

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Rafael Cancel Miranda talks about fight to free Cuban 5
— PAGES 7-8

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 76/NO. 38 OCTOBER 22, 2012

Join 9-week drive to win new readers to 'Militant'!

BY LOUIS MARTIN

The *Militant* has set the dates for a nine-week international subscription campaign beginning Oct. 13 aimed at giving the biggest boost to its working-class readership base in years. The drive will run until Dec. 16. All new and renewed subscriptions sold since Sept. 29 will count toward the effort.

READERS ORGANIZE TO SPREAD 'MILITANT' FAR AND WIDE

A chart with the campaign's overall and local goals will be printed in the issue to be mailed Oct. 18. We are looking forward to adding cities and towns that haven't been on the chart in recent years. Make sure to get your region on it by sending your local quota by 8 a.m. EDT, Tues., Oct. 16.

We urge all our readers to join this effort. The backbone of the campaign will be going door to door in working-class neighborhoods, in big and small towns as well as in rural areas.

Four books on revolutionary work—
Continued on page 3

'We need to fight for big gov't job program'

SWP pres. candidate speaks in UK



James Harris, right, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. president, talks with Oliver Jones after campaign meeting in Manchester, England, Sept. 29. Harris said workers in U.S. and U.K. face similar attacks by bosses, including unemployment, speedup and use of temporary workers.

BY CATHARINA TIRSEN

MANCHESTER, England—"What is the most important thing you bring to the presidential campaign that is currently missing?" Jackie Burton asked Socialist Workers Party U.S. presidential candidate James Harris in an Oct. 1 interview by Peace FM Radio Manchester.

We are the only campaign giving voice to the interests of the working class, Harris answered.

"None of the capitalist politicians are putting forward a jobs program here in the U.K. or in the U.S. And workers face massive unemployment," Harris said. "We put forward the idea there should be a massive public works program, government financed, to provide the jobs that are needed."

The SWP candidates explain that this would put those of us without jobs to work at union-scale pay, build—
Continued on page 4

Production, trade slow in US, China and Europe

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

From the U.S. to Europe to China, the worldwide economic crisis is marked by a long-term trend of slowing production, trade and employment. In the short term, there is as yet no sign of a conjunctural upturn.

Global trade, which has grown an average of 6 percent a year over the past two decades, is projected by the World Trade Organization to expand this year by only 2.5 percent, half its volume the year before.

In the Port of Los Angeles, the nation's largest, outbound containers fell 10.5 percent in August from a year ago. That same month in China's Shanghai port, the world's largest by volume, shipping containers passing its quays declined by 6 percent.

"Outright declines in world trade volumes are rare," notes the *Wall Street Journal*. "Apart from the severe 12 percent drop in 2009, total world trade declined only three times in the past half century."

Manufacturing and exports are slowing in China, the world's second-largest economy. In September, Chinese industrial production contracted for the 11th consecutive month, according to an HSBC report, with new export orders declining to its lowest rate in three-and-a-half years.

This year the Chinese economy
Continued on page 9

South Africa miners undeterred by firings, evictions, cop attacks



Miners on strike against Gold Fields in Carletonville, South Africa, after eviction from company housing, Oct. 2. Three days later, bosses allowed workers to return as strike continues.

BY SETH GALINSKY

October 10—Some 80,000 miners in South Africa—out of some 500,000 workers at mines across the country—are engaged in wildcat strikes in at least five provinces.

Mining bosses are firing workers, evicting some from company-owned housing and threatening to shut down mine shafts. President Jacob Zuma has called on miners to go back

to work and his African National Congress government has sent in cops to bust up demonstrations. The ANC led the fight that overturned the white supremacist regime in 1994, and has been the ruling party since.

Miners and other workers across the country were inspired by rock drillers at the Lonmin Platinum Marikana mine who won a 22 percent
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US-led sanctions drive fall of rial, Iranian workers press wage raise

BY EMMA JOHNSON

Under pressure of economic sanctions imposed by Washington and its allies aimed at forcing the Iranian government to abandon its program of nuclear research, Iran's currency,

the rial, plunged 40 percent against the dollar the last week of September.

The imperialists' squeeze is having some of its intended effects: deepening hardship for working people in order to destabilize the regime and widening fissures within Iran's ruling class.

The currency plunge led to a strike by
Continued on page 2

Romney-Obama debate: 'Rich do fine either way'

BY JOHN STUDER

NEW YORK—"I asked a worker from Cablevision yesterday what she thought about the debate," Róger

MILITANT LABOR FORUM

Calero, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate in New York, told a Militant Labor Forum here Oct. 5. "The first sentence out of her mouth
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ILWU protests 1-day jail term for union president

BY EDWIN FRUIT

LONGVIEW, Wash.—On Oct. 1, 75 longshore workers and their supporters accompanied Robert McEllrath, international president of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, to the Cowlitz County Justice Center to serve a one-day jail sentence.

McEllrath was convicted by a Cowlitz County jury Sept. 28 on misdemeanor charges of obstructing a train.

The union president is among some 75 members and supporters of the ILWU who faced trumped-up charges for their part in union protests last year against EGT Development's refusal to employ ILWU members at its grain terminal here.

"I want to thank everyone for their support," McEllrath told the crowd. "This is about the union and we must stick together."

The ILWU and its supporters conducted protests, held rallies and maintained 24-hour picket lines over an eight-month period before EGT agreed in February 2012 to hire members of the ILWU.

"What's happening in this country against the middle class is wrong, and I have no regrets," McEllrath said at his sentencing.

McEllrath was first acquitted last June as a result of a hung jury. But the Cowlitz County prosecutor's office decided to retry the case.

"Everyone has put this behind us except the Cowlitz County prosecutor's office," Dan Coffman, president of ILWU Local 21 in Longview, told

the *Militant* in a phone interview. This is the price that working people pay for fighting for their rights."

In addition to McEllrath, three other union members were sentenced to jail time. Union member William "Sonny" Halliday, is currently serving a 120-day jail sentence. Members Ronald Stavis and Byron Jacobs served jail sentences earlier this year.

Supporters of the *Militant* were distributing the newspaper at the hiring hall of ILWU Local 19 in Seattle when word of the conviction came down. Longshore workers said their fellow ILWU members from San Diego to Alaska had walked off the job from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. earlier that evening.

Coffman also talked to the *Militant* about ongoing contract negotiations between the union and grain compa-



Militant/John Naubert

International Longshore and Warehouse Union rally Oct. 1 in front of Cowlitz County Jail in Kelso, Wash., before ILWU President Robert McEllrath went to jail. McEllrath is tallest at left.

nies along the West Coast. "They want more concessions, more management rights and the elimination of jobs. The grain companies are making huge

profits, including subsidies from the U.S. government. This is part of the corporate greed that is occurring all around the country."

Sanctions hit Iran's economy, working people

Continued from front page

currency traders and bazaar merchants, and clashes between riot police and demonstrators in Tehran Oct. 3.

More significant than the traders' and bazaar protests is a petition workers delivered Sept. 22 to the Minister of Welfare, Labor and Social Affairs with 10,000 signatures from factories around the country, protesting the high cost of living and demanding increased wages.

An earlier petition was delivered June 16, also with 10,000 signatures. Organizers say that so far they have had no response from the minister and that 10,000 more signatures are on the way.

"Since last year ... and especially in the past few months, the living expenses have risen several fold. ... This staggering increase in prices ... has taken place while the median salary of us workers has only risen by 13 percent," the petition says.

Among the signers are workers in mines, steel mills, construction, engine manufacturing, rail and pharmaceuticals.

Jafar Azimzadeh, one of the petition organizers, told the Associated Press Oct. 1 that unless the government finds ways to prop up wages and rein in prices "workers would not stay at the level of writing petitions. They would go toward street gatherings and other actions."

