

THE MILITANT

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Cuban doctors help build
Equatorial Guinea's health services
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 69/NO. 45 NOVEMBER 21, 2005

Help win over 3,000 'Militant' subscribers

Mechanics and others on strike against Northwest Airlines resisting job, wage, and benefit cuts. Working people along the Gulf Coast who saved the lives of thousands despite government indifference during the social disaster after Hurricane Katrina. Independent truckers in the South organizing into a union. Taxi drivers in Florida

EDITORIAL

and New York demanding relief from rising fuel costs. Meat packers who just won their first union contract in Brooks, Alberta.

These are among the nearly 2,300 new *Militant* subscribers. With two weeks to go in a circulation drive with results not seen in many years, we urge all readers to pitch in to surpass the international quota of 3,000 by the November 20 deadline.

This is the appropriate response to the new political period we have
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Poultry workers in California walk out again, demand better job conditions

BY LEA SHERMAN

LIVINGSTON, California, November 5—Hundreds of workers returned to the picket lines November 3 at the Foster Farms poultry processing plant here. The two-day walkout was preceded by a similar five-day action the week before.

The workers hit the streets again to show their determination to win a decent contract. They are demanding improved job conditions, an end to company abuse, and recognition of the affiliation of their union—the League of Independent Workers of the San Joaquin Valley—with the International Association of Machinists.

"We decided to go out again because the company doesn't want to negotiate with the union," said Francisco Alvarez, a coordinator for the League in the packaging department. "More people came out from the second shift than last time, so it was a victory for us."

Picket lines were spirited, he said, with workers chanting, "Yes, we can do it," in English, Spanish, and Punjabi, and "The people united, Will never be divided!"

Foster Farms is Merced County's
Continued on page 9

FRANCE

Unrest spreads among youth, workers of African descent Gov't declares state of emergency, orders curfews

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Protests by youth and other working people, largely of African descent, erupted in working-class suburbs surrounding Paris at the end of October. They have since grown in intensity, spreading to some 300 cities and towns throughout France and causing a crisis for the ruling class.

Using a 1955 law dating back to the French war against the anticolonial movement in Algeria, the French cabinet declared a 12-day state of emergency November 8, authorizing local officials to impose curfews, ban public meetings, and conduct police raids and searches for weapons. According to the BBC, this is the first time these emergency powers have been implemented in mainland France.

Some 9,500 cops—including the hated riot police known as the CRS—have now been deployed to confront the protesters. The police have arrested more than 1,200 people. About 6,000 vehicles have been torched during the clashes.

French interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy has ordered the expulsion of all "foreigners" convicted of taking part in the street actions, including those who have residency visas. He informed par-



Working people and others, largely of African origin, march October 30 at Clichy-sous-Bois suburb of Paris to protest killings three days earlier of two youth chased by cops. Their deaths ignited the social explosion.

liament November 9 that 120 protesters would be deported "without delay."

The social explosion was ignited by police harassment and brutality. Its underlying causes include racist discrimination in employment, housing, and education facing millions of working people who have emigrated to France from its former colonies in Africa.

The protests began after the October 27 electrocution of Traore Bouna, 15, and Ziad Benna, 17. The two died after trying to escape from cops in the Clichy-sous-Bois suburb of Paris. The youths, sons of working-class immigrants from Mauritania and Tunisia, respectively, were returning home after playing a soccer game when they encountered one of the many police

roadblocks set up to harass and check identity papers of local residents.

Adel Benna, Ziad's brother, told the *Washington Post* that one of the boys had left his papers at home. Not wanting to be dragged down to the police station, they dodged the checkpoint, scaling a power substation wall to avoid being taken into police custody.

"Young people don't just throw themselves into an electrical current," said Adel Benna. "They looked behind them and saw something that made them so terrified, so desperate, they did it out of absolute fear. I hate the police. They are responsible for my brother's death."

Government officials dispatched an additional 1,300 police to Seine-Saint-Denis.
Continued on page 3

After 23-day strike, Canada meat packers win union contract

BY JOHN STEELE

TORONTO, November 6—After 23 days on strike meat packers at the Tyson-owned Lakeside Packers in Brooks, Alberta, are returning to work with a union contract. Fifty-six percent of the workers voted yes for the agreement United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 401 reached November 1 with the Tyson bosses.

When the result was announced workers present in the Brooks voting center chanted, "We won, the union's in!"

About 1,600 of the 2,100 workers participated in the November 4 vote. These included workers who crossed the picket lines during the strike. "The company bused many of the scabs to the vote," Aamir Shahzad, a meat packer and union representative of UFCW Local 1118 at the Cargill slaughterhouse in High River, told the *Militant* by phone from Brooks. "They were told to vote

no to keep the union out." Shahzad was assigned by the union to help Local 401 during the walkout.

Under the contract, the first since the union was decertified in the 1980s, all workers will pay union dues. Those hired after November 5 will be union members as a condition of employment. Those who were not members at the time of ratification are not required to join. The 51-month contract includes an immediate wage increase of Can\$1 (US\$.84), bringing the starting hourly pay to \$13, and raises of 30 cents each the next three years, and a 40-cent increase in 2009.

"Come Monday [November 7] we'll reach out to those who crossed the picket line because we're all on the same side," UFCW Local 401 president Doug O'Halloran told the *Calgary Sun*.

"We must make it clear that what we did was not for us, but for all employ-

ees," said meat trimmer and striker Peter Jany, who is a member of the bargaining committee.

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— ON THE PICKET LINE —

Northwest Airlines seeks to eliminate retirees’ health benefits
ST. PAUL, Minnesota—Northwest Airlines announced it will ask the bankruptcy court to rubber stamp its plan to eliminate medical benefits for its retirees after the age of 65, reported the St. Paul *Pioneer Press*. Some 12,000 retirees will be affected. Active workers will have to pay higher premiums.

Northwest is planning to ask the bankruptcy judge at a November 16 hearing to cancel all union contracts if its workforce does not accept an additional \$1.4 billion in concessions. The unions for the pilots and flight attendants agreed in early November to “interim” annual pay cuts of \$332 million. The Machinists union, representing ramp workers and ticket agents, has not come to an agreement with the company.

Northwest is demanding that 75 percent of its international flights be serviced by nonunion flight attendants. It plans to eliminate union flight attendants on planes with 77–100 seating capacity in North America. It is also seeking to outsource all ramp worker positions, except at its hubs, and all customer service jobs at its non-hub airports.

Ted Ludwig, president of Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA) Local 33, has announced plans for a November 19 rally here to respond to whatever new union-busting moves Northwest Airlines takes with the court’s blessing. AMFA organizes some 4,400 mechanics, cleaners, and custodians at Northwest who have been on strike since August 19.

—Nelson Gonzalez

New Zealand: workers protest aircraft maintenance job cuts
AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Aircraft maintenance engineers and their

supporters marched and picketed at Auckland International Airport October 29 to protest the planned layoff by Air New Zealand of hundreds of workers at its aircraft maintenance depots. Around 100 people took part. It was called by the Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union and the Aviation and Marine Engineers Association.

The government holds an 80 percent stake in the airline. The bosses say they will cut over 600 of the 2,100 maintenance positions at the end of the year. Most of the cuts will take place at the Auckland facility. They announced the cuts October 19 after complaining their profits for 2005–2006 would fall by more than half over the previous year. They argue that when it comes to bidding for work in maintaining and refitting long-haul jets—including Air New Zealand’s own fleet—the maintenance operation cannot compete in price with larger bases overseas. Christchurch and Auckland depots, they say, will continue to service short-haul planes.

—Patrick Brown

Bosses at Ford truck plant start timing workers’ bathroom breaks
The bosses at Ford Motors truck plant in Wayne, Michigan, issued a memo October 27 to the workforce stating they will start timing bathroom breaks, the *Detroit News* reports. The company said that too many workers—members of United Auto Workers Local 900—were going to the can longer than the allotted 48 minutes per shift, slowing down production. Ford reported a loss of \$191 million in the third quarter. It plans to close plants, laying off 20,000 workers.

—Arrin Hawkins

New York City school teachers approve union-weakening contract
NEW YORK—After working for

Argentina: 25,000 rally against ‘free trade’ pact



AP/Dario Lopez-Mills

Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez (at podium) addresses some 25,000 protesters November 4 in Mar del Plata, Argentina. The rally took place during two-day, 34-nation Summit of the Americas there. U.S. president George Bush attended the summit to promote formation of hemispheric “free-trade” area that would open up the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to greater imperialist exploitation. Government representatives from Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, Uruguay, and Paraguay did not agree to this deal.

30 months without a contract, New York City school teachers and others represented by the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) voted November 3 by a 63 percent margin for an agreement the UFT leadership had reached with city hall. The pact expires in October 2007. It affects 100,000 union members in city schools.

Teachers will receive a pay increase of 15 percent over the length of the contract. At the same time, the pact includes an extension of the workday and work year, weakening of seniority rights and grievance procedures, and putting more power in the hands of administrators on disciplinary and other matters.

“They are asking for a lot,” said elementary school teacher Nia Mason October 11 outside a UFT delegates meeting. Mason, who has taught for 18 years in the Bronx, said she opposed the provision giving administrators more leeway in assigning teachers to hall patrol or cafeteria duty.

“This contract is unfair,” said Valerie Ramsey, a teacher for four years at Middle School 385 in Brownsville. “They already don’t pay us enough for all the work we do at home grading papers, preparing lesson plans. If I’m on lunch duty, when do I eat?”

“The merit pay is going to pit one teacher against the other,” said Jean

Leal, a retiree who taught for 26 years at PS 100 in Queens, an elementary school. She was referring to a new position, the “master teacher,” who will get an extra \$10,000 per year based on “merit.”

“If the principal wants to put a paper in your file, it will sit there for three years,” said Ana Anglada, who has taught second grade at PS 106 in Brooklyn for seven years. Until now teachers could answer such written criticism, which can be used in disciplinary action against them, and have their reply included in their file as well.

—Paul Pederson

New York transit workers open contract talks
NEW YORK—Transit workers began contract negotiations October 14 with a rally of 700 unionists. Over 32,000 bus and subway workers are demanding improvements in wages and pensions, and no concessions in their health plans. The Transport Workers Union (TWU) is also calling for a moratorium on disciplinary procedures under the current abusive system. TWU Local 100 president Roger Toussaint said the Metropolitan Transit Authority had taken disciplinary action 15,204 times against workers in the last year alone. The union contract expires December 15.

—Michael Italie

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Law students in a skit at end of first-ever book fair in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea.

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Rulers of Japan take steps to boost military, antilabor attacks at home

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

Barely six weeks after winning Japan's national elections by a landslide, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) approved a plan for a draft amendment to the country's constitution that would make the so-called Self-Defense Forces a full-fledged military and facilitate using them abroad to advance Japanese imperialism's interests.

The decision, announced October 28, came two weeks after the Upper House of parliament passed a controversial bill to privatize the post office, signaling the government's resolve to step up attacks on working people at home.

The draft amendment is a step toward transforming Tokyo's military and putting it on a par with those of its imperialist allies—the Japanese rulers' goal since the post-World War II constitution was adopted. Drafted by Washington in the aftermath of its victory over Tokyo in that war, the constitution forbids Japan from using its military abroad. Tokyo has 240,000 troops and a military budget of nearly \$50 billion, the fifth largest in the world.

"Military forces for self-defense shall be maintained with the prime minister

of the cabinet as the supreme commander," the LDP draft states. This would replace wording in the constitution that says: "Land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained." Two days after the LDP announcement, Japanese prime minister Junichiro Koizumi affirmed at a troop review near the capital that "I will do my best to improve an environment at home and overseas in which the Self-Defense Forces can fulfill their missions in style."

The LDP is expected to formally announce its proposed amendment soon. To become law the revision must be approved by a two-thirds vote of parliament and a national referendum.

The constitutional clause has been at the center of a heated political dispute in Japan as Tokyo has pressed to use its military forces more aggressively in the region and as part of imperialist interventions in other parts of the world.

At a joint press conference at the Pentagon October 29, the U.S. and Japanese defense and foreign ministers announced an agreement that increases Tokyo's role in the military alliance of the two imperialist governments. It

Earthquake survivors in Kashmir prevented from crossing Pakistan-India line



Reuters/Kimimasa Mayama

A policeman (left) stops earthquake survivors November 7 from crossing military Line of Control into Indian-controlled Kashmir from the Pakistani-controlled side. Four weeks after an earthquake struck the area, killing more than 87,000 people, the Indian government agreed to open a single checkpoint for survivors and aid, but no Kashmiris were allowed to cross.

includes stepped-up joint training and military exercises between Washington and Tokyo, and calls on the Japanese government to increase its "participation in international peace operation activities." Tokyo will put in place X-band radar, which identifies and tracks

incoming warheads. Under the accord Washington will redeploy about 7,000 Marines from the Japanese island of Okinawa to Guam.

In 2003, the Japanese government sent hundreds of troops to Iraq as a part of Washington's "coalition of the willing." Tokyo has signed on to the U.S.-led Proliferation Security Initiative, under which Washington and its allies have stopped, boarded, and confiscated the cargo of ships they deem suspect of carrying "weapons of mass destruction." Last year the U.S. Navy deployed Aegis destroyers in the Sea of Japan, off the waters of north Korea, laying the foundation for a U.S. "missile shield" that includes Japan. Such a shield would give Washington first-strike nuclear capacity.

On the same day as the LDP made its announcement, the Japanese government agreed for the first time to house a U.S. nuclear-powered aircraft carrier in Yokosuka port near Tokyo.

The Koizumi administration is taking these steps weeks after returning to office in a sweeping electoral victory. The prime minister called the September 11 elections after the upper house of parliament killed his bill to privatize the post office. With assets of \$3 trillion, the post office is the main source of savings accounts, credit, and insurance for Japan's population. On October 14 the upper house okayed the bill. Koizumi made it clear the Japanese rulers' next targets include the health-care system.

Protests by African immigrants shake France

Continued from front page

Denis, a northeastern area of Paris that includes the town of Clichy-sous-Bois, where the clashes started. Cops fired tear gas and rubber bullets at hundreds of protesting youth who defended themselves by throwing rocks and bottles. As the conflict escalated, vehicles and buildings were torched.

Immediately after their deaths, Sarkozy referred to the two teenagers as juvenile delinquents involved in robbery and vandalism. Four days later, after the fury these statements fueled among immigrants and other working people across the country, Sarkozy was forced to retract his remark, admitting that the youth had no criminal records.

But then, on November 3, the Interior Ministry released a preliminary report exonerating the officers of any role in the youth's deaths, the Associated Press reported.

Anger at the cops was further inflamed October 30 when a tear gas grenade of the kind used by the police was thrown into one of the town's local mosques, forcing some 700 worshipers to flee the choking smoke.

"People are fed up with being controlled by cops, being stopped over and over," Jean-Jacque Eyquem, a 53-year-old taxi driver living in Clichy-sous-Bois, told the *Post*.

"It's the police who are provoking us," a man who gave his name as Mohamed told the *New York Times*. Currently unemployed, he had moved to France from Algeria in 1971. "They say integrate, but I don't understand: I'm already French, what more do they want?" he said. "They want me to drink alcohol?"

Salim Khalil, 25, of Tunisian origin, is a temporary worker at the Peugeot auto plant in Poissy outside of Paris. The protests erupted "because of the lack of jobs, of help and facilities, especially for youth 18 to 25," he told the *Militant*.

"Sarkozy provoked people, calling us 'scum,' we who are excluded from the workforce."

No affirmative action programs in employment, education, or housing exist in France, unlike the United States where such programs were won by Blacks and other oppressed nationalities, as well as women, as a result of the civil rights movement.

The escalating protests have heightened tensions within the governing Union for a Popular Movement. Sarkozy and Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin are vying for the party's presidential nomination in the 2007 elections. Sarkozy has described youth living in these immigrant housing projects as "scum" and pledged a "war without mercy" against them. Villepin has tried to paint more of a soft-cop picture of himself but has not hesitated in joining the rest of the government in deploying thousands of cops to the affected areas.

The French Communist Party (PCF), which is part of or runs municipal assemblies in many of the towns where the clashes have been erupting, has called for Sarkozy's resignation. PCF member Olivier Klein, who is deputy mayor of Clichy-sous-Bois, said that instead of the federal government sending paramilitary units like the CRS riot police into these towns a "community policing operation" is needed.

Socialist Party (PS) leader Julien Dray has stated that Sarkozy shouldn't resign because doing so would give in to the "rioters." The SP is not opposing the state of emergency either.

An estimated 6 million citizens of North African descent live in France, many in decrepit, segregated, suburban high-rise enclaves, which the government calls "sensitive urban zones." In these 751 areas, the official unemployment figure is 19.6 percent—double the

national average—and more than 30 percent among 21- to 29-year-olds. Actual unemployment in some neighborhoods is substantially higher. Workers' income in these areas is only a quarter of the country's average, reported the *Christian Science Monitor*.

Many who succeed in securing jobs work for the lowest wages with little chance for advancement. "We are all janitors here," a young man of North African origin who identified himself as Awax told the *International Herald Tribune* in the town of La Courneuve. "It's our destiny."

Between April and August of this year, three fires in dilapidated buildings housing African immigrants killed 48 people, including 28 children.

Derek Jeffers and Jean-Louis Salfati in Paris contributed to this article.

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Bay Area labor council backs miners' union fight, defends freedom of press

BY PAUL MAILHOT

SALT LAKE CITY—Last week the San Francisco Labor Council joined many others in the union movement who have added their names to the fight to defeat C.W. Mining’s harassment lawsuit. The company, which runs the Co-Op mine in Huntington, Utah, filed the suit together with the company-affiliated International Association of United Workers Union in retaliation for the miners’ fight to win representation by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). Targets of the suit include the UMWA, coal miners at the Co-Op mine, the *Militant*, and two of Utah’s main dailies.

The labor body’s November 3 letter addressed to the Militant Fighting Fund says:

“The San Francisco Labor Council supports the United Mine Workers in their fight to obtain union recognition for the workers at the Co-Op mine in Utah. The Council also denounces the illegal firing of union supporters, especially the tactics of terminating the 30 Mexican born workers for allegedly failing to produce valid work documents.

“The San Francisco Labor Council

cil supports the right of all workers, including immigrant workers, to organize and bargain collectively. We also stand in defense of the First Amendment’s right to the freedom of the press to communicate and report issues of concern to working men and women.”

Support for the Militant Fighting Fund, which was organized to help defend the *Militant* and publicize the fight of the UMWA, the Co-Op miners, and others who have been dragged into court by C.W. Mining, continues to grow internationally, too. Steve Armstrong, president of Communications, Energy, and Paperworkers Local 28-0 at Invista in Maitland, Ontario, is one of the latest endorsers. More than 350 chemical workers there are coming off a hard-fought five-month strike.

In endorsing the case, Armstrong expressed his appreciation to supporters of the Militant Fighting Fund in Toronto for the newspaper’s coverage of the Invista workers’ fight. He encouraged them to attend the Ontario Federation of Labor convention in mid-November where he was certain more support could be won.

Only 726 ‘Militant’ subs to go!

BY PAUL PEDERSON

Nearly 330 people subscribed to the *Militant* last week. It was one of the best efforts of the circulation campaign and bodes well for reaching the 3,000 mark. Last week’s pace needs to be sustained to bring the drive home by the November 20 deadline.

Militant readers in Stockholm, London, and Edinburgh, Scotland, also increased their quotas last week, bringing the total of all quotas to 2,987—just 13 shy of the international target.

Here are some of the highlights of the last seven days:

Fall 2005 ‘Militant’ Sub Drive			
September 17–November 20			
Week 7 of 9			
Country	Quota	Sold	%
AUSTRALIA*	40	33	83%
SWEDEN*	35	29	83%
NEW ZEALAND			
Auckland	30	27	90%
Christchurch	20	14	70%
N.Z. total	50	41	82%
UNITED KINGDOM			
Edinburgh**	40	31	78%
London**	100	78	78%
UK total	140	109	78%
UNITED STATES			
Salt Lake City*	45	39	87%
San Francisco*	95	82	86%
Birmingham*	75	63	84%
Des Moines*	150	124	83%
Price, UT*	80	66	83%
New York**	450	360	80%
Miami*	120	95	79%
Newark**	270	211	78%
Pittsburgh*	100	77	77%
Los Angeles*	185	139	75%
Boston*	120	90	75%
Twin Cities*	160	119	74%
Seattle*	100	73	73%
Houston*	125	91	73%
Chicago*	115	81	70%
Atlanta**	115	80	70%
Philadelphia*	125	85	68%
Washington*	100	65	65%
Detroit*	20	12	60%
U.S. total	2,550	1,952	77%
CANADA*	150	102	68%
ICELAND	22	8	36%
Int’l totals	2,987	2,274	76%
Goal/Should be	3,000	2,333	78%
*raised quota **raised quota more than once			

Machinists strike Boeing in three states to defend workers’ health-care benefits



Militant/Frank Forrestal

HUNTINGTON BEACH, California—Members of International Association of Machinists picket Boeing’s plant here November 5. Nearly 1,500 Boeing workers in Alabama, Florida, and California walked out November 2. The aircraft giant is seeking cuts in health care—increasing deductibles and premiums and canceling retiree health-care benefits for new hires. The three IAM locals on strike organize workers at Boeing’s Delta government rocket program. Despite some replacements crossing picket lines here, unionists said the strike is solid. IAM District Lodge 725 is holding a solidarity rally November 10 at its Huntington Beach union hall.

—FRANK FORRESTAL

Also in the mail last week was a copy of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 46 newsletter from Washington State carrying an

article on the fight against the Co-Op mine harassment lawsuit. IBEW member Dean Peoples submitted the report to the newsletter.

Two weeks to go, \$32,000 to collect for Socialist Workers party-building fund

BY ANGEL LARISCY

NEWARK, New Jersey—With two weeks to go, nearly \$32,000 needs to be collected for the Socialist Workers party-building fund.

The annual fund drive allows the Socialist Workers Party to respond to political developments in the world. It also enables the party to maintain a national center in New York City and have the resources to collaborate with sister parties in other countries.

Three areas—Philadelphia, Salt Lake City, and Seattle—raised their quotas last week.

Olympia Newton spoke in Seattle October 29 on the changing political situation in the world. Two longshoremen from Seattle and Tacoma were among the 40 people present. “New and increased pledges at the event totaled \$2,082,” said John Naubert from Seattle. “The pledges now total \$8,045, surpassing our initial quota of \$7,000. Forty-five people have contributed so far.”

A supporter of the fund from Kaiser, Oregon, who could not attend the Seattle event sent his check along with this note: “Enclosed is a check for \$1,000 for the party-building fund. Now is the time to organize and build. There will be now and in the future more labor struggles, more opportunities to expand and grow. A friend of the party, always.”

Seattle party supporters then increased their quota to \$8,300.

Wendy Lyons reports that Socialist Workers in Los Angeles held a fund-raiser November 5 where Newton gave a similar talk. Norma and Morberto Martínez, whose son Gonzalo was killed by the police, attended and announced an important victory. The police had been trying

to get immunity from prosecution and a judge ruled against that. A supporter of the fund from San Diego called in to say he would match any new pledges to the fund up to \$200, in addition to the generous donation he had made. “More than \$1,300 was collected or pledged at the meeting in new contributions so we will go over our quota,” said Lyons.

Such efforts, along with mailings, phone calling, and other outreach are needed to meet the \$90,000 nationwide goal by the November 20 deadline. Checks or money orders should be made out to the SWP and sent to the party’s national office at 306 W. 37th St. 10th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

\$90,000 SWP Party-Building Fund			
Sept. 11–Nov. 20: Week 8 of 10			
	Pledge	Collected	%
Seattle*	8,300	6,897	83%
Newark	4,000	3,036	76%
Atlanta*	6,500	4,875	75%
New York*	14,000	10,296	74%
Des Moines	1,500	1,077	72%
Boston*	3,300	2,312	70%
Los Angeles*	9,500	6,660	70%
Philadelphia*	3,250	2,151	66%
Salt Lake City*	1,100	725	66%
Price, UT	1,700	1,074	63%
Chicago	5,000	3,010	60%
San Francisco	9,500	5,575	59%
Houston	3,500	1,995	57%
Washington	3,000	1,580	53%
Pittsburgh	3,500	1,715	49%
Birmingham*	2,300	1,113	48%
Twin Cities	4,500	2,121	47%
Miami	1,700	628	37%
Other	2,051	1,807	88%
TOTAL	88,201	58,647	65%
Goal/should be	90,000	72,000	80%
* raised quota			

King-size buckets of white-wash?—A cover-up of the catastrophic storm is under way. The money-soaked rich



Harry Ring

are tumbling off the barrels of whitewash.

For Big Business and the politicians, the fix is already

under way. In early November, members of Congress opened the hiring office for mainly professorial “experts.” Congress will take it from there. The initial press interview suggests that if it finds it can’t do better for the U.S. rulers, it may settle for pinning whatever they can on the Army Corps of Engineers.

A spokesperson told reporters that the Corps “still had some of the best engineers in the world.” She said she had been unaware of allegations

of corruption in New Orleans levee construction.

A tread-softly civil engineering prof told Senators: “We are receiving disturbing reports that there may have been some conscious human error involved. There may have been some malfeasance.”

P.S. Stop the press—Another civil engineering prof confided to a *Los Angeles Times* reporter that officials have “troubling” reports that several builders had received

no-bid contracts in the early 1990s.

Public service—“RIO RANCH, New Mexico—The American Civil Liberties Union of New Mexico has advised science teachers in Rio Ranch that they don’t have to teach or discuss a theory called intelligent design, and they should contact the ACLU if they’re disciplined for refusing.

“The school board in August adopted a policy allowing al-

ternative theories of evolution to be discussed in science classes.”—News item

U.S. territory— Union leaders warned that Puerto Rico’s government plans to lay off 20,000 to 30,000 workers and called for a protest. Union officials said that at least four public agencies have given advance warning of the pending cuts to help the territory to cut down a budget deficit. The governor hasn’t confirmed the layoff.

Rosa Parks: cadre of working-class movement that ended Jim Crow

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—Karla Johnson and her friend Sheila Harkins were among the 40,000 people who stood in line for hours October 31 here to pay last respects to Rosa Parks. “I’ve got to find out more about her, what it was like then, and what really happened said Harkins,” 26, from nearby Alexandria, Virginia.

Parks was effectively given a state funeral. Her casket lay in the Capitol Rotunda for viewing—the first woman and second Black to be afforded that distinction. President George Bush, leading capitalist politicians in the House and Senate, and a host of others were present for the opening of the viewing. But as Harkins noted, “She’s getting all this recognition now, but back then she was just another Black woman who didn’t know her place.”

Furthermore, the reason state authorities are canonizing Parks now is to gut the content of the movement she was part of of its working-class character and revolutionary potential.

On Dec. 1, 1955, Parks refused to relinquish her seat to a white passenger on a Montgomery, Alabama, bus. She was arrested, jailed, and charged with violating the city’s Jim Crow segregation laws, which required that Blacks give up their seats to whites in public transportation vehicles and that they be relegated to separate facilities from whites in drinking fountains, bathrooms, or locker rooms. These laws legally relegated Blacks to second-class status in all aspects of life throughout the South. Her action became the catalyst for a victorious 13-month boycott and protest against segregated public transportation in the city.

Parks, a 42-year-old seamstress at the time of her arrest, had been an active member and occasional officer of the Montgomery NAACP. She had worked with E.D. Nixon, the principal organizer of the boycott, on voter registration efforts as an NAACP secretary.

Nixon was a respected trade unionist, a regional official of the Sleeping Car Porters union, and a leader of the Montgomery and Alabama chapters of the NAACP. All that year Nixon had attempted to get a test case on which to challenge segregation on city buses and to launch a boycott. After Parks’s arrest it was Nixon who provided an attorney and bailed her out of jail.

The day after Parks was arrested Nixon called several preachers inviting them to a meeting to discuss launching the boycott. One of them was a young minister, Martin Luther King, Jr., who initially hesitated but later agreed. When the 70 Black leaders met in the basement of King’s church, flyers were

already circulating calling for a one-day boycott on December 5, the day Parks was scheduled to go to trial. Nixon had arranged with the Women’s Political Council, a Black women’s civic organization, to print and distribute thousands of the flyers.

The boycott was a resounding success, with 75 percent of Black riders staying off the buses. Parks was convicted anyway and fined \$14. That evening, a meeting of 5,000 Blacks at the Holt Street Baptist Church launched an ongoing bus boycott.

Over the next year Nixon’s and King’s homes would be bombed. Court indictments were handed down against 90 leaders of the boycott, including several drivers of the car pool formed to provide transportation for those boycotting segregated buses. The White Citizen’s Council threatened to have anyone supporting the boycott fired from their jobs. But local merchants disavowed the council when Blacks threatened in response to extend the boycott to their stores.

“The Montgomery Improvement Association, which is conducting the magnificent protest movement against Jim Crow segregation on the bus lines of Montgomery, Alabama, has issued an urgent appeal for funds,” said Farrell Dobbs, presidential candidate of the Socialist Workers Party, in a statement featured on the front page of the March 19, 1956, *Militant*. “The



First mass meeting at Holt Street Baptist Church in support of 1955–56 bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama. The protest was response to decades of racist mistreatment.

money is needed to keep their car pools going....

“The struggle to batter down color segregation of the bus lines of Montgomery is not the concern of the Negro community alone. On the contrary. It is a cause which is vital to all of the working people of this country and especially to the organized labor movement. The inspiring action organized and led by the Montgomery Improvement Association has done more to prepare the ground for the union organization of the open-shop South than anything the leaders of the combined AFL-CIO have done in the past decade.

“Not a single Negro in Montgomery,

Alabama, should be compelled to walk because of the lack of money to operate their car pool!

“The Negro people of Montgomery are now manning the longest picket line in the world....

“Every union local, every worker in office, factory or workshop, must make it a personal obligation to take action NOW! This is no time for passing the buck! This is the time to collect it and send it to the Montgomery Improvement Association care of the Rev. M. L. King, Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, Montgomery, Alabama.”

Segregation of the city’s buses ended after a 382-day struggle.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



November 21, 1980

ROANOKE RAPIDS, N.C.—“You know, we made history last week,” a woman millworker says. “Right here in Roanoke Rapids.”

There’s a mood of pride and confidence among textile workers in this small North Carolina company town. On October 20, they forced the giant J.P. Stevens Company to do what it swore for seventeen years it would never do—sign a union contract with the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU).

The two and a half year contract covers 3,000 workers in the seven Stevens mills at Roanoke Rapids. Workers will receive an immediate 19.3 percent wage and incentive pay increase.

“We have more rights now,” said a young Black man who had been working for \$3.60 an hour in Stevens’s warehouse. “That’s what I really like about it.”



November 21, 1955

On the night of Sept. 15, George Martinez, a 16-year-old Puerto Rican youth, was killed in East Harlem by one of New York’s trigger-happy cops. The boy was shot in the back after he and five other youths fled when approached by detective Philip Dennehy. Dennehy fired once in the air and then shot to kill.

According to the Sept. 16 *New York Times*, “a woman whose name was withheld had alleged that he (George) had attacked her.” The same report stated that the boy was also “wanted for questioning about other rape cases.”

None of the capitalist papers seriously questioned the possibility that George was an innocent victim. Didn’t he run when he saw a cop?

The truth is that the Puerto Rican people, particularly the youth, live in terror of the police who resort to the most brutal methods in the minority communities.



November 1, 1930

This announcement is not intended for a certain type of “practical people.” We mean the kind who always excuse the fact that they do not read and study the problems of the working class movement with the argument that they are “too busy doing practical work.” Now, practical work is the life’s blood of the revolutionary movement. But unless it proceeds from a clear understanding of fundamental principles, unless it is motivated by correct theories, it is just so much barrel thumping: lots of noise but no content.

In our files we have assembled a pile of material by comrade Trotsky—articles, documents, pamphlets and books—as tall as your leg. We could get small groups of comrades to sponsor these publications. The “sponsorship plan” enables us to sell it at 25 cents a copy, and at 18 cents if you take a bundle of 5 or more. Our editions are limited in number, and you’d better order quickly.

New York SWP mayoral candidate:

‘The future is in hands of working people’

Below is an article that appeared in the November 7 Washington Square News, a daily paper published by New York University. Titled “An unlikely bid for mayor,” it is based on an interview with Martin Koppel, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of New York City. Reprinted by permission.

BY PHIL HENNESSEY

Democrats. Republicans. Bloomberg. Ferrer. To mayoral candidate Martin Koppel, of the Socialist Workers Party, it’s all the same.

“Capitalists,” Koppel said, “are only interested in their profits.”

So Koppel is taking to the streets. In just two weeks, he has received more than 20,000 signatures to get his name on the ballot. But Koppel said that his campaign is not just to get votes.

Koppel ran for New York Senate last year, gaining 0.2 percent of the vote and losing to Democrat Charles Schumer. This year, he was not included in the mayoral debates, and neither were several of the other lesser-known mayoral candidates, including Jimmy McMillan of the Rent is Too Damn High party.

Koppel said that his party’s main appeal is the alternative it offers to the two major parties.

“A lot of working people signed up readily when we said our campaign was offering a working-class alternative to the Democrats, the Republicans and other capitalist parties,” Koppel said. “Many people were glad to sign, to have that opportunity, to hear our point of view.”

Koppel said he was focused on the big picture, and was not merely concerned with recruiting votes and winning this election.

“Our campaign is not simply a vote-getting campaign—it’s one of building

a movement of working people,” he said. “Our candidates and supporters have gone to where the workers are on strike to defend unions or organize unions.” Unions are at the center of his election campaign, which will come to an end Tuesday. In recent weeks, Koppel has traveled around New York City, met with striking bus drivers in Westchester County and spoken with workers at nearby airport hotels who are fighting to organize a union.

“What has made America what it is today is the labor of workers and farmers who create all the wealth, which is expropriated by a tiny handful for their own benefit at the expense of the needs of the majority,” Koppel said, defending his push to enforce union scale wages on a large scale. “We need unions to defend our living standards.”

Koppel first became politically active as an exchange student in Marseille, France, during his senior year of college at the University of California at Santa Barbara.

“What changed me was that I ended up spending my last year of college in France,” he said “I saw things I had never encountered, like strikes. I could see more openly the class-divided society that existed. I began to wonder: ‘Why is it that most workers in France consider themselves socialists or communists?’”

Koppel found himself slowly changing his mind.

“Before going [to France], I thought socialism was simply an idea,” he said. “But then I discovered that it was associated with a social class. I wasn’t a communist by any means—I was a liberal. I thought there had to be some reasoning, and that led me to look.”

In France, Koppel was exposed to a lot of political refugees from Latin America. He began to feel that the sto-

care premiums in the last contract. New workers received no medical coverage for three months. After that, they paid 30 percent of the premium for the first year and 20 percent for the next.

The new agreement stipulates that all union members pay 1 percent of their wages toward health-care premiums. The pact also provides for a 3 percent annual wage increase over the four-year contract.

During a November 4 rally of 300 unionists and their supporters, many sported “Health care for everyone” T-shirts produced by the TWU. “Our fight is a fight for everybody,” TWU Local 234 president Jeffrey Brooks told the crowd. “The whole labor movement is watching.”

“Every person deserves health care but the average person can’t afford it,” George Hamilton, a driver for seven years, told the *Militant*. “The strike is important because we’re sick of giving back.”

Janet Post and Bob Stanton contributed to this article.

New Jersey: Socialist campaigners get hearing



Militant/Carole Lesnick

Young Socialist Chauncey Robinson (right) campaigns November 5 in Camden, New Jersey, for the Socialist Workers Party ticket in the state. SWP campaign supporters sold 10 *Militant* subscriptions there that day.

ries he read in magazines did not tell him the whole story.

“I really had no knowledge—I was completely ignorant,” he said. “I spent four years in college and realized I knew very little about the world.” Upon returning to the United States in 1977, Koppel joined the Socialist Workers Party in Baltimore, as he hoped to avoid the “dog-eat-dog” mentality of capitalism.

Koppel cited the U.S. government’s recent reaction to Hurricane Katrina as a prime example of the “real face of capitalism,” under which everyone is left to fend for themselves.

He said the workers and farmers in Louisiana and Mississippi who were left behind helped save lives, took care of others’ homes and found ways to give each other food and shelter. Under those circumstances, they demonstrated the “true spirit of solidarity.”

Koppel said Hurricane Katrina was a “social, man-made disaster,” rather than a natural disaster. He blames the United States’ capitalist structure for the inadequate government response that led to inefficient relief.

“This will happen again and again,” Koppel said.

Koppel also cited the Cuban Revolution to prove workers’ capacity to run

society in the interest of the majority.

“In Cuba, you become a doctor to serve people,” Koppel said, emphasizing that Cuba’s priorities begin with the needs of the workers.

He said that the United States is a system that meets the profit needs of the few at the expense of the vast majority.

Koppel foresees a future of economic depression and permanent wars in the United States. He said that only the working class can change this. Koppel believes that today’s working class may be the strongest it has ever been, as it is more international, with greater representation from females and minorities.

“Our campaign is not about what some politician promises they’re going to do for you,” he said. “It’s about what we can do. We have to look ourselves in the mirror and view ourselves as the actors of society.”

He said capitalism is a dying system, but one that will not fall by its own weight. The Socialist Workers Party calls for a workers’ and farmers