colonial world," Barnes says. Above, diagram showing how Washington's "missile shield" is supposed to work.**

weakening vis-à-vis its ability to stabilize a world in which the lives of hundreds of millions of restive toilers in semi-colonial countries are marked by the increasing turmoil, want, and disease produced by the world capitalist system itself. An imperialist power less and less able to handle the political challenges it cannot but create, because it is a power that cannot stabilize the global capitalist economy, the effects of which keep coming down on workers and farmers worldwide. A power that must bear a disproportionate load in policing the planet for imperialism in one crisis of its own making after another, from the Balkans to every corner of the semicolonial world. One that has not achieved its goals in a single major war since 1945. One that now, after supposedly winning the cold war "without firing a shot," is no longer exempt from attacks on its home soil.

An imperialist power in its heyday is able to bend regimes to its will. To order "allies" to turn to. To crush resistance by toilers in the colonial world. It has the economic reserves to stabilize its international currency. That is not the situation of U.S. imperialism today, however, and has been less and less so since the mid-1970s. Instead, the moves we are witnessing are part of the decline of the world's final empire, which today faces the political and military consequences of its imperialist course at the same time it is entering its greatest economic crisis since the 1930s....

**Curve of capitalist development**

None of these trends—none of the underlying contradictions of world capitalism that are pushing toward depression and war—began with the September 11 assault on the World Trade Center and its consequences. Some were accelerated by those events, but all have their roots in the downward turn in the curve of capitalist development a quarter century ago and the interrelated collapse of the Stalinist apparatuses in the Soviet Union and across Eastern and Central Europe at the opening of the 1990s. We have followed these trends over that entire period: in *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*, in feature articles in several issues of *New Internationalist* magazine—"What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold," "The Opening Guns of World War III," "Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War," and "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War"—in *Capitalism's World Disorder*, and in *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*.

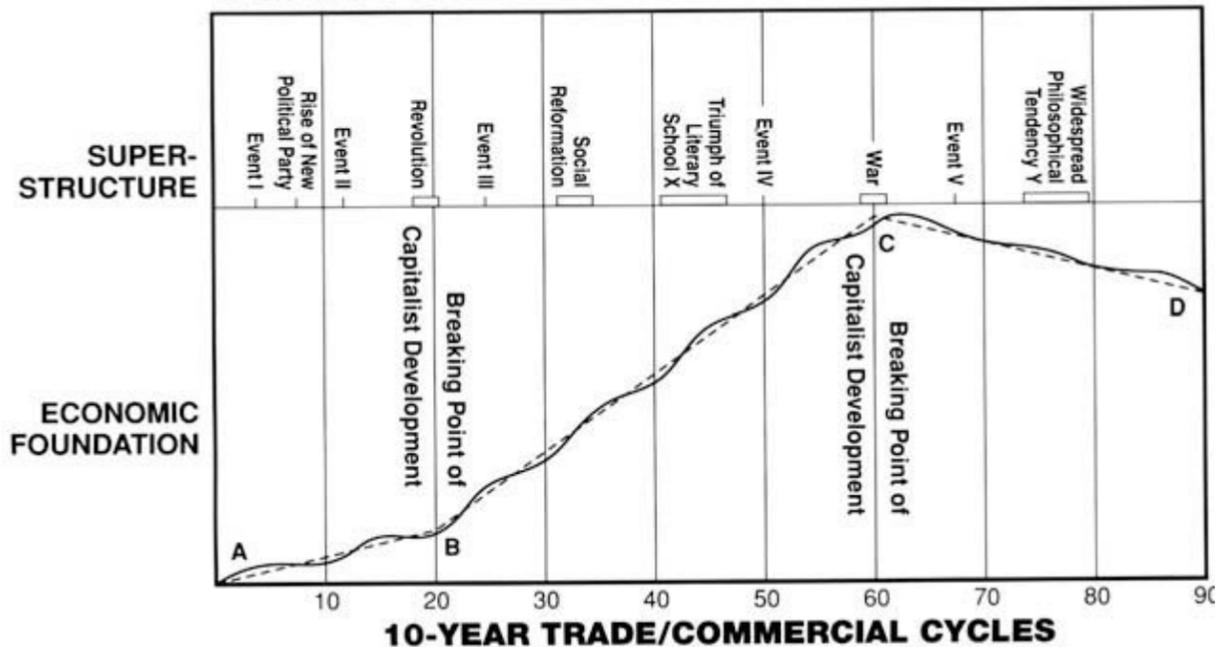
It's useful now to go back to *Capitalism's World Disorder* and reread "So Far From God, So Close to Orange County: The Deflationary Drag of Finance Capital," a talk given to a regional socialist conference in Los Angeles at the opening of 1995. The rudiments of the unexpected and violent credit contraction we are threatened with once again today could be seen in late 1994 in the collapse of the Mexican peso and in the bond default—chosen in preference to raising taxes—by the government of a wealthy county in southern California. We said at the time:

With returns on investments in capacity-expanding plant and equipment under pressure since the mid-1970s, owners of capital have not only been cost cutting; the holders of paper have been borrowing larger and larger amounts to buy and sell various forms of paper securities at a profit. They blew up a giant balloon of debt in Orange County over a period of years [betting on interest rates continuing to go down in the early '90s was an insight only greedy county administrators and Merrill Lynch bond salesmen were given by God; going massively short and uncovered was protected by the alignment of the stars!]; the bondholders thought they had died and gone to heaven.... When the balloon international bankers had inflated in Mexico in the 1980s began to collapse, the bondholders stepped in and blew it back up for a while. But in Orange County, the more local officials borrowed to make a killing using public funds to gamble [in collusion with] bond merchants, the greater their vulnerability became....

Now the capitalists and their public representatives—and not just in Mexico or Orange County—have been given another warning of the long-run possibilities of an uncontrollable deflation. Over the past couple of decades, upturns in the business cycle have relied on floating large amounts of fictitious capital—ballooning debt and other paper values. The capitalists are now paying the piper for the lack of sufficient economic growth during that period to keep rolling over the loans.<sup>3</sup>

The capitalists pushed off the crisis for another half decade after the mid-1990s by inventing and inflating more credit instruments and paper assets. The stock market, as measured by the Dow Jones Industrial Average and the S&P 500, more than tripled. Corporate borrowing more than quadrupled in the United States over that five-year period—not to expand productive capacity, but often to buy back their own bloated shares, bloat them further, and sit on what more and more becomes a cash hoard.<sup>4</sup> Between 1995 and 2000, the biggest net buyers of

**CURVE OF CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT**



In a 1923 letter, Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky said that unlike trade and commercial cycles of recession and recovery, there is no "rigidly lawful rhythm" to long-term capitalist development. Trotsky included the above chart of a hypothetical 90-year period—a "pictorial juxtaposition" of major political and social events and the economic ups and downs of the curve of capitalist development.

shares in the United States were corporations, often the same corporations that had issued them. And we've already discussed the explosion in Wall Street leveraging of casino chips called derivatives.

That's why, at this early stage in the onset of a world depression, we need to keep our eyes on the unfolding financial crisis of the bourgeoisie. In the history of modern capitalism, and in the imperialist epoch above all, the first giant shocks that begin shattering the confidence of sections of the rulers themselves are centered in financial institutions—in the banks and markets for currencies, debt, and equity—not in factories, mines, and mills. The devastation of production and employment follows afterwards, and with a lag....

Sometime in the mid-1970s we entered a downward segment in the curve of capitalist development, and that's the period we're still living through today. Lenin and Trotsky provided us with the necessary political tools to analyze these long-range trends in the history of capitalism and their

consequences for communist strategy and party building. Some of the most useful were their reports and writings around the time of the third and fourth congresses of the Communist International in 1921–22.<sup>5</sup> Trotsky summarized these conclusions in a brief 1923 letter that we published in *New Internationalist* magazine under the title, "The Curve of Capitalist Development."<sup>6</sup>

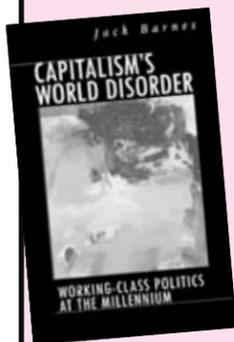
Unlike capitalist business cycles of recession and recovery with their chartable, and recurring, patterns, Trotsky said, there is no "rigidly lawful rhythm" to the long-term development of world capitalism. In the 1923 letter, Trotsky contrasted this conclusion to that of a Soviet academic named Nikolai Kondratiev. Pretending to formalize what could not be formalized—the materialist dialectic of modern history—Kondratiev bourgeoisified the work Lenin and Trotsky had presented at the third and fourth Comintern congresses. He argued that in addition to shorter trade and inventory cycles, there were also regular cycles of roughly

Continued on Page 8

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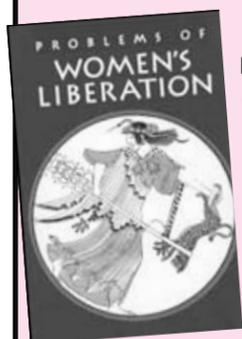
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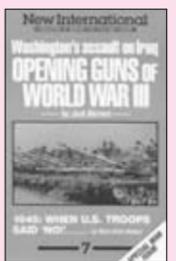
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Continued from Page 7

fifty years that could be charted over the history of capitalism since at least the opening of the industrial revolution in the latter half of the 1700s.

Kondratiev's empirical chart itself was a roughly accurate sketch of trends in capitalist development over the previous century and half, Trotsky said. But if you looked carefully at its turning points—and at the duration and steepness of its upward, downward, and flatter segments—it was clear that these corresponded to major events in politics and the class struggle, not solely “economic” factors as normally understood. There was nothing “automatic” or “cyclical” about an *upturn* in this longer curve, as there is at a certain point in the destruction of value and drawing down of inventories during a capitalist recession.

“As regards the large segments of the capitalist curve of development,” Trotsky wrote, “their character and duration are determined not by the internal interplay of capitalist forces but by those external conditions through whose channel capitalist development flows. The acquisition by capitalism of new countries and continents, the discovery of new natural resources, and, in the wake of these, such major facts of ‘superstructural’ order as wars and revolutions, determine the character and the replacement of ascending, stagnating, or declining epochs of capitalist development.”

**A long hot winter**

Kondratiev did employ a useful metaphor in describing this long-term curve, whose character he did not understand. He, and his rediscoverers and vulgarizers today, speak of the slow beginnings of recovery as “spring”; sharply rising segments as “summer”; the stagnant opening of a downward segment as “autumn”; and the more sharply downward segment as “winter.” We’ve been in autumn since the mid-1970s; now one of capitalism’s infrequent long winters has begun. With no seeming limits on the Federal Reserve and Treasury Department’s blowing up every balloon they can find, and now the accompanying acceleration of imperialism’s drive toward war, it’s going to be a long, hot winter. Even more important, slowly but surely and explosively, it will be one that breeds a scope and depth of resistance not previously seen by revolutionary-minded militants in today’s world.

During world capitalism’s quarter-century-long “autumn,” the business cycle continued oscillating, including two long capitalist upswings—one for nearly eight years after 1982; the second stretching an entire decade from 1991 to 2001, the longest cyclical upturn in U.S. history. Both upturns, however, were fueled by a massive inflation



Militant/Paul Pederson

**“In seeking to boost their profit margins, more and more employers have been unable to count on anything other than pressing to drive down wages and benefits, lengthening hours, and intensifying labor,” Barnes says. Above: Janitors who are members of the Service Employees International Union rally September 23 in New York to protests attempts by building owners to cut health-care benefits.**

of debt and paper values, adding little to productive capacity in comparison to the post-World War II expansions in the United States and later in Europe and Japan. In seeking to boost their profit margins, more and more employers have been unable to count on anything other than pressing to drive down wages and benefits, lengthening hours, and intensifying labor. This stretch-out and speedup, this increase in absolute and relative surplus value, is the “secret” to the productivity growth that Greenspan exaggerates and brags about in order to reassure the capitalist class that something more is happening than a further expansion of the massive government debt-created bubble. By the U.S. government’s own figures, however, including those of the Federal Reserve, neither economic output nor labor productivity during these two most recent booms came anywhere close to increasing at the rates logged from the late 1940s through the early 1970s.

**Class inequality widens**

It’s worth repeating what a delegate from Washington, D.C., Sam Manuel, reminded us of during the discussion. It’s never enough just to look at government statistics, or even at how the average or median sector of the working class might be faring for a few years. We have to keep our eyes on various layers of the working class, and the differential social *consequences* of “booms” such as

these. Over the past quarter century, not only did wage inequality increase within the working class, but above all the income gap widened explosively between workers and better-off middle-class and professional layers, not to mention the wealthiest propertied families (whose astronomical annual incomes, let alone their accumulated wealth, are not even counted in government statistics). Real wages, medical and pension coverage, jobless benefits, workers comp, affordability of housing, food, and college education—all these declined, often sharply, for the majority of workers and working farmers. If, during the late 1990s, take-home pay rose for certain layers for several years, even that relief has reversed engines once again today.<sup>8</sup>

As long as the capitalist economy is heading up, as long as real interest rates are stable or coming down, as long as the dollar remains strong relative to the currencies of Washington’s imperialist rivals, this debt-ridden house of cards keeps standing—and standing taller (in dollar terms!). But as all this begins to change, as it has since sometime

late in 2000, the entire structure becomes increasingly unstable. Marx’s observation that “interest-bearing capital always [is] the mother of every insane form” of capital is once again being demonstrated in spades.<sup>9</sup>

Neither we nor anybody else has any way of predicting exactly how long it will take for these gigantic balloons—stock prices, consumer debt, real estate costs, the relative “value” of the dollar—to deflate. But since everyone can see it coming, it can seem natural to say: “Surely the capitalists will do something to stop it!”

But that’s not how the law of value works. That’s not how a market system driven by the competition of capitals—and, in the imperialist epoch, on the more and more violent competition of bigger and bigger capitals, and more and more leveraged speculation—operates. Finance capital since the mid-1970s has postponed the crisis and moderated the frequency and volatility of the swings of the trade cycle. But it did so only at the expense of inflating the debt balloons more and more, increasing their variety as they debase the purchasing power of the currency, thus making the eventual bursting of the bubble even more destructive to imperialist stability, self-confidence, and alliances.

**Notes**

1. V.I. Lenin, “Report on the World Political Situation and the Basic Tasks of the Communist International,” *Workers of the World and Oppressed Peoples, Unite!, Proceedings and Documents of the Second Congress, 1920* (New York: Pathfinder, 1991), vol. 1, p. 139. Also in Lenin, *Collected Works*, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1966), vol. 31, p. 227.
2. In July 2004 the U.S. government loaded the first ground-based Anti-Ballistic Missile interceptor into a silo in Alaska, a project begun during the Clinton administration. President Bush hailed the installation as “the beginning of a missile-defense system that was envisioned by Ronald Reagan.”
3. Jack Barnes, *Capitalism’s World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* (New York: Pathfinder, 1999), pp. 60–61.
4. Government figures showed declining capital investment throughout 2001 and 2002. Even the modest upswing beginning in mid-2003 focused on replacing worn-out equipment, driving labor costs down by intensifying the pace of work and lengthening the workday, not by expanding capacity and output. An article in the July 19, 2004, *Business Week* magazine, headlined “Corporate Coffers Are Stuffed With Dough,” pointed out that “so far at least, instead of putting all this firepower to work—by pumping up capital budgets, upping the pace of hiring, restocking inventories, or passing out bigger dividends—companies are keeping much of their powder dry.” Companies, *Business Week* said, are putting their cash into money market funds and stock buybacks of their own shares.
5. These reports can be found in the two-volume collection of Leon Trotsky’s writings entitled *The First Five Years of the Communist International* (New York: Pathfinder, 1972) and in Lenin, *Collected Works*, vols. 32 and 33.
6. Trotsky, “The Curve of Capitalist Development,” in *New International* no. 10 (New York, 1994), pp. 209–10.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 210.
8. In late 2003, according to the Wall Street investment bank Goldman Sachs, the annual growth rate of hourly earnings in the United States fell to “the slowest pace ever recorded.” Over the next half-year, through the middle of 2004 when this issue was going to press, real weekly earnings actually fell.
9. Karl Marx, *Capital* (London: Penguin, 1981), vol. 3, p. 596.

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# Remarks by Kerry, Edwards on Cheney's daughter show coarsening of bourgeois politics

BY SAM MANUEL

The lowest point in the debates between the top candidates of the Democratic and Republican parties came when John Kerry pointed to the sexual preference of Mary Cheney, daughter of Vice President Dick Cheney, to score a political point. Kerry made the remark while debating President George Bush in their third and final televised encounter, which took place October 13 at the University of Arizona in Tempe.

Kerry's statement was similar to what his running mate, John Edwards, had said a week earlier while debating his Republican opponent in Cleveland. These calculated remarks were additional signs of the coarsening and pornographication of bourgeois politics.

Debate moderator Robert Schieffer of CBS News asked the candidates whether they believed "homosexuality is a choice."

"If you ask Dick Cheney's daughter, who is a lesbian," answered Kerry, "she would tell you that she's being who she was, she's being who she was born as."

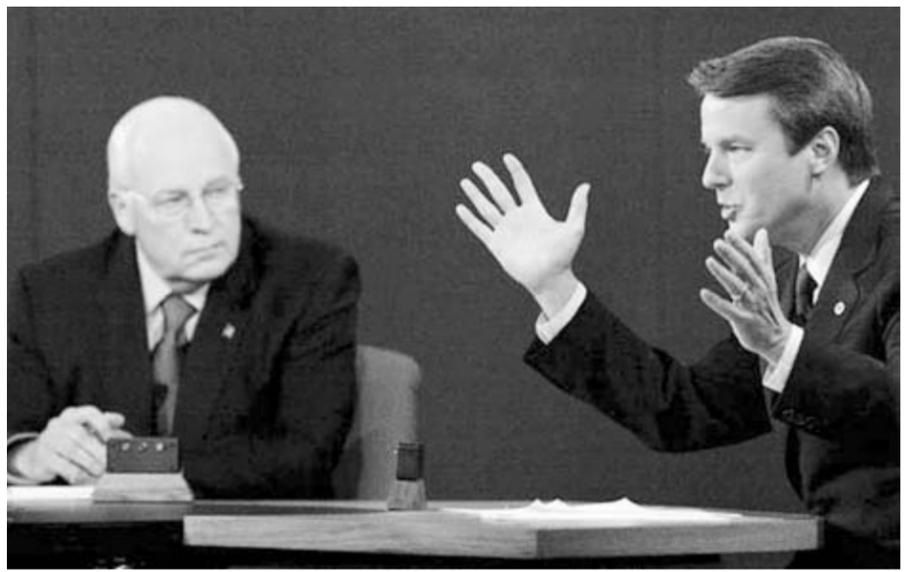
Bush did not comment on the remark during the debate. But the administration did have a formal response later. "The president of the United States does not believe it was

appropriate for Senator Kerry to bring up Mary Cheney at the debate," said White House press secretary Scott McClellan.

Kerry's remark drew a sharp response from Vice President Cheney during a subsequent campaign rally in Florida. Saying he was a very "angry father," Cheney described Kerry's statement as that of a man who "will do and say anything to get elected." His wife, Lynne Cheney, called Kerry's remark "a cheap and tawdry political trick."

Not stepping back at all from the coarse remark, Edwards' wife, Elizabeth, who is also active in the Democratic campaign, accused Lynne Cheney of "overreacting" and showing "a certain degree of shame with respect to her daughter's sexual preferences."

The level of exchanges between the two campaigns sunk even lower in a second set of base remarks by the Democratic vice-presidential candidate. Appearing on the Jay Leno talk show October 12, Edwards was asked if he could beat President Bush in a foot race. Edwards said he played football as a student and that Bush was on a cheerleading squad. "Bush was on the side, with his pom-poms," Edwards said. "I don't know, can you run fast with those cheerleading



John Edwards (right) debates Republican opponent Richard Cheney October 5 in Cleveland. Remark by Edwards on Cheney's daughter was low point of encounter.

oufits on?"

Such debasing remarks have more and more marked the political climate in the United States over the last decade. Their source is the steady offensive by the ruling class to push down wages, worsen working and living conditions, and attack social programs that working people have won in struggle in order to increase profits for the employers. This was also evident in the third Bush-Kerry debate.

On health care, for example, Bush reiterated his proposals to establish individual,

tax-free "health savings accounts" to provide medical insurance based on individual coverage rather than employer-sponsored plans. Workers would receive tax credits for putting savings into these accounts. This proposal, along with a similar one establishing individual "retirement savings accounts," forms the centerpiece of the rulers' preparation for the next round of assaults on Social Security.

Kerry, who has been silent on Bush's specific proposals, sketched in a few more elements of his own plan. It too reinforces the position that health care is an individual's responsibility, not a social right. In exchange for the federal government taking over the cost of health care for children on Medicaid, Kerry said, the states would cover individuals with an income up to three times higher than the poverty line. No state would be obligated to do so. Individuals would also be allowed to "buy into the same health care insurance that senators and congressmen give themselves," Kerry said.

Members of Congress, however, make more than \$150,000 a year. Bush said the current congressional medical insurance costs the government \$7,700 per family.

Kerry blamed rising health-care costs and growing numbers of people without any coverage—about 45 million now—on the president's policies. But he said nothing about the deterioration of health care during the eight years of the Clinton administration. Bush's proposals, in fact, build on the assaults on health care under Clinton. Speaking at the 1996 Democratic convention, Hillary Clinton, now a senator, praised a bill sponsored by Senators Edward Kennedy and Nancy Kassebaum that included "portable" health insurance for people who change jobs. It also included an "experimental" component in which 750,000 people would buy "catastrophic" health insurance and set up tax-free individual accounts to cover routine medical expenses. By the end of the Clinton administration, an estimated 40 million people had no health-care coverage, 2 million more than when Clinton first took office. And that happened during the longest post-World War II economic recovery.

## U.S. warplanes and tanks pound militias in Fallujah

Continued from front page

against civilian and other targets in Iraq. Talks between the U.S.-installed regime and negotiators for Baathist and other militias that have been operating in Fallujah broke down over this issue October 14. Since then, U.S. warplanes and tanks have been pounding the city, home to 300,000 people in Iraq's Sunni Triangle.

Over a seven-day period in mid-October, more than 200 Iraqis were reportedly killed around the country, most of them civilians, including scores in Fallujah. More than half died in suicide and other such bombings by anti-government groups, according to media accounts.

The U.S.-led assault on Fallujah is part of joint operations between U.S. forces and the Iraqi military to bring under the authority of the Allawi government more than 30 cities and towns where militias opposed to the U.S.-led occupation have been operating with little opposition. These operations began with the takeover of Samarra, also in the Sunni Triangle, on October 3. The goal of the attacking Iraqi and U.S. troops is to take control of as many of these areas as possible before elections scheduled for early next year.

The Sunni Triangle is an area of central Iraq where the former Baathist regime of Saddam Hussein had a strong base.

More than 1,000 U.S. and Iraqi soldiers have surrounded Fallujah, according to Al-Jazeera TV. At the east and northeastern gates of the city, U.S. tanks have been bombarding homes and other buildings in neighborhoods that reportedly have been strongholds of militias. The Associated Press reported that the U.S. military has asked UK defense minister Geoff Hoon to redeploy more than 650 British troops to the area to back U.S. and Iraqi forces surrounding the city.

A report in the October 17 Armed Forces Information Service (AFIS), a Pentagon news service, said Iraqi Special Forces and elements of the First Marine Expeditionary Force formed a "dynamic cordon" around the city starting October 15. It also said that U.S. warplanes blasted a checkpoint set up by Tawhid and Jihad militiamen. The AFIS report said that informants have "linked such checkpoints to kidnappings and executions carried out by insurgents." The report also claimed that Iraqi and U.S. troops have recovered stockpiles of explosives and captured several of al-Zarqawi's aides.

Tawhid and Jihad has claimed responsibility for numerous kidnappings and has publicized the beheading of their captives on the Internet. It has also claimed responsibility for car bombing attacks against U.S. and Iraqi troops and police that have also resulted in the death of civilians—in one case 35 Iraqi children who were receiving candy from U.S. troops.

Given growing revulsion among Iraqis

against such methods, and taking advantage of the fact that the main leader of Tawhid and Jihad is from another country, the interim government and its U.S. backers are trying to drive a wedge between the pro-Zarqawi forces and Fallujah's main Sunni Muslim leaders. And they are scoring successes so far.

Military operations against militias in the city were stepped up after negotiations with Sunni Muslim clerics in the city broke down October 14. The next day U.S. troops arrested the main Sunni cleric negotiator, Khaled al-Jumeili, as he left a mosque after Friday prayers in a village about 10 miles south of Fallujah. The Iraqi interim government released Al-Jumeili a few days later.

During recent sermons in mosques throughout the Sunni Triangle clerics read a statement declaring that al-Zarqawi's presence in the city "is a lie just like the weapons of mass destruction lie," according to an AP report.

In Ramadi, with the assistance of informants, U.S. Marines arrested 17 alleged insurgents said to be leaders of a militia in the city. U.S. officials in Iraq have said their goal is to "pacify" Ramadi and Fallujah before elections next year.

There have also been press reports of clashes between U.S. troops in Qaim, a city near the Jordanian border also said to be a stronghold for opponents of the Allawi regime and a major route through which they

obtain weapons. U.S. and Iraqi troops are also fighting militias in al-Anbar province, Rutba, and Hiyt, according to Al-Jazeera.

The joint military operations by U.S. and Iraqi troops register the progress Washington is making in recruiting, training, and bloodying a new Iraqi army. U.S. president George Bush and defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld have said the administration's goal is to train as many as 200,000 Iraqi troops that can increasingly take on more of the fighting against adversaries.

The Allawi regime has so far been unable to obtain a settlement of the type agreed to with Shia cleric Moqtada al-Sadr. Members of al-Sadr's Mahdi militia began handing over their weapons to the government October 11. The Mahdi militia has taken heavy casualties in fierce fighting with U.S. Marines that began last April in the Shia cities of Najaf, Karbala, and Kufa.

In another development, Staff Sgt. Michael Butler and most of his platoon, another 18 U.S. soldiers, refused orders by superiors to deliver a fuel shipment from the Talil air base near Nasirya, Iraq, to another base in the north.

The troops said this would have been a "suicide mission," because the trucks were in bad shape and they would have to drive them without any escorts by armored vehicles. Butler and the other troops are now under investigation for insubordination.

## US Airways guts union contracts using fig leaf of bankruptcy

BY SAM MANUEL

On October 15 US Airways threw out the contracts with its unions and cut wages and benefits the airline claims it needs in order to avoid liquidation after getting a bankruptcy judge to bless its request. Following suit, United Airlines, also in bankruptcy, announced it will do the same next month.

On September 12, US Airways filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy reorganization for the second time in two years after workers refused to bow to the company's demand for \$800 million worth of cuts in wages and benefits. The company first filed for bankruptcy protection in August 2002 and emerged the following April with a \$900 million gift in the form of a loan from the government's Air Transportation Stabilization Board.

Feigning concern for the company's 28,000 employees, Judge Stephen Mitchell in Alexandria, Virginia, said he "reluctantly" agreed with the airline. He ruled that the owners could impose a cut of up to 21 percent in wages over the next four months. The company sought approval for a 23 percent reduction over six months, reported the *New York Times*. The judge also ruled that the company may reduce or eliminate its contributions to employee pension fund plans.

US Airways was also released from an agreement it made in its first bankruptcy filing to keep at least 279 planes in its fleet. That will likely result in additional layoffs.

Attorneys for the unions said the cuts were too severe given that employees granted \$1.9 billion in concessions in the first bankruptcy. They also said salaried employees had taken cuts of only 5 to 10 percent and US Airways' chief executive, Bruce Lakefield, was not taking a pay cut. Lakefield responded that he had already taken an equivalent reduction because his \$450,000 annual salary was less than his predecessor, whom he replaced in April.

The cuts will take effect immediately except in the case of the airline's pilots, who are expected to approve a concession agreement that will reduce salaries by 18 percent along with cuts in pension and health-care benefits.

Lakefield and airline chairman David Bronner praised the tentative agreement with the pilots. "Originally we were after a little less than that," Lakefield said, alluding to the company's first demand for a 16 percent cut.

On the same day that Judge Mitchell cleared the way to impose cuts on workers at US Airways, United Airlines announced

that it will ask the bankruptcy court to sanction voiding its contracts with the unions so that the owners could impose wage and benefit cuts. This would be the second round of concessions imposed by United, which started bankruptcy proceedings in December 2002. The union gave up \$2.5 billion in concessions in the spring of 2003 after the company threatened liquidation. Despite the concessions and a \$1.8 billion federal government loan guarantee the company went into bankruptcy anyway.

United also repeated its threat to terminate current pension plan agreements with the unions and replace them with 401(k) plans. In August attorneys for the bosses told a bankruptcy judge that the company would be within its rights to terminate retirement benefit agreements with the union. In response to that threat, officials of the Association of Flight Attendants and the International Association of Machinists asked the judge to replace United chief executive Glenn Tilton with a court-appointed trustee.

After the company's latest pronouncements threatening to tear up pension plan agreements and the contracts in their entirety, the union officials dropped their demand to replace Tilton.

# Vote Socialist Workers Nov. 2

Continued from front page

bosses, workers in the United States need to organize unions and to use our unions as effective instruments of struggle where they already exist. Out of the struggle to organize and transform the unions, a labor party based on the unions needs to be formed that fights in the interests of workers and farmers. That's the only way for working people to fight not only on the economic level but to develop our own political voice independent of the ruling capitalists and their parties.

To promote economic development so necessary for social and political advances by working people in Asia, Latin America, and Africa, the socialists have been exposing imperialism's hypocritical campaign to prevent Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea—and other countries they target—from developing the sources of energy they need, including nuclear energy.

In addition, the SWP candidates have been denouncing the efforts by Washington, London, Paris, Berlin, and others to dictate which weapons may be developed by governments in the semicolonial world in face of ongoing military threats and aggression by imperialist powers.

They have also been pointing out that it is the capitalist government of the United States, the common enemy of the toilers outside and within its own borders, that represents the biggest threat to humanity. It is Washington that has the largest nuclear arsenal in the world, and it is the only government to have ever used the nuclear bomb.

The socialists have been calling for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of U.S. and other imperialist troops from Iraq, Afghanistan, Yugoslavia, Korea, Haiti, Colombia, and Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

Calero, Hawkins, and the other socialist candidates are themselves workers who have been part of the resistance by working people to the bosses' offensive on our wages, working conditions, and living standards. They have been urging working people to vote not for the individual, but for the program. "It's not who you're against, but what you are for!" has been the slogan of the socialist campaign.

The SWP ticket is also advocating principled positions in the interests of workers and farmers on local initiatives and referenda that will be on the ballot November 2. These

include voting no on a referendum in Georgia that would ban gay marriage and deny basic civil rights to same-sex partners (see article below). The socialists are calling for full civil rights for gays and lesbians. Similar reactionary initiatives are on the ballot in another 10 states. They should all be defeated because they advance anti-gay prejudice and discrimination.

The ruling class in the United States has adopted a military posture and political world strategy since the end of the Cold War that has crystallized over the last few years. This is not the offspring of the Bush administration alone but has the backing of the majority of the wealthy rulers—Democrats and Republicans. It includes the "transformation" of the U.S. military into more agile and mobile units that use the most modern technology, and are being repositioned away from western Europe and closer to theaters of conflict imperialism is pursuing, centered in the Middle East and Central Asia. It also includes the doctrine of preemptively striking "terrorists" and states that give such groups shelter.

The U.S. rulers are being driven to accelerate *their* transformation in the teeth of the challenges they face—including imperialist rivals vying with them over control of the world's aircraft or other markets; the failure of neocolonial models, from Iran to Argentina and Singapore, that imperialists held up in the past as proof that capitalism and "democracy" work; and a world financial crisis. The ruling class will pursue this course *regardless* of which party occupies the White House or organizes Congress after November 2.

At the same time, militant workers are being transformed as working-class resistance grows to the social consequences of the capitalists' course. It is this resistance that's generating the seeds of the coming rebellions against the rule of the exploiters and provides hope for humanity's future. This is what the socialist campaign points to. Join us in supporting the working-class alternative in November, and beyond.

As part of backing the socialist ticket, we also urge you to build and take part in wrap-up SWP campaign rallies across the country (some of them advertised on page 11) and the October 31 public forum in New York featuring SWP national secretary Jack Barnes (see front-page ad).

## Co-Op miners' struggle

Continued from front page

on time for the October 2 one-year anniversary rally marking the start of the organizing fight at C.W. Mining, also known as the Co-Op mine, held at the UMWA hall in nearby Price, Utah. A greeting card was signed by 13 sewing machine operators in an unorganized shop in central Iowa, where a number of workers have been trying to unionize. "Thank you for your inspiring example," the card said. It included a contribution of \$20.

Support is also growing for the miners' fight against a lawsuit that the Kingstons, the Co-Op owners, filed in federal court September 24. It targets the UMWA, 17 Co-Op miners, dozens of their supporters, and many newspapers—including the *Militant*—and other media that have covered the labor struggle. The suit charges the 120 defendants with "unlawful labor practices" and "defamation."

"C.W. Mining Company has recently filed a federal lawsuit targeting individuals and groups who supported the picketing workers," says a letter to the editor from Ned Scarlet published October 12 in the *Sum Advocate*, one of the Utah newspapers cited in the Kingstons' lawsuit for alleged defamation. "They are also suing reporters who wrote stories about C.W. Mining's recent labor dispute. Defending oneself in this type of action can be very expensive, even if the suit is without merit. I believe this is the latest scheme to intimidate anyone who opposes their practice of paying low wages and not providing benefits. What the mine owners do not understand is that when people are speaking or writing the truth it is not slander or libel, nor is it defamation of character."

On Sept. 22, 2003, C.W. Mining bosses fired 75 miners after getting wind of the miners' talking to the UMWA about organizing. Miners there were getting paid between \$5.25 and \$7 an hour, while wages for underground miners in the United States average at least \$17 per hour.

The miners, who are mostly Mexican immigrants, were locked out of their jobs after protesting the firing of one UMWA supporter and disciplinary actions against other miners who supported the UMWA organizing effort. A few weeks later, the miners turned the lockout into a strike.

The miners began getting the word out about their struggle to the labor movement and others. The depth of solidarity the miners have received was reflected at the October 2 rally here when Bob Butero held up a large stack of messages of support. The 900-member Local Lodge 869 of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers in Montreal, Quebec, sent such a letter.

The Co-Op miners said many of the messages were greeting cards and letters with signatures of individual workers; more than 400 workers signed greetings like these. Workers at the Point Blank Body Armor plant in Oakland Park, Florida, sent an 8 1/2 by 11 inch card that read in part, "Two years after we started we continue our struggle... If we all stick together, and support each other, everything is possible." Workers at this sewing plant make bulletproof vests for the army and police. They won representation by UNITE HERE and their first contract last year.

Coal miners from Pennsylvania sent a message with a wood sculpture of two Co-Op miners. "Amigos, raffle this carving to help raise funds! Your brothers and sisters of UMWA L.U. 1248, Uniontown, PA," said the letter.

It is solidarity like this, the miners say, that forced the NLRB to uphold UMWA charges that C.W. Mining had fired the workers illegally last year. After a large majority of the 75 dismissed workers signed a petition demanding representation by the UMWA, the board also ruled that a union election must be held. The government agency then brokered a settlement between the bosses and the UMWA under which the company offered the strikers an unconditional return to work. A number of strikers went back to the job July 12. The NLRB held hearings in Price on July 20-21 to determine who would be eligible to cast ballots in the union election. The UMWA and the Co-Op miners argued that Kingston family members and relatives, including managerial and office personnel who have been brought into the mine to stack the deck against the union-organizing effort, should not be allowed to vote. The bosses argued that all 100 of these "workers" should be permitted to vote because they are members of the so-called International Association of United Workers Union (IAUWU), which the NLRB has recognized since 1979. The miners counter that this is a company union.

Attorneys for the IAUWU filed the recent civil lawsuit against the UMWA and its backers along with the Kingstons. This action, miners say, is further proof that this is an outfit run by the bosses, not a workers' union.

Two weeks ago, the IAUWU gave out letters to several miners revoking their membership. The miners said Juan Salazar's foreman, Chris Peterson, approached him underground October 4 and handed him an envelope with a note from the IAUWU. The letter told Salazar, one of the UMWA stalwarts, that he is being kicked out of the "union."

"It has been determined that you are in violation of your membership agreement with IAUWU," Salazar reported the letter as saying. The notice was signed by IAUWU local president Chris Grundvig. A check for \$39.76 was also enclosed as a refund for dues taken out of Salazar's paychecks since July 12.

The miners are asking that letters be sent to the NLRB backing the UMWA's position on the upcoming union election, and demanding the board set a date for the union vote. These letters should be sent to NLRB Region 27, attention B. Allan Benson, director, 600 17th Street, 7th floor—North Tower, Denver, CO 80202-5433. Tel: (303) 844-3551; Fax: (303) 844-6249.

For more information contact UMWA District 22 at 525 East 100 South, Price, UT 84501; Tel: (435) 637-2037.

### Socialist Workers Party candidates across the United States

The SWP presidential ticket is on the ballot in: **Colorado, District of Columbia, Florida, Iowa, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Utah, Washington State, Wisconsin, and Vermont**

#### Alabama

Janine Dukes, U.S. Senate  
Clay Dennison, U.S. Congress, 7th C.D.

#### California

Dennis Richter, U.S. Senate  
Mark Gilsdorf, U.S. Congress, 8th C.D.  
Chessie Molano, U.S. Congress, 12th C.D.  
Seth Dellinger, U.S. Congress, 33rd C.D.  
Wendy Lyons, U.S. Congress, 34th C.D.  
Naomi Craine, U.S. Congress, 35th C.D.

#### Florida

Nicole Sarmiento, U.S. Senate  
Karl Butts, U.S. Congress, 11th C.D.  
Omari Musa, U.S. Congress, 17th C.D.  
Lawrence Mikesh, U.S. Congress, 21st C.D.

#### Georgia

William Arth, U.S. Senate  
Eleanor Garcia, U.S. Congress, 5th C.D.

#### Illinois

Maurice Williams, U.S. Senate  
Rebecca Williamson, U.S. Congress, 4th C.D.

#### Iowa

\*Edwin Fruit, U.S. Senate

#### Massachusetts

Andrea Morrell, U.S. Congress, 1st C.D.  
\*Laura Garza, Massachusetts state representative, Suffolk County District 1

#### Michigan

Osborne Hart, U.S. Congress, 13th C.D.

#### Minnesota

Bill Schmitt, Congress, 4th C.D.

#### Nebraska

Lisa Rottach, U.S. Congress, 2nd C.D.

#### New Jersey

\*Ved Dookhun, U.S. Congress, 10th C.D.  
\*Angel Lariscy, U.S. Congress, 13th C.D.

#### New York

\*Martín Koppel, U.S. Senate  
Willie Cotton, U.S. Congress, 6th C.D.  
Millie Sánchez, U.S. Congress, 8th C.D.  
Salm Kolis, U.S. Congress, 16th C.D.

#### Ohio

Romina Green, U.S. Senate

\*Carole Lesnick, for State Board of Education

#### Pennsylvania

Brian Taylor, U.S. Senate  
John Staggs, U.S. Congress, 1st C.D.  
George Chalmers, U.S. Congress, 2nd C.D.  
Tim Mailhot, U.S. Congress, 11th C.D.  
Martha Ressler, U.S. Congress, 14th C.D.  
John Crysdale, Pennsylvania State Senate, District 7

\*Kristopher Barkanic, Pennsylvania General Assembly, 116th District

#### Texas

Anthony Dutrow, U.S. Congress, 7th C.D.  
Jacquie Henderson, U.S. Congress, 18th C.D.

#### Washington

Connie Allen, U.S. Senate

#### Washington, D.C.

John Hawkins, D.C. City Council—At Large  
Lea Sherman, Delegate to the House of Representatives

\*on the ballot

## Vote 'No' on antigay initiative in Georgia

BY BILL ARTH

ATLANTA—Shaking hands with demonstrators at the October 17 AIDS Walk Atlanta, Ellie García, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress in Georgia's 5th District, said, "I urge all working people to vote 'no' on Proposition 1, which would ban gay marriage and deny civil rights to same-sex couples. Proposals of this type are aimed at fueling reactionary prejudices and embolden rightist forces to go even further and carry out violent attacks. They are anti-labor and aim at deepening divisions in the working class at a time when working people need to find ways to unite to effectively resist attacks by the employers."

The Georgia amendment to the state constitution will be on the November 2 ballot. It consists of two paragraphs. "This state shall recognize as marriage only the union of man and woman," states the first. "Marriages between persons of the same sex are prohibited in this state." The second paragraph says, in part, "No union between persons of the same sex shall be recognized by this state as entitled to the benefits of marriage." Only the first paragraph will appear on the ballot. Opponents of the amendment filed a lawsuit in the state Supreme Court seeking to have the referendum taken off the ballot. They argue that paragraph 2 could be interpreted as prohibiting civil unions, but voters will not see this when they vote. They will only see the prohibition on same-sex marriage.

Referenda like the one in Georgia are on the ballot in 11 states. They are considered likely to pass in 10 states,

with a close vote expected in one, Oregon. Missouri and Louisiana have already passed such amendments. A recent poll by Zogby International said that 61 percent of Georgia voters favor the amendment. The same poll showed that voters were evenly split on giving gay couples a legal status called something "other than marriage."

Some capitalist politicians have pushed these amendments in the aftermath of the Massachusetts Supreme Court decision last year to strike down as unconstitutional a state law that banned same-sex marriage.

Congress failed to pass a similar amendment to the U.S. Constitution this summer. Republican candidates have proposed these measures as a means to energize their conservative electoral base, as well as to score factional points against their Democratic Party opponents. A number of Republicans, though, including President Bush, while formally supporting such measures have done little to nothing to campaign for their passage on the federal level, knowing they would fail. Many Democratic politicians have tried to avoid the issue.

Close to 200 opponents of the anti-gay referendum rallied outside the Georgia State Capitol October 10 in one of the largest protests since the state legislature voted to put the initiative on the ballot last spring. The majority of those present were high school and college students. A small number of rightist counter demonstrators harangued the youthful protesters with obscenities.

Bill Arth is the SWP candidate for U.S. Senate in Georgia.

# Socialist candidates campaign in Puerto Rico

BY LAURA GARZA

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico—"Working people in the United States and the people of Puerto Rico share common interests. We face a common enemy, the billionaire families that exploit workers and farmers in the United States and who maintain colonial rule over Puerto Rico," Martín Koppel told students at a meeting held here October 18 at the University of Puerto Rico (UPR). Koppel, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate in New York, visited Puerto Rico together with Nicole Sarmiento, the socialist candidate for U.S. Senate in

Florida.

The forum, chaired by UPR student Diego Negro and attended by 20 students, was sponsored by the UPR Student Council, which has backed the campaign against the presence of the U.S. Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) on university campuses here. Many of the students at the meeting had been part of a one-day student strike October 7 against the suspension of Professor Héctor Rosario at the UPR campus in Mayagüez for his involvement in an anti-ROTC protest.

The students were interested in finding

out about the Socialist Workers campaign and its revolutionary perspective. They listened intently as the SWP candidates described the working-class resistance in the United States to the bosses' profit drive, from the successful union-organizing fight by garment workers at Point Blank Body Armor in Florida to the strike by textile workers in Massachusetts.

"What do you think of the Hugo Chávez government in Venezuela?" a student asked. Sarmiento said Venezuela remains a flashpoint in Latin America because of the confidence workers and farmers have

gained there in fighting for their interests—including land, jobs, literacy, and decent medical care for all—and defeating attempts by U.S.-backed capitalist forces to overturn the elected government. She urged students interested in the developments in Venezuela and in the international fight against imperialism to attend the world youth festival scheduled for next summer in Caracas, Venezuela.

The socialist campaigners sold nearly 30 books and pamphlets on revolutionary politics to students on the campus.

Koppel and Sarmiento also joined a picket line by members of the Independent Authentic Union (UIA) on strike against the Water and Sewer Authority (AAA). Some 4,300 workers walked out October 4 after the bosses stopped paying into the union-run health-care fund and contracted with a private insurance company. The strikers have faced an intense propaganda campaign by the government and bosses, branding the UIA as corrupt and accusing the unionists of sabotage.

Picket captain Alberto Hernández told the socialists the "corruption" charges were a pretext to justify the anti-union attack. Gloria Martínez, with 25 years on the job, said the water utility's equipment is old and in disrepair, and it's not uncommon for entire neighborhoods to lose water service for days at a time.

The socialist candidates also met with leaders of the successful fight to get the U.S. Navy out of Vieques, joined a protest demanding freedom for six jailed anti-Navy activists, and met with two well-known former *independentista* prisoners, Rafael Cancel Miranda and Luis Rosa.

## Brian Taylor stumps in Utah for SWP ticket

Continued from front page

ticket of Róger Calero for president and Arrin Hawkins for vice president.

Taylor was the featured guest at a barbeque later that day at the home of a campaign supporter. His presentation was followed by a lively give-and-take. Dale Brackett, a 20-year-old steelworker, asked to take a stack of campaign handouts to distribute in the next weeks. "We have a one-party system," Brackett said. "You might as well call it the Capitalists' Party," instead of the Democrats and Republicans. "There is no sense in talking about a lesser evil. It's just evil."

Taylor responded that this is the easier

part to see. The other "third parties," like the Libertarians or the Greens, are pro-capitalist too, he said. The same is true of the Nader/Camejo "independent" campaign that serves as left pressure on the Democrats.

Brackett said he had just finished reading the *Communist Manifesto*, a pamphlet he picked up when he met socialist campaigners in September. He took advantage of Taylor's visit to talk with the senatorial candidate for several hours throughout the day and ended up buying four more books on revolutionary politics.

The following morning, five Co-Op miners gave Taylor a tour of the site of their 10-month picket line outside the coal mine in a Huntington canyon.

In Price, Taylor spoke at the Militant Labor Forum hall that afternoon to more than a dozen workers and their families, most of them also miners at Co-Op. Celso Panduro presented Taylor with a commemorative T-shirt from the one-year anniversary of the ongoing fight for the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) at the mine.

Taylor urged the miners to vote for Calero and

Hawkins, who are on the ballot in Utah, and support the socialist ticket in every other possible way.

Taylor ended his presentation by reading some messages to the miners at Co-Op from his co-workers in UMWA Local 1248 at Maple Creek's High Quality mine. These union members eagerly await the Co-Op miners joining them in the UMWA, he said.

In the discussion that followed, one participant asked if the socialist campaign's efforts to effect revolutionary change is legal in this country. "I have seen many people get in trouble fighting for these things in Central America," this worker said.

Drawing on their past year of experience in struggle, several coal miners and

one of their spouses joined in the discussion. Among them were Juan and Rosa Salazar.

"We have rights, we are workers," said Juan, a leader of the union organizing fight at Co-Op. "The bosses can't treat us as badly anymore. They used to order us around freely—now they think twice. If they do something to one of us, they know that now they may be facing 50 of us."

"I agree with what the miners have been doing here. Don't just take it," added Rosa. "You have to do something to fight back. It has been very hard, but worth it."

Participants stayed after the program for refreshments and political discussion with Taylor and local campaign supporters. One miner bought a subscription to the *Militant* and picked out dozens of copies of the paper from recent months to have as a chronicle of the Co-Op struggle.



Militant/Teri Moss

Brian Taylor, (right) SWP candidate for U.S. Senate in Pennsylvania, speaking to miners, their families, and others October 17 at campaign event in Price, Utah.

## — CALENDAR —

### NEW YORK

#### Manhattan

Come join the Puerto Rican Nationalist Youth in celebration of the 1950 revolt of the Puerto Rican Nationalists Thurs., Oct. 26, 7 p.m., at El Maestro, 700 Elton Ave (off of 154 St. at 3rd. Ave.)

Commemorating the 30th anniversary of 'El Acto Nacional' a Day of Solidarity with Puerto Rican Independence Keynote speaker: Juan Mari Bras, founder El Movimiento Pro Independencia, Music by Roy Brown, Sat., Oct. 30, Donations: Students/Seniors \$10, General admission \$15, Tickets available, *Hostos Community College, 450 Grand Concourse (149th St) Tel: (718) 518-4154.*

## — LETTERS —

### British Labour Party

Despite its bourgeois, imperialist politics, is the British Labour Party still somewhat of a labor party, or only in name? I understand that some unions are disaffiliating from Labour, though not necessarily towards independent working class politics. *Robby Kopec Oakland, California*

### A blow for free speech

Residents of St. Petersburg, Florida, struck a blow for free speech when they forced the city council to back off some proposed ordinances on street vending, demonstrating, and soliciting. On September 16, the city council held a public hearing on two ordinances. One would have banned street vending on "arterial" and "collector" streets. Another would have

prohibited standing or stopping in the median for any purpose other than crossing the street.

City leaders who supported the proposals claimed this was a safety issue. Opponents pointed out that the city had no evidence of accidents caused by such solicitation and was infringing on free-speech rights of political candidates, charitable groups, small businesses, newspapers, and student fundraisers. Several speakers attributed the proposals to the efforts of businesses wanting to get homeless people soliciting for money and jobs as well as political protesters out of their areas.

Outside of city council members, no one in the packed chamber spoke in favor of the ordinances. While speaking at the hearing was to be limited to residents, Karl Butts, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Congress in

the 15th Congressional District, a district that includes part of St. Petersburg, was allowed to speak. It seemed that preventing anyone who wanted to speak from doing so would have been met with opposition from the audience. Butts said that the proposals would curtail democratic rights.

By 1:30 a.m., the city council had heard from over 20 individuals and representatives of organizations, all opposing the measures. Not only were both proposals defeated, the city council also voted to opt out of a county ordinance regulating solicitation from motorists. *Cheryl Goertz Tampa, Florida*

### Bush-Kerry debates

Upon reading and thinking about the October 19 *Militant* edi-

torial titled "Support SWP ticket in 2004," I must take issue with the second sentence. Describing the event featuring lead Democratic and Republican Party candidates as a "rehearsed show" I believe weakens the editorial.

What difference does it make if it was rehearsed or not? (Though by watching it, I would guess it was not). The main point to make there is that neither candidate offers a working-class perspective or brings to the table working-class solutions to the deepening economic crisis toilers are forced to endure daily.

The way the editorial begins calling the event staged also gives way to conspiracy-type ideas about politics.

Prepared or unprepared, from the hip or prewritten, the so-called debates were bound to be marked by the fact that both participants

and both parties gear themselves toward solving the problems of the tiny billionaire class.

The point you make in the next sentence about the exclusion of the Socialist Workers campaign and other campaigns I believe is absolutely correct.

*Brian Taylor Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*

[The reader has a point about the "rehearsed show" designation—Editor.]

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.

## — MILITANT LABOR FORUMS —

### AUSTRALIA

#### Sydney

After the 2004 elections: New government attacks on the unions and working-class resistance Speaker: Bob Aiken, Communist League, Fri., Oct. 29, 7 p.m. 3/281-7 Beamish St., Campsie (upstairs in arcade near Evaline St.) Donation. Tel: (02) 9718-9698.

### NEW ZEALAND

#### Christchurch

'Law and order' campaign targets working people Fri., Oct. 29, 7 p.m. 'The Gloucester' Arcade, (near the Theatre Royal), 129-131 Gloucester St, Donation \$3. Tel: (03) 365-6055.

### FLORIDA

#### Miami

Support union organizing! Organize unions where there are none, strengthen unions where they exist Speaker: Omari Musa, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Congress, 17th C.D., Fri., Oct. 29, 7:30 p.m., 8365 NE 2nd Ave., #206 Tel: (305) 756-4436.

### ILLINOIS

#### Chicago

Hear Róger Calero, Socialist Workers Party candidate for president. Wed., Oct.

27, Reception 6 p.m., Program 7 p.m., 3557 S. Archer Ave. Suggested donation \$5. Tel: (773) 890-1190.

### NEW YORK

#### Manhattan

Celebrate the accomplishments of the socialist campaign! Speaker: Róger Calero, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, Fri., Oct. 29, Dinner 7 p.m., Program 8 p.m., 307 West 36 St., 10th fl. (use north elevators) Suggested donation: \$5 dinner, \$5 program. Tel: (212) 629-6649.

### TEXAS

#### Houston

Support efforts by workers to organize unions and strengthen those they have Speaker: Róger Calero, Socialist Workers Party candidate for president, Tues., Oct. 26, Reception 6:30 p.m., Program 7:30 p.m.

#### For a workers and farmers government

Speaker: Karl Butts, farmer, and Socialist Workers Party candidate for Congress from Florida, Jacquie Henderson and Anthony Dutrow SWP candidates for Congress from Houston. Sat., Oct. 30, Dinner 6:30 p.m. Program 7:30 p.m. Both programs at 4800 W. 34th St., suite C-51A, Donation: \$5 for dinner, \$5 for program. Tel: (713) 869-6550.

## Iceland seamen's unions fight reductions in crews

BY GYLFI PÁLL HERSIR  
AND ÖGMUNDUR JÓNSSON

REYKJAVIK, Iceland—An attempt by fishing capitalists to bypass the unions on one ship and impose a contract on their own terms has sparked widespread protests from seamen and their unions.

In September the Brim company in Akureyri in northern Iceland set up a subsidiary to operate one of its trawlers, the *Sólbakur*, and drew up an "agreement" that reduces the size of the crew and increases the workload by 20 percent for those still on the job. It also revoked a clause in the previous contract under which each trawler stops for a minimum of 30 hours, and sets wages on a monthly basis instead of for each fishing tour. Workers said they were told they could not join a union.

Unlike Brim, one of the largest companies in the fishing industry here, the new company is not a member of either of the two employer organizations—the Confederation of Icelandic Employers (SA) and the Federation of Icelandic Fishing Vessel Owners (LIU).

Everyone on the *Sólbakur* crew signed the deal. Brim had tried earlier, unsuccessfully, to sign a similar contract with seamen on another trawler, *Gudmundur í Nesi*.

Gudmundur Kristjánsson, manager of Brim, has defended the deal as a matter of "freedom of association," as have other fishing capitalists.

When the *Sólbakur* docked in Akureyri October 5, eight officials of the seamen's unions tried to stop its unloading by parking their cars on the docks. After a daylong stalemate, the local police arrested the unionists and brought them in for questioning next day. The trawler was unloaded, but the workers doing the job decided, at the urging of the board of their union, that this would be the last time they unloaded the ship under these conditions.

This comes at a time when the unions are negotiating a new contract with the LIU—they haven't signed a new accord in more than a decade. The workers are now preparing a strike vote. They have been on strike a few times, but the government has always used antilabor legislation to order them back to work.

The employers' main demand has been to reduce size of the crews on trawlers. The central union demand is for the entire catch to be brought to market where it can be sold at a higher price. In many cases, the same company owns both the trawler and the processing factory, thus setting a lower price. The seamen's income is largely tied to the total value of the catch.

Saevar Gunnarsson, chairperson of the Icelandic Seamen Federation, said a contract could be signed without the participation of the union only if the agreement meets the minimum terms of the existing contract. On that basis, he said, the *Sólbakur* deal is illegal. "The seamen's unions will use all the means they have and the Seamen Federation will seek aid from other trade unions to stop this," he said in an interview on state radio.

Protests have poured in from most trade unions in the country. Crews on more than 40 other trawlers and fishing boats have sent declarations supporting the actions taken by the seamen's organizations and protesting the *Sólbakur* deal. Other employers, especially those in the fishing industry, view the deal as a trial balloon in their effort to drive down wages and conditions. While denying any responsibility for Brim's actions, they have endorsed the contract wholeheartedly.

Meanwhile, a small fight developed on *Sléttbakur*, another Brim trawler. The crew had been called on board the morning after the unloading of *Sólbakur*. According to the general contract, the crew doesn't have to work while the trawler is in harbor and the boat has to leave within an hour after the crew is on board. When the owners vio-

lated these provisions, the crew contacted their union and the owner was instructed to follow the contract. This meant the company had to release the workers and call them back, which delayed departure for four hours.

At many ports across the country, unions voted not to unload *Sólbakur*. When the ship came to harbor October 13 in Akureyri, the company obtained an injunction to bar the workers from stopping the unloading of the trawler. The seamen's organizations have decided to bring the matter to the labor regulation court.

In a similar attack on labor, Iceland Express, a low-fare airline, announced plans to lay off all 40 of its flight attendants effective January 1. In an interview with *Fréttablaðið* Ólafur Hauksson, head of public relations for the airline, said "We need to add to the work hours of the flight attendants and we are not confident that we can reach an acceptable solution through traditional methods here in this country, that is, through negotiations."

In order to continue working for Iceland Express the flight attendants must resign from their trade unions. Then they might be rehired through Astraeus, a contracting-out company. In an interview with *Fréttablaðið* Ásdís Eva Hannesdóttir, chairperson for the Icelandic Cabin Crew Association, said this is a new situation for the labor movement in Iceland. "This has not happened before, that an Icelandic company lays off its Icelandic employees to rehire them through a foreign contracting-out company and on foreign terms," she said.

The fishing industry bosses claim that their profit rates are down, and that must cut labor costs. This means going after the unions. The owners of Iceland Express face fierce competition on European routes

## Australia unionists protest asbestos exposure

BY AL MITCHELL  
AND ROB GARDNER

SYDNEY, Australia—More than 20,000 trade unionists and their supporters gathered in major cities across Australia September 15 to demand "make James Hardie pay." James Hardie Industries, for decades the largest manufacturer of asbestos products in Australia, has become embroiled in a scandal after it shifted its corporate headquarters to the Netherlands in 2001, leaving a fund set up to cover compensation for asbestos-caused diseases A\$2 billion (U.S.\$ 1.45 billion) short of expected liabilities.

Chanting "James Hardie knew, pay the victims now," a rally of around 5,000 in Sydney wound its way through city streets to protest outside the company's annual shareholders' meeting. Bernie Banton, a vice president of the Asbestos Diseases Foundation of Australia (ADFA), who suffers from mesothelioma, a rapidly-growing malignant lung tumor, told the marchers, "We're here to let Hardies know we are not going away. We are going to fight until we get justice for victims and their families."

The same day, about 15,000 people marched in Melbourne, with protests also taking place in Brisbane, Adelaide, and Hobart.

Speaking at a Militant Labor Forum in Sydney on September 29, Barry Robson, a retired Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) official who is the president of ADFA, outlined the long history of the fight for fair compensation for the victims of asbestos diseases and their families.

"Cases are going to grow and grow," in coming years, he said. "That is why the fund needs to be topped up." Focusing on the dockworkers' experience, Robson said that the MUA had a policy of sending a union representative to every asbestos-related funeral of a dockworker—"about

## Quebec poultry workers strike over hours, wages



Militant/Natalie Stake-Doucet

MONTREAL—About 80 poultry workers, members of the Confederation of National Trade Unions, went on strike here September 13 against Volailles Marvid. The workers, in their majority Haitians, are demanding more hours of work and a higher wage. The union contract expired in December 2003.

The owners of Volailles Marvid, which produces kosher chicken, had added another production line months ago that increased the number of workers but at the same time reduced the workweek to about 20 hours, said pickets. And even the 20 hours are not guaranteed. Working conditions are also a big question. "We walked out to demand sufficient hours but also for better working conditions," said Kalil Sy, who has worked for two years as a production line butcher. "They are treating us like animals."

Every Sunday the workers organize a barbecue accompanied by music and singing at the same time as the bosses and their relatives try to do some production. They are pictured above during such an activity on October 17.

—SEBASTIEN DESAUTELS

and use this to justify their attacks on the unions. The problem the employers face, however, is that neither fishing industry workers nor flight attendants are taking these attacks sitting down and are backed by many other workers who see it as their cause as well.

At the same time, a nationwide strike by more than 4,000 teachers has entered its

fifth week. The September 20 walkout has shut down all public schools for students between the ages of 6 and 16, affecting 45,000 students (see issue no. 37 of the *Militant*). The teachers remain united in spite of an ongoing media campaign against them. More than 1,000 teachers packed a theater for a rally on October 11 and are planning a march for October 20.

one a month" in recent times. Along with the metalworkers and construction workers unions, the MUA played a key role in setting up ADFA, he said.

Asbestos is a fibrous mineral widely used for decades in the manufacture of building, fireproofing, and insulation materials, and brakes, among other products. It causes a range of diseases, often many years after exposure to its fibers. Asbestosis is "like breathing wet cement," Robson said, while mesothelioma can kill someone within months of the first symptoms.

Around the world, about 100,000 people die every year from these diseases. A leading Australian asbestos disease statistician has estimated that 27,000 people have died so far in Australia from asbestos-related diseases, with another 27,000 expected to die by 2020.

Hardie manufactured asbestos until 1987, becoming one of the "blue chip" companies in Australia in the process. Some 3,000 people have sued Hardie for compensation to date. The trust fund set up by the corporation to cover compensation payments is expected to be exhausted in two to three years if more funds are not allocated to it.

"Fibro" wall cladding made from asbestos was widely used as a building material after World War II, due to a shortage of other materials and a shortage of building tradespeople during the war, Robson said at the forum. In the early 1950s, half the houses built in New South Wales were made of "fibro." While two small asbestos mines operated in Australia, most of the asbestos used was imported from Canada.

Robson worked on the docks in Sydney for 37 years, the last eight as a full-time official of the MUA's Sydney branch. While containerization and a sharp drop in imports had ended direct handling of asbestos by waterside workers after 1975,

in earlier decades bags of asbestos were unloaded manually with wharfies (dockworkers) getting covered in dust and fibers, he said. Direct exposure continued when the material was shipped in on large pallets with the bags often shifting and splitting open. Asbestos would go right through the cargo holds and across the docks "like snow," Robson explained, with wharfies demanding "dirt money" if conditions got too dusty. Some workers got suspended for up to three days if they refused to work in these conditions, he said.

In the late 1990s, in the course of fighting for compensation for a wharfie dying of mesothelioma, the union uncovered a letter written by a port authority doctor in the 1950s saying, according to Robson, that "we don't want the union to find out" about the dangers of asbestos.

Following an inquiry established by the New South Wales state government into the asset-stripping that was aimed at limiting the company's legal liability to compensation claims, Hardie bosses announced that they would meet future payments "voluntarily." The Australian Securities and Investments Commission has announced that it is to investigate whether Hardie executives lied to the share market about its coverage for asbestos liabilities.

Ivan McMurray, a 63-year-old refractory bricklayer who is dying of asbestosis after handling Hardie products for two decades, is one of many speaking out in support of a ban on Hardie products. "I don't want to see them get away with it," he told the *Sydney Morning Herald* September 23, adding that the government inquiry had left too much "squirmy room" for the company. Some 50 construction union members walked off the job on an unsafe housing demolition site after McMurray had addressed them, the *Herald* reported.