Prices for food, rent and transportation have doubled since last year. Meat and rice, staples in Iran, have risen 48 and 34 percent respectively.

Since 2006 the UN Security Council has imposed four rounds of sanctions against Iran. The U.S. and European Union have leveled their own additional punitive measures. At the end of 2011 the Barack Obama administration adopted sanctions targeting foreign finan-

cial institutions that do business with Iran's national bank, aimed at hampering Tehran's oil sales. A month later the EU imposed an oil embargo and froze the bank's foreign assets.

Iran relies on crude oil exports for 80 percent of its foreign income. Oil production has fallen by more than half in a year. The country's oil revenues have declined by \$40 billion since the beginning of 2012. At the end of 2011 the International Monetary Fund estimated Iran's currency reserve to be \$106 billion. Today it's somewhere between \$50 and \$70 billion. And some of it is frozen in accounts outside the country.

In early October Parliament Speaker Ari Larijani said President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's government is responsible for 80 percent of the economic problems Iran faces.

In a speech at the UN Sept. 27 Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that military action would not be necessary before mid-2013—a marked step back from his previous call for immediate action as sanctions against Iran take their toll.

THE MILITANT

Protests against austerity drive in Europe

Tens of thousands have joined recent marches and protest strikes in Greece, Spain and Portugal against attacks on working people. "Governments change, but the attacks continue," Vangelis Anastopoulos, a worker in Athens, told the 'Militant.'



March in Thessaloniki, Greece, during Sept. 26 nationwide protest strike.

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant's* views. These are expressed in editorials.

Join 9-week 'Militant' drive

Continued from front page
ing-class politics will be offered at reduced prices with a subscription. (See ad on this page.)

The response so far to our call for readers to join this effort shows the potential that exists to mobilize hundreds of them to expand the reach of the paper.

"The *Militant* isn't just about what is going on right here. It also has articles like these here on China and South Africa and Greece. That's why I really like this paper," Kenneth Davidson from Palestine, Texas, said when he met last weekend with *Militant* supporters Jacquie Henderson and Michael Fitzsimmons from Houston.

Davidson is the president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in Palestine and a long-time fighter for Black rights. He subscribed to the *Militant* and bought the *Workers Power* book at the June NAACP national convention in Houston, where he met James Harris, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president.

"I've been reading this paper for many years. You should get a subscription to keep informed of the struggles of the working class." This is how *Militant* subscriber Juan Valadez introduced himself as he was going door to door with Fredy Huinil and Jacob Perasso in his neighborhood in South Omaha last weekend. Valadez works at Excel Beef, one of the city's big meatpacking plants.

The three *Militant* readers sold two subscriptions to the paper over the course of the afternoon and got the names of two workers who want them to come another time for more discussion.

"I was struck by the number of people we met who initially thought there was nothing working people could do, but were convinced to read the *Militant*," Lilian Julius commented after going door to door in the working-class neighborhood of East Acton in London. A teacher, she has been reading the *Militant* for three years. "One worker who subscribed had recently arrived

from Greece. He was keen to find other people involved in struggles."

In Manchester, England, Roberto Carrasco, a student from Mexico, joined *Militant* supporters going door to door in the Moss Side area of the city. All together they sold three subscriptions and 13 single copies of the paper, as well as one copy of *The Cuban Five* book.

"Today, I met working people like I never have during my two years here," Carrasco said afterward.

Militant supporters in New York went to a Communications Workers of America meeting in the Bronx Oct. 3 where members were discussing a contract agreement with Verizon that covers 34,000 workers from Virginia to Massachusetts. CWA workers returned to work without a new contract after a two-week strike in the summer of 2011. Votes on the new contract will take place by mail ballot later in October.

A number of workers at the meeting knew the *Militant* and its support for last year's strike because they got a copy on the picket line during the walkout. They bought a total of 13 subscriptions and 23 single copies of the paper.

"Sign up for the subscription. It's a great paper," Ken Spatta yelled to a worker nearby who was looking through the paper. He decided to get the subscription. Spatta had renewed his subscription for a year a few months before.

Guilford College student Samir Hazboun was joined Oct. 4 by two Socialist Workers Party members from Atlanta at a table on the campus in Greensboro, N.C., publicizing the *Militant* and a coming meeting for Harris.

"I was completely caught off guard by the amount of interest about Harris coming to speak and fellow students buying copies of the *Militant* and looking into getting subscriptions of their own," Hazboun said. He had recently ordered a weekly *Militant* bundle of five copies.

Belinda Parker-Brown from Slidell, La., recently renewed her subscription

Books on Cuban Revolution popular at Sri Lanka fair



Books on the Cuban Revolution and working-class politics published by Pathfinder Press were on display for the first time at the annual international book fair in Colombo, Sri

Lanka, one of the largest in Asia. This year's event, held Sept. 18-26, drew more than 1 million participants, organizers report.

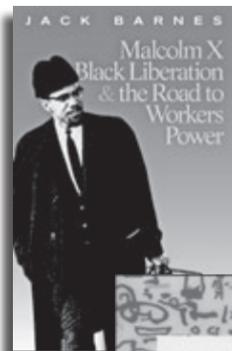
The books were prominently displayed at the stand of the Friendship Book Centre, a long-established bookseller in Colombo and one of more than 400 exhibitors at the fair.

According to Friendship owner Iqbal Mohamed, among the most popular titles were those by Fidel Castro and Ernesto Che Guevara. Other books sold included *Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution* by Vilma Espín, Asela de los Santos, and Yolanda Ferrer; *What Is Surrealism?* by André Breton; *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks*; and *Humanism and Socialism* by George Novack.

Mohomed noted that few books at the fair were available in Tamil, the language of nearly a quarter of Sri Lanka's population. Tamils are an oppressed nationality in Sri Lanka. They comprise the bulk of agricultural laborers on the country's tea, rubber, coconut, and other plantations. Many others work in garment factories and other jobs in the cities.

—MICHAEL BAUMANN

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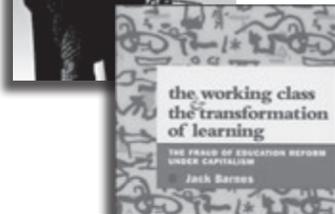


Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power

by Jack Barnes

Why the "revolutionary conquest of state power by a politically class-conscious and organized vanguard of the working class—millions strong—is necessary."

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The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free

Articles, interviews from the *Militant*

\$3 with a subscription (usually \$5)

See distributors on page 8

because, as she told Henderson who called her from Houston, she couldn't do without it.

"I love the articles, especially those by and about prisoners," she said. Parker-Brown has organized protests in Slidell against the prison system, including one on Aug. 4 where cops arrested her son for videotaping their harassment of demonstrators. She told Henderson that as soon as she finishes an issue of the *Militant*, she is giving it to someone else to read. "I want the paper to get around," she said.

The *Militant* has more subscribers behind bars than in a long time and looks forward to expanding its circulation in prisons. We call on these readers to help win fellow inmates to read and subscribe to the paper.

Subscriptions to prisoners are made possible by contributions from *Militant* readers to our Prisoners' Fund. The fund

makes it possible for inmates, often with help from friends or family, to order subscriptions at reduced rates of \$6 for every six months. Six-month subscriptions are also offered free of charge for those who have no means to pay.

"I am going to show this paper to some of the people at work," new Miami subscriber Chiquita Thomas said. She especially likes the fact that the *Militant* explains how the bosses and their politicians have no solution to the economic crisis, except attacking working people. Thomas bought her subscription from a team of *Militant* readers going door to door in the mostly Black neighborhoods of South Miami and Coconut Grove.

Send me your reports, comments, quotes and photos by 9 a.m. EDT every Monday. You can order subscription blanks and *Militant* bundles at themilitant@mac.com or (212) 244-4899.



Militant/Michael Fitzsimmons

Kenneth Davidson, *Militant* subscriber and NAACP president in Palestine, Texas, talks Oct. 6 with Jacquie Henderson, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from Texas, about *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes.

'It's what workers and farmers do, not elections, that matters'

BY PAUL DAVIES

LONDON—During his tour of the United Kingdom, James Harris, Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate, was invited by dairy and beef farmers Peter and Youllette Parkes to visit their farm in Surrey and discuss what farmers and workers face today.

The Parkes have been involved in a series of actions outside dairy processors protesting cuts in what dairy farmers receive for their milk.

Over the last decade supermarket chains have steeply increased the percentage they get from the sale of milk at the expense of farmers. This adds to the squeeze processors lay on them.

As a result, the number of dairy farmers fell from 35,741 in 1995 to 14,793 in 2011.

"The molasses we need to supplement our animal feed has risen from 35 pence a liter to 85 pence," (1 pence=US 2 cents) Youllette Parkes told Harris. Peter Parkes pointed to one of their parched fields, saying, "We can't afford to dig it up and reseed it, so I'm having to dig ponds to drain off some of the water."

"Small farmers are being driven off the land in the U.S.," Harris said. "Farmers should be guaranteed their costs of production so they can make a living. Workers and farmers produce all the wealth, but have no control over it. Food should not be a commodity, it is a basic human need."

"Farmers and workers at the processing plants produce the milk, but the dairies take all the profit," he added.

"Workers are being made to pay for the crisis," Peter Parkes replied. "We

need to get rid of the government bureaucracy."

"There are two ways to approach a problem—ask some experts, set up a commission and pay them some money, or call on working people to volunteer to deal with it," said Harris. "But for that workers need political power. Without that, then even when you win some victories, all the problems will just keep coming back."

"So how do we change that?" Youllette Parkes asked. "The rich are getting richer at our expense and they have ways of getting around taxes."

"It won't be changed by elections, but by working people organizing," Harris replied. "It'll be what regular workers and farmers like yourselves do that matters. Every gain we make is made through struggle."

Harris: 'Fight for gov't-funded jobs program'

Continued from front page
ing public facilities workers need—housing, schools, medical, recreation and child care centers, and to replace crumbling infrastructure.

Harris was also interviewed on the BBC Radio Manchester program "The People." "Workers here face the same things as we do: speedup on the job, unemployment, the casualization of the labor market," Harris said.

Harris was joined by Peter Clifford, Communist League candidate in the Nov. 15 parliamentary by-election in Manchester Central, at a Militant Labor Forum Sept. 29.

"Who is elected president is not the central question workers face," Harris said. "It is the massive movements of the working class that will change the world. That is where working people have their strength."

"Look at the miners in South Africa who won a wage raise despite the police crackdown that killed 34 of them," Harris explained. "These miners are heroes, and they are the union. They stayed out despite the leadership of both unions urging them to go back. And now 75,000 miners are on strike."

"There is caution among working people, who are a bit weighed down by fear of losing jobs and income," Clifford said. "At the same time many know that the crisis is not going away, so they are open to getting a working-class view of developments in today's world."

SWP vice pres. candidate joins Chicago protest



Militant/Laura Anderson

Maura DeLuca, left, Socialist Workers Party candidate for vice president, meets with a group of young workers after participating in Oct. 4 protest at a construction site on Chicago's South Side demanding an end to racist hiring practices where new Meijer and Menards stores are being built.

"We advance the need for a government-funded public works program here also," Clifford added. "That's needed to overcome divisions between employed and unemployed and to overcome fear."

"What we are fighting for has nothing in common with the 'big government socialism' that makes decisions in the interests of the capitalists over the heads of the working class," said Clifford, referring to the Labour Party conference taking place the same weekend in Manchester. "They say they want a 'fairer Britain' and claim electing them will mean less pain for working people. But pain is what they have in store for us as much as the Conservatives."

The forum was attended by 29 people, including five who had subscribed to the *Militant* through sales efforts in working-class areas leading up to the meeting.

Two days later Harris met with Kelechi Nzeribe, 18, who along with his father Amodi Nzeribe and uncle Ikem Nzeribe, told Harris how he had been stopped by a police officer on the way to see his mother.

"I asked the police why do you stop me?" Kelechi Nzeribe said. "I don't have any drugs. Then the police put his hands on me."

In the shuffle that followed, more cops were called in, and Kelechi was arrested. He had just been convicted in court on trumped-up charges of assaulting two police officers.

"This is what the police do. It is the purpose of the police to put fear in working people. Crime and antisocial behavior is just an excuse," Harris said. "They aim to break people who can become fighters, to teach you to know your place."

"But what can we do about it?" Amodi asked. "What do Black politicians in the U.S. do about young Blacks being stopped on the street?"

"They don't do anything, because they don't represent the working class. That is why the Socialist Workers Party is standing candidates," said Harris. "We need a political, working class organization to take these things up. As it is now it is up to the individual families. It was not until Trayvon Martin's parents kept raising his case that it received wide attention."

While in Manchester Harris also met with members of Anthony Grainger's family. Grainger had been shot dead by the Manchester police on March 3. The family registered a small victory Sept. 22 when the Manchester Crown Court cleared Grainger and the three friends who were with him in the car when he was killed of the charge "conspiracy to rob."

"I was asleep till they killed our Anthony," Grainger's cousin Wesley Ahmed told Harris, "Now I can see how the police act as judge, jury and executioner. I am determined to press for prosecution of the police who killed him."

Peter Clifford contributed to this article.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Education Under Capitalism: A Panel Discussion. Fri., Oct. 19, 7:30 p.m. 4025 S. Western Ave. Tel.: (323) 295-2600.

IOWA

Des Moines

Fight for a Public Works Program to Create Jobs! Speaker: Ellen Brickley, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Oct. 19, 7:30 p.m. 3707 Douglas Ave. Tel.: (515) 707-1779.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

What's Behind the Unfolding Events in the Middle East. Why Working People Should Oppose U.S. Intervention. Fri., Oct. 12, 7:30 p.m. 13 Bennington St., 2nd floor. Tel.: (617) 569-9169.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

Our Politics Start With the World. Speakers: James Harris, Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate; others. Sat., Oct. 20. Dinner, 5:30 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. Bethany United Church, 6230 Beacon Ave. S. Tel.: (206) 323-1755.

CANADA

Montreal

October 1962: The Missile Crisis, When Revolutionary Cuba Made Washington Back Down. Speaker: Katy LeRougetel, Communist League. Sat., Oct. 20, 4 p.m. 7107 St-Denis, room 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

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The working class, labor, socialist campaign

- Yes, I urge workers and youth to give a hearing to the working class alternative in 2012, Socialist Workers Party candidates James Harris for president and Maura DeLuca for vice president.
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NAACP asks UN to condemn discriminatory US election law

BY JOHN STUDER

"We remain deeply concerned with the continued practice and discriminatory impact of felony disenfranchisement" in the U.S., Lorraine Miller, chair of the NAACP's advocacy and policy committee, told the United Nations Human Rights Council Sept. 25 in Geneva.

On behalf of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, which led a U.N. panel on voter disenfranchisement in the U.S., Miller called on the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Racism to "investigate racially discriminatory election laws" and urged the council "to examine these practices and make recommendations that will restore the political and voting rights of all citizens with particular focus on the formerly incarcerated."

There are nearly 5.9 million working people in the U.S. who are denied the right to vote because they were convicted at one time on a felony charge.

"More than 2 million are African-American," Miller said, "yet African-Americans make up less than 13 percent of the U.S. population."

According to the Sentencing Project, that is one out of every 13 Blacks of voting age. In three states—Florida, Kentucky and Virginia—the figure is one in five.

After the overthrow of slavery in the Civil War, the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution of 1870 guaranteed former slaves the right to vote. But poll taxes, literacy tests and other counterrevolutionary measures imposed shortly thereafter—part of the overthrow of progressive Radical Reconstruction governments in the South and the imposition of Jim Crow segregation—blocked its realization for the vast majority.

Kemba Smith Pradia, an advocate for rights of ex-prisoners, was among several others who spoke on the NAACP panel. She quoted a 1901 speech by Virginia state Democratic delegate Carter Glass saying these voting restrictions "will eliminate the darkey as a political factor in this State in less than 5 years, so that in no single county ... will there be the least concern felt for the complete supremacy of the white race in the affairs of government."

These anti-working-class voter restrictions—including felony disenfranchisement—were beaten back by the rise of the massive proletarian movement for Black rights in the 1950s and '60s. In particular, it forced the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965, which barred states from adopting laws that

had a racist impact on the right to vote.

Over the last few years there has been a growing campaign to re-impose voter restrictions. Historically bipartisan and originally pressed by Democrats, these efforts today are largely being led by Republican politicians seeking immediate electoral advantage.

In 14 states new laws have been passed that include 25 measures aimed at restricting access to registering and voting.

These measures include requiring state-issued photo identification for registration, lengthening residency requirements and broader denial of those convicted of a felony.

"There are 2.4 million people in prison or jail in this country today," Hilary Shelton, the NAACP's senior vice president for advocacy and one of its delegates to the Human Rights Council



Schomburg Center/New York Public Library

Blacks in Lincoln County, Ga., recently enfranchised under 15th Amendment in 1870, ford a creek rifles in hand on their way to the polls. To exercise right to vote during Radical Reconstruction, African-Americans needed disciplined organization and self-defense.

meeting, told the *Militant*. "The U.S. is the largest incarcerator in the world. Six hundred thousand are released each year, many of whom will not have a voice or vote because they will be disenfranchised. Forty percent of those will

be African-Americans."

"As the criminal justice system has expanded, so too has its impact on the right to vote," Mark Mauer, executive director of the Sentencing Project, told the *Militant*.

Bronx DA says won't prosecute stop-and-frisk 'trespassing'

BY RÓGER CALERO

BRONX, N.Y.—The district attorney's office here announced Sept. 26 it will no longer automatically prosecute people charged with trespassing under the New York Police Department's "Operation Clean Halls" program. The unusual step comes as city and police officials face a class-action lawsuit for constitutional rights violations under the program.

Under "Operation Clean Halls" residents and visitors are stopped and questioned in lobbies, hallways and other areas in public housing developments and private apartment buildings where landlords have enrolled in the program. Many are arrested on bogus charges, often "trespassing" for not producing proof they live in the building—even if they do or are visiting someone.

Instead of rubber stamping piles of trespassing charges, the office of District Attorney Robert Johnson will

now require cops to provide some justification.

The suit *Ligon v. City of New York* was filed March 28 by 13 plaintiffs, all but two of whom are Black residents of the Bronx. It charges the city, Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly and 17 city cops with numerous rights violations as established under the Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution against illegal search and seizure; the First and 14th Amendments on the right to association, assembly, and equal protection; the New York Constitution; and the Fair Housing Act; as well as state laws against false arrest, false imprisonment, assault and battery, and malicious prosecution.

"Operation Clean Halls" is part of the NYPD's broader stop-and-frisk program, which has garnered widespread criticism for its arbitrary racist character. Nearly 700,000 New Yorkers were stopped by the police de-

partment last year—87 percent were Black or Latino.

"I disapprove of people being harassed, especially because of their race," said Erica Rivera, 25, to the *Militant*, in her apartment building in the Concourse neighborhood in Bronx.

"They come into my building and I don't even look at them because I am afraid they would stop me," Juan Martínez, another Concourse resident, told the *Militant*. Martínez went on to describe how he and his son have been harassed repeatedly by cops posted around the area.

Ariel Siatt, 20, got a citation when he and his friend sat in front of a high school in Brooklyn. "It would take longer to tie your shoes than how long we sat for," he said. "They jumped on us, and took our college IDs." Siatt is a student at New York City College of Technology in Brooklyn, and a restaurant worker in Manhattan. He is scheduled to appear in court in two weeks.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



October 23, 1987

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador—A billboard on the road from the airport to downtown San Salvador proclaims, "Welcome to Salvadoran Democracy." But the true face of this U.S.-backed regime is revealed by the continued and increasing use of terror against all opponents of the government.

Kidnappings, disappearances, and official and unofficial acts of repression have been on the rise in recent months, as José Napoleón Duarte's regime tries to intimidate all political and working-class opposition to his rule.

In May a bomb destroyed the offices of a coalition of three committees of mothers of the disappeared and political prisoners. That same month a leader of the National Union of Salvadoran Workers was shot while protesting outside the Mariona Prison, where many victims of the regime are held, often without being charged. Recently political prisoners were attacked by prison guards and soldiers.



October 22, 1962

The great majority of the American people are opposed to a U.S. military attack against Cuba. President John F. Kennedy has begun to court this majority sentiment by attacking Republican advocates of immediate invasion. At the same time he continues his efforts to strangle the Cuban Revolution and preparations for a direct U.S. military assault at some future time.

While the American people have been blinded to the truth about the Cuban Revolution by the propaganda barrage, they are nevertheless opposed to flaunting world opinion or risking nuclear war over Cuba.

The only reason there hasn't been any shooting incidents directly involving U.S. and Cuban forces so far is because the Cubans have refrained from responding to provocation—and the provocations are great. James Reston reported in the Oct. 12 *Times* that the Kennedy administration "is sending its planes over Cuba night and day."

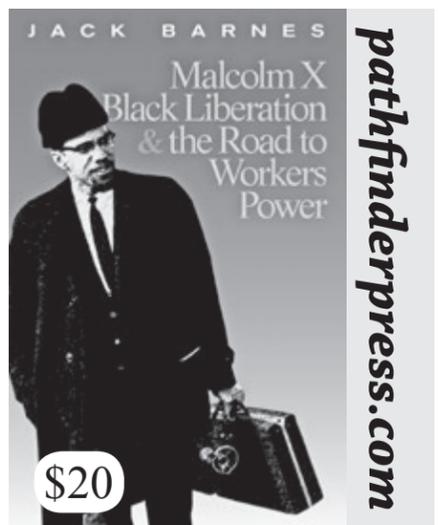


October 23, 1937

Since September 13, a trial, silently ignored by the American press, has been taking place at the city of Ponce, Puerto Rico. The eleven nationalist defendants, including Julio Pinto Gandia, President of the Nationalist Party, are accused of assassinating an insular policeman who was killed during the premeditated police machine gun attack upon a nationalist demonstration on March 21, 1937.

The Nationalist Party of Puerto Rico calls for the independence of that island from the United States. The Roosevelt administration which so hypocritically condemns Japanese violation of Chinese territorial integrity in the name of "humanitarianism" and "civilization," has been ruthlessly suppressing the national aspirations of the Puerto Rican people. The nationalists are constantly being terrorized, hounded and incarcerated.

For the right of the Puerto Rican people to their independence!



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Factory workers organize protest strike in Indonesia

BY PATRICK BROWN
AND BASKARAN APPU

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Hundreds of thousands of factory workers took part in a nationwide protest strike in Indonesia Oct. 3, the first such action there for nearly half a century.

The strike was called to protest the growth of “outsourcing”—replacing permanent workers with contract labor—and to press for an increase in the minimum wage, which in the capital Jakarta amounts to about 1,500 million rupiah per month (US\$156). Other demands were put forward around health insurance and retirement incomes.

“This is just the beginning,” said Rini Kusnadi in a phone interview from Jakarta Oct. 5. Kusnadi is head of the women’s department of the National Union Confederation (KSN), one of the participating unions.

“The worst thing that is happening right now is outsourcing,” said Kusnadi. “The underlying problem is that 14 years after *reformasi*, workers’ lives have gotten harder.”

Reformasi is a popular term for the period after the downfall of the military-based dictatorship of Suharto, who resigned in 1998. The fight against the Suharto regime brought greater political rights for working people. Recent years have also seen a rapid rise in foreign and domestic capital investment and industrial development.

According to the Oct. 2 *Jakarta Globe*, Said Iqbal, chairperson of the Confederation of Indonesian Workers Union (KSPI), said among the issues of the strike is opposition to the proposal under new legislation to make “workers pay 2 percent of their wages towards health insurance.”

The Indonesian Workers Assembly (MPBI), and the Indonesian Metal Workers Federation (FSPMI), made the initial strike call, reported the *Jakarta Post*.

Hundreds of thousands struck at 700 workplaces in 80 industrial estates, according to police estimates. At least 5,000 factories were affected on the islands of Java, Batam, and Sumatra, Sofyan Wanandi, chairman of the Indonesian Employers Association, told the Singapore-based *Straits Times*.

The biggest reported actions took place on Java, home to half the country’s 240 million people. In the industrial areas of Jakarta, strikers marched from workplace to workplace, encouraging others to join.

In a number of places bosses “deployed armed security personnel to prevent workers from joining the strike,” Iqbal told the *Post*.

The unions in Yogyakarta “were not big enough to close the factories,” said Mahendra, a worker for the Congress of Indonesian Unions Alliance (KASBI) in the city of nearly 400,000 people in Central Java. Instead, “we gave out leaflets outside the factories,” he told the *Militant* in an Oct. 6 phone interview.

“The strike was very significant—the first time in 50 years there’s been a nationwide strike,” said Mahendra. “It opens up the chance for negotiation and will strengthen the fight for the workers’ demands.” Above all, he said, “it increased workers’ self-confidence.”



Associated Press

Factory workers march in Cikarang, West Java, Indonesia, during one-day nationwide strike Oct. 3 to demand higher wages and protest replacing permanent workers with contract labor.

Obama-Romney debate: ‘Rich will do fine’

Continued from front page

was, “They didn’t talk about jobs.”

It was one of the most striking things about the Oct. 3 debate in Denver between Democratic President Barack Obama and his Republican challenger Mitt Romney, watched by an estimated 67 million people.

“Of course the word ‘jobs’ was used many times. But neither candidate gave even lip service to a single proposal that might address one of the most important questions in the minds of millions of workers,” Calero said. “What is going to be done to create jobs *today!*”

As Romney and Obama jostled, it became clear their programs are geared above all to boost the bosses’ profits. They sought to outdo each other in backing the propertied rulers’ drive to make U.S. capitalism more competitive than their rivals around the world on the backs of working people. Each put forward their own monetary or tax scheme they say is the best way to help businesses big and small on the pretext that what is good for business is good for all.

“The opposite course is put forward by the SWP candidates, who are kept out of the debate,” Calero said.

“We talk to working people—here and worldwide—about the need to fight for a government-funded public works program to put millions of people to work,” he continued.

The second striking thing about the “debate” was how much both candidates said they agree on, said Calero. From the next step in cutting government expenses on education and Social Security to blaming workers for taking “irresponsible” loans, causing the collapse of the housing bubble, their agreement flowed from a shared starting point—as Obama put it, “the genius of America is in the free enterprise system.”

Or as Romney put it to Obama, “the rich will do fine, whether you’re president or I am.”

The fact is, Calero said, given the impact of the economic crisis on millions of people’s lives, the election should be a shoo-in for Romney.

More than 17 million are out of work. Forty-six million live below the official poverty line, which is set lower and lower. More than 45 million are forced to turn to food stamps to get by.

“Obama said it’s not where we’ve been, but where we’re going,” said Calero. “He wishes that were true, that working people could just forget what’s been happening and put in a new CD.”

Romney confronts a challenge under these circumstances as a result of his difficulty in concealing his country club Republican attitude, sneering down on workers and dismissing huge swaths of them out of hand.

The two candidates of big business say they were debating divergent economic “policies,” Calero said. But policies didn’t create the historic crisis of capitalism—it was created by its lawful workings, its rapacious appetite for ever-accelerating accumulation that leads to inevitable crises.

And no new government policy—from the Obama administration’s so-called quantitative easing, which is essentially money printing, to Romney’s pledge to lower taxes on small business—can turn their crisis around. In fact the propertied rulers have no course. They react to the crisis of capitalism by deepening the exploitation of the working class.

The consensus of political pundits and politicians of both parties is that Romney won the debate.

Some said it was a “new Romney” who, for the first time, looked “presidential.” Most pointed to the failings of Obama. “He didn’t fight, he didn’t show, he wasn’t awake and hungry,” pro-Romney Peggy Noonan wrote in the *Wall Street Journal*.

Many commentators noted Obama dropped the populist themes his campaign had been pushing. He didn’t mention Romney’s quote on not being interested in the 47 percent of the people who supposedly don’t pay taxes, depend on the state and will vote for Obama no matter what. He didn’t try to paint Romney as a “heartless corporate raider” at Bain Capital.

“The German magazine *Der Spiegel* had a plausible explanation,” Calero pointed out, “when it said ‘Obama showed a lack of desire to be president.’”

Obama believes that he is one of the intelligent elite, Calero said, uniquely honed to know what is good for you and how government should be used to do it for and to you.

Obama appears worn out and frustrated by the lack of gratitude and “comprehension” among working people—from the toilers of the Middle East to those who “cling to guns or religion or antipathy toward people who aren’t like them,” as he described workers in Pennsylvania’s coal country at one of his 2008 fundraisers.

“Romney, on the other hand, dema-

gogically tries to appeal to workers who rightly oppose the increasing intrusion of government into their lives,” Calero said. Behind which lurks no more than a desire for faster, further cuts to social spending.

In the debate, Romney said Obama believes “that a bigger government, spending more, taxing more, regulating more—if you will, trickle-down government—would work.”

But the truth, Calero said, is that neither one of them wants to weaken the capitalist state and both fully support—and decline to speak a word about—government assaults on constitutional protections and workers rights that have accelerated over the last decade.

“The government apparatus and bureaucracy has grown under Republican and Democratic administrations alike,” Calero said.

“Communists have a different view,” he explained. “We are for the abolition of the capitalist state, for replacing it with the working class in power.”

“Workers in power will have no need for an army, or cops and prison guards or a big government bureaucracy,” Calero said. “Their repressive state will be replaced with an armed population.”

“This is the lesson of workers’ revolutions throughout the last 150 years—from the Paris Commune of 1871 to the Russian Revolution to today’s living, fighting revolution in Cuba, brought to victory in 1959 by workers and farmers under the leadership of Fidel Castro,” Calero said.

“Real changes are not possible by taking over and reforming the bosses’ government apparatus,” Calero said. “We are not for a more democratic, better run welfare state.”

After the Cuban Revolution, Calero said, they moved to wipe out illiteracy. They didn’t set up a big education bureaucracy, writing standardized tests. Workers and peasants mobilized by the tens of thousands, spread out across the country, and in less than a year illiteracy was eliminated.

“The Socialist Workers Party is getting a better hearing today than in decades. Workers deeply feel they are living through something different than they have experienced before,” Calero said. “They want to know why and what we can do about it.”

This is why *Militant* readers new and old are coming together to join this discussion and build the paper’s readership, Calero concluded.

Maoism vs. Bolshevism by Joseph Hansen

The communist alternative to Mao’s Stalinist class-collaborationist course, which in 1965 paved the way for a CIA-backed coup in Indonesia, and for which more than half a million workers, peasants and youths paid with their lives. \$12



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'By fighting for Cuban 5, we fight for ourselves'

Puerto Rican independence fighter Cancel Miranda speaks on campaign to free Cuban revolutionaries jailed in US

The following are remarks by Rafael Cancel Miranda, one of the most prominent leaders of the Puerto Rican independence struggle for nearly six decades. He was speaking at a Sept. 14 meeting in Washington, D.C., that called on the U.S. government to free Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González. The five are Cuban revolutionaries who have been imprisoned by the U.S. government on trumped-up conspiracy charges for more than 14 years.

The meeting, which drew more than 100 people, was sponsored by the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five and endorsed by local groups including the D.C. Metro Coalition to Free the Five and Takoma Park Free the Five Committee.

Cancel Miranda and four other Puerto Rican independence fighters, supporters of the Nationalist Party led by Pedro Albizu Campos, spent more than a quarter century in U.S. prisons for their pro-independence actions.

In 1954 Cancel Miranda, Lolita Lebrón, Andrés Figueroa Cordero and Irving Flores walked into the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington, unfurled a Puerto Rican flag in the balcony and fired pistols, wounding five congressmen. Convicted and given prison sentences of up to 81 years, they joined a fifth Nationalist, Oscar Collazo, imprisoned four years earlier for an armed attack on the residence of U.S. President Harry Truman.

In face of a mounting international campaign, President James Carter extended executive clemency and commuted the sentences of Figueroa Cordero in 1977 and Cancel Miranda, Lebrón, Flores and Collazo in 1979. The release of the five Nationalists—who refused anything short of their unconditional freedom—came under the pressure of a resurgent Puerto Rican independence struggle that coincided with more than a decade of massive opposition to Washington's war against the people of Vietnam, expanding struggles for Black and Chicano liberation and women's equality, and revolutionary victories

from Grenada and Nicaragua to Iran.

Cancel Miranda addressed his audience in English. Also speaking at the event were Tom Hayden, editorial board member of the *Nation*; Liz Derias of the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement; Michelle Tingling-Clemmons of the African Awareness Association; and José Pertierra, attorney for the Venezuelan government in its efforts to extradite CIA-trained Cuban counterrevolutionary Luis Posada Carriles, wanted in Venezuela on 73 counts of murder. An article on the event was published in the Oct. 1 issue of the *Militant*.

The transcription, footnotes, text in brackets and subtitles are by the *Militant*.



BY RAFAEL CANCEL MIRANDA

Thank you very much for being here.

Why do we fight for the five? Because we are fighting for ourselves.

We're not doing them a favor. We're doing *ourselves* a favor because we are fighting for us, for our freedom.

Why are the five in prison? For protecting their country. For preventing those killers from murdering their people.

You know, I've been called a terrorist. In fact, today they threatened me here in Washington. One of those rightists wrote, "A terrorist Puerto Rican is in town." That doesn't bother me. If they call me a terrorist, it means I'm doing something right. If they pat me on the shoulder, then I'm doing something wrong. [Applause]

Now, I was in the same prison with Orlando Bosch before he set off the bomb on the plane. We were both in the Marion penitentiary.¹

When they first brought him to Marion, the warden called me in saying he wanted to talk to me about something. I normally didn't talk much with the prison officials. I was taken to his office and he told me, "We're going to bring two prisoners here. If anything happens to them, you're responsible." I told the warden, "As long as they don't step on my toes, everything will be all right." I didn't even know who they were.

About a week or two later I saw them. They were Orlando Bosch and Rolando



Bill Hackwell
Rafael Cancel Miranda speaking at Sept. 14 event in Washington, D.C., on the case of the Cuban Five. Cancel Miranda spent more than 25 years in U.S. jails for armed action in support of independence for Puerto Rico.

Masferrer.² Every time these guys came in my direction, if I went this way they would go another way. See how brave Bosch was? Outside prison he would place bombs and things like that in the middle of the night. But man to man, he was a coward. He would never come close to me.

By the way, after Rolando Masferrer got out, he was killed. They had planted a bomb in his car—they would kill each other too, you know.

We have to keep alive the names of the five. For two reasons.

First, because as we fight for them—and it is a *fight*, we're fighting for their freedom—they are giving off their light and their strength while in prison.

Thanks to them—to Antonio, to Fernando, to René, to Gerardo, to Ramón—many thousands or millions of people have been enlightened about the truth of who the enemy is.

A little while ago I talked with Gerardo by phone. It was the first time we had talked. He didn't say a single word like "Oh, poor me," nothing like that. Men and women like him are strong.

But there is another reason why we must fight for the five. I once told [Cuban National Assembly President] Ricardo Alarcón that we need to keep the struggle alive because we are protecting their lives. The more people get involved in fighting for them, the more careful their jailers will be about how they handle them.

I'm here today thanks to people like

you, who kept fighting and fighting and fighting. And if I'm still alive, it's thanks to people like you. Because in the prison and in Washington, they knew there were many thousands of people watching out for us. So they were more careful.

Sometimes we get a little frustrated. I never do. Sometimes we want things to happen. But things won't happen until people make them happen. We will keep pushing, pushing.

When they learn about meetings like this, you're giving them strength. Not that they need more strength—they are strong. But I know that when we were in prison, every time I got a letter of solidarity, it made me feel good.

By the way, I told [José] Pertierra that I was in prison for 27 and a half years. The second time I spent 25 and a half years because of those firecrackers we set off in Washington in 1954.

The first time, they put me in prison for *not* shooting. And the next time they put me in prison, it was *for* shooting. It depends who you're shooting at. [Laughter and applause]

The first time they put me in prison, I was in high school in Puerto Rico. It was during the Korean War. I was 18 year old. They wanted me to be part of their army.

By the way, *they* invaded my country. They bombarded my country on May 12, 1898, killing Puerto Ricans. And on July 25, 1898, they invaded us, killing Puerto Ricans. That was done by

Continued on page 8

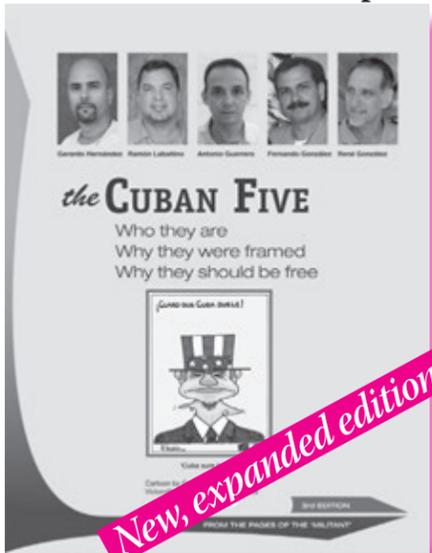
Who are the Cuban Five

Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González are Cuban revolutionaries who during the 1990s accepted assignments from the Cuban government to gather information on the activities of Cuban-American counterrevolutionary groups operating in southern Florida. These paramilitary outfits, organizing on U.S. soil with virtual impunity, have a long record of carrying out bombings, assassinations and other deadly attacks, both against targets in Cuba and supporters of the Cuban Revolution in the United States, Puerto Rico and elsewhere.

On Sept. 12, 1998, the five were arrested by the FBI. They were framed up and convicted on a variety of charges, which included acting as unregistered agents of the Cuban government and possession of false identity documents. Without a shred of evidence, three were charged with "conspiracy to gather and transmit national defense information."

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Rafael Cancel Miranda

Continued from page 7

the U.S. Army—the same army they wanted to put me in—and the Marines.

They massacred my people in Río Piedras on Oct. 24, 1935.

On March 21, 1937, they massacred my people again in Ponce, on orders from Blanton Winship.³

And then they expect us to throw them kisses and roses.

They invaded us, but they want us to say, “Thank you. You are so nice.” And they expect us to join that army to kill people in Korea and other countries.

We can be as peaceful as we want. But that doesn’t mean we have to take it, to let them do whatever they want to us. We have the right to fight back. [Applause]

As I said, I was in high school in Puerto Rico, nearly 18 years old, and they wanted to draft me into their army, to kill Korean people. But why should I? The Korean people didn’t invade my country.

I knew who invaded my country. If someone invades your country, you fight *them*, right?

They say they are not terrorists. They can kill, like they do in Iraq and Afghanistan—kill children and other people by the thousands. But those are “democratic” bombs.

When we defend ourselves, we are called “terrorists.” When Antonio defends his people, he’s a “terrorist.” Ramón, René, Gerardo, Fernando—they are terrorists because they care for their people, because they fought for

their people.

If that’s being a terrorist, Lord, make me a terrorist all of my life. [Applause and cheers]

I forgot to tell you something. Batista put me in prison, too.⁴

Now, if someone like Batista doesn’t like you, that means you’re doing something right.

How the five Nationalists were freed

Now, it was an international campaign that got me here, to be able to see people like you—an international campaign, and Cuba. When the United States government realized that having us in prison was no good for them, then they were willing to do an exchange of prisoners with Cuba.⁵ But it was because of people like you.

Carter was telling the whole world, “Human rights! We’re the champions of human rights!”

And people would say: “But you have five Nationalists in prison. How come they’ve been jailed for so long?”

You know, we could have been out of prison much earlier—four years before the exchange of prisoners. We got out of prison on Sept. 10, 1979. During the four previous years, the FBI came—again and again—to see Lolita Lebrón, Andrés Figueroa Cordero, Irving Flores, Oscar Collazo and myself in prison.

You know, we were five, too—the five Nationalists—and now we have the five Cubans. Five seems to be a magic number!



Left to right in front row, Puerto Rican Nationalists Irving Flores, Rafael Cancel Miranda, Lolita Lebrón and Andrés Figueroa Cordero following their arrest for armed protest for Puerto Rican independence inside U.S. Congress, March 1, 1954. International campaign succeeded in winning their release from prison in September 1979.

Anyway, they came to us in prison to tell us that if we asked for forgiveness, the next day we’d be out. The FBI! They acted *so nice*. ... [Laughter]

Why? Because we had become a symbol of resistance of our peoples—including Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, other countries.⁶ And they wanted to crush that symbol.

But we told them, “You are the ones who have to ask us for forgiveness. You

are the ones who bombed our country, massacred our people.”

So the international pressure was strong. And there came Fidel. When I say Fidel, I’m saying Cuba. Because if you look for a government that really represents the people, there is one—Cuba.

I was 23 years old when I walked up the steps of the Capitol. Today I’m 82 and I haven’t changed the way I think about anything.

Except that today maybe I’m a little more revolutionary, because I know the enemy better.

Today it is we who thank the Cuban Five. We thank them for the example they are giving us.

4. In reply to a question after his initial remarks, Cancel Miranda elaborated on the story of his days in Cuba in 1951–52. A coming issue of the *Militant* will reprint a fuller account of that story, which Cancel Miranda recounted in a 2006 interview entitled, “I was expelled by [U.S.-backed Fulgencio] Batista regime, embraced by Cuban revolutionaries.”

5. José Pertierra had told the audience that Cuba’s revolutionary government had offered to release four jailed U.S. agents, including admitted CIA operative Lawrence Lunt, if Washington freed the four Nationalists still in prison. It did so in September 1979, 10 days after the Puerto Rican revolutionaries returned home.

6. In 1979 revolutionary uprisings overturned U.S.-backed dictatorships and brought to power workers and farmers governments in Nicaragua and Grenada, giving an impetus to revolutionary struggles throughout Central America—especially in El Salvador and Guatemala—and more broadly around the world.

3. In 1898 the U.S. armed forces declared war with Spain and seized its colonies, including Puerto Rico. U.S. ships bombed San Juan on May 12 and U.S. troops invaded the island at Guánica on July 25 of that year. Since then Puerto Rico has remained under the U.S. colonial boot. On Oct. 24, 1935, four Nationalist Party supporters were killed by police under the command of Col. Francis Riggs at the University of Puerto Rico in Río Piedras. On March 21, 1937, police opened fire on a Nationalist Party rally in the city of Ponce, Puerto Rico, killing 21 and wounding 200. The colonial governor then was Gen. Blanton Winship, who had been appointed by U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt.

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Production

Continued from front page

is projected to expand by about 7.5 percent, notes the *Journal*, but this is its “weakest annual expansion since 1990.”

The slowing of the steel industry in China has reduced imports of metallurgical coal, causing the price of coal used for steelmaking to tumble nearly 50 percent.

Coal production is falling in the Appalachian region of the U.S., which includes West Virginia and parts of Kentucky and Virginia. Patriot Coal Corp. has laid off more than 1,200 miners as well as cut health benefits to 2,000 miners and some 20,000 retirees or surviving spouses, reported the *Journal*.

Alpha Natural Resources Inc. said it was cutting 1,200 jobs. Earlier this year it laid off 700 miners and cut production at more than 20 mines. ConsolEnergy Inc. in early September closed one of its largest mines in southwestern Virginia, which employed 620 miners.

Imports by China from nations in Asia, like Singapore and Thailand, which supply parts for goods produced for exports from China has also been declining.

Manufacturing has been dropping for some time in Greece and Spain, two of the less developed and hardest hit countries among the 17 nations that share the euro.

In Greece, which has been in a recession for the past five years, output from factories, mines and utilities fell 5 percent on the year in July, according to the Hellenic Statistical Authority. With the exception of a miniscule blip in June, industrial output has fallen for the past 50 months.

Factories there have been operating at less than 60 percent of capacity, reports the *Journal*. One-quarter of the workforce is officially unemployed and more than double that amount for youth under age 25.

In Spain, with similarly high unemployment rates, industrial sales have been steadily declining for the first seven months of 2012, down about 8 percent on the year, according to Bloomberg News.

Even Germany, the top manufacturer and strongest economy in Europe, faces an economic slowdown. Industrial production dropped for the fifth consecutive month in August, with new export orders falling at its steepest rate since April 2009, according to the Markit manufacturing data. German capitalism is heavily driven by exports, two-thirds of which go to countries in the European Union. To compensate for falling demand in Europe, Germany is shifting more exports to China, Russia and the U.S.

Durable goods orders drop in U.S.

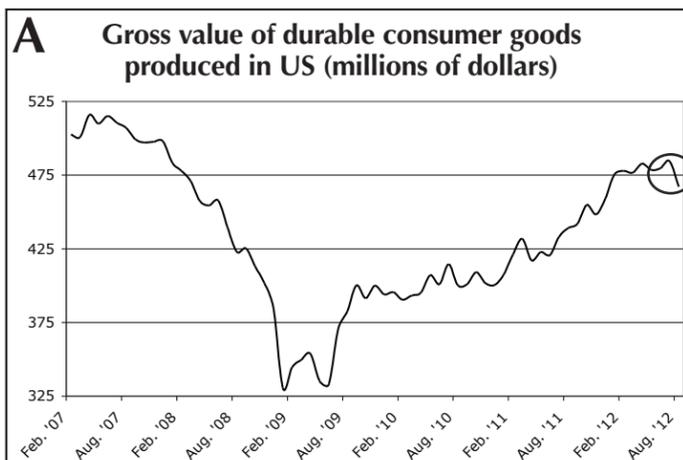
In the U.S., orders for durable goods dropped 13.2 percent in August, the most since January 2009. This included aircraft, and automobiles and transportation orders, which fell nearly 35 percent. Overall factory orders that month were down 5.2 percent, the Commerce Department reported.

This decline takes place in the context of manufacturing output that has never fully recovered from the recession that officially ended in June 2009. Before this most recent decline, production had risen from 20 percent below pre-recession levels to about 5 percent below, largely through speedup and intensification of labor. See chart A on production of durable goods.

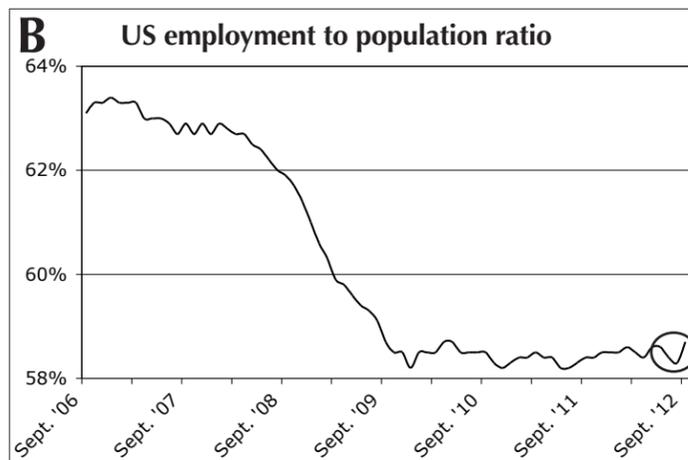
In September, the official U.S. unemployment rate was 7.8 percent, a decline of 0.3 percent from the previous month, reported the Labor Department. While providing good headlines for incumbent President Barack Obama's reelection bid, the figures indicate no significant change in the long-term stagnation of jobs during the “recovery.”

The employment to population ratio, which measures the percentage of the total population that is employed, rose by 0.4 to 58.7 percent in September. But it has fluctuated between 58.2 and 58.7 percent since September 2009 after falling sharply from 63.4 percent at the end of 2006. The length of this stagnation is unprecedented in U.S. history. See chart B.

In addition, the slight increase is questionable. The government released two varying reports on



Graph A: U.S. manufacturing output declined sharply in 2007-2008. Drop this August comes after more than three and a half years of failing to recover to previous levels. Increase in recent years is due largely to speedup. Graph B: Employment to population ratio is more objective measure than government's official unemployment rate. Failure of any significant recovery in employment over three-year period is unprecedented in U.S. history and puts questionable September rise—most of which appears to come from increase in part-time jobs—in perspective.



how much jobs rose in September. According to an employers' survey, 114,000 jobs were added. But a household survey—which is used for official statistics—puts the figure at 873,000. Two-thirds of these new jobs—582,000—are part time, which the government counts as being employed. There are now 8.6 million workers seeking full-time work forced into part-time status.

Striking miners in S. Africa undeterred

Continued from front page

wage increase Sept. 18 after a five-week strike in which cops killed 34 miners. Platinum, gold, coal, chrome, iron and diamond miners have disregarded calls by union officials to end their strike and in many cases formed their own strike committees.

Workers in other industries are also going on strike. Autoworkers at Toyota's Durban factory won a wage increase through a three-day wildcat strike that ended Oct. 4. Some 28,000 truck drivers began a walkout Sept. 25.

“We live in shacks. There is no running water. No electricity,” rock driller Mtopo, who is on strike at the Samancor chrome mine, said in a phone interview from South Africa's North West province Oct. 8. Mtopo speaks Setswana and spoke to the *Militant* through a coworker who speaks English. “We don't get enough money to see our families every month, sometimes only every three months.”

Safety on the job is also a concern. “Some of the people who get injured, management fires them, they say you got yourself in danger,” he said.

His coworker, Solomon Putu, an assistant surveyor in the mine, said the company had promoted delegates of the National Union of Mineworkers in the mine to supervisors, “leaving us on our own.” The National Union of Mineworkers is a member of the ANC-allied Congress of South African Trade Unions.

Key source of world's minerals

South Africa is the world's largest source of chrome, manganese, platinum, vanadium and vermiculite, and mines more than 10 percent of the world's annual gold production. It is the fourth largest producer of diamonds and fifth largest producer of coal.

While some of the large operations are owned by South African capitalists, United Kingdom-based corporations, including Anglo American, Rio Tinto, BHP Billiton and Xstrata are dominant.

South African-based Gold Fields Ltd. evicted hundreds of workers from company-owned hostels in Carletonville, but agreed to allow workers to return, switching the water back Oct. 4.

Anglo American Platinum (Amplats), the largest platinum mining company in the world, sent text messages to 12,000 strikers Oct. 5 telling them they were fired. Workers there have been on strike since Sept. 12.

“Amplats is within its rights to fire the workers because the strike is illegal,” National Union of Mineworkers spokesperson Lesiba Seshoka told the *Militant*, “but we think it's the wrong move if you want to end the strike and get people back to work.”

The NUM, Congress of South Africa Trade Unions and Chamber of Mines issued a joint statement Oct. 4 saying that they would begin discussions Oct. 9 “to respond to the demands workers have been making recently.”

Like other mining companies, Amplats says the drop in the price of platinum has shaved profit margins and they can't pay a wage increase. Amplats did not

So, according to the household survey, the increase in employment can largely be accounted for by the growth of part-time jobs. The numbers the Labor Department reports in September who are either unemployed, forced to work part time, or not counted because they're labeled as discouraged, adds up to 14.7 percent of the labor force, unchanged from August.

respond to interview requests.

“Their problem is not our problem,” Amplats winch operator Evans Ramokga said in a phone interview. “We don't know about the selling of platinum. The only thing we know is that every day the platinum comes up out of the mine. If you don't meet their target, they dismiss you. We work hard and every day we go over their target.”

“Miners earn 4,000 rand [\$450]. The shift supervisors get 30,000 a month,” he said, “and the higher up supervisors get 80,000.”

Ramokga said the mines should be nationalized “and run by the government of South Africa. The profits should stay here, not be taken back to London.”

“The fight at the Marikana mine inspired workers,” Mametlwe Sebei, a leader of the Democratic Socialist Movement who is active in a strike committee set up by workers at Amplats, said by phone. “The bosses are going to do everything they can to avoid another example.”

Strike ‘fever’

COSATU has officially opposed the wildcat strikes. It issued a joint statement with the NUM that said Lonmin Platinum “made a grave error” in granting the Marikana miners a wage increase because it “threatens every foundation of the industrial relations systems.”

“After the Marikana events, a fever spread throughout the mines,” Dan Sebabi, secretary of the Congress of South African Trade Unions in Limpopo province, said in a phone interview Oct. 9.

Sebabi had just returned from a visit to the Bokoni Platinum mine where the company has fired almost 2,000 striking workers. “In the early days of a strike if you say end it, they will cut your neck off,” he said. “I know the anger.”

Recognizing that the strikes will continue regardless of the position of the union officialdom, COSATU and NUM leaders have been traveling to the struck mines and trying to garner support from miners.

“In the old days the shop steward worked in the mine,” said Sebabi, explaining the hostility that many miners have toward the union leadership. “Now let's say you become the branch secretary, you don't have to go underground anymore, you have a landline and air conditioning.”

“I listen to the workers carefully,” he said. “The workers are not saying ‘we don't want the union.’ They are saying they don't want the representatives of the union.”

“I try to work with the committee they have elected to consolidate and handle the demands properly. I told them they have to appeal the dismissals, we don't want them to lose their jobs,” he said.

COSATU is demanding that a commission of inquiry be established to “investigate the employment and social conditions” of the miners.

“We're not going back to work until they give us what we want,” said rock driller Mtopo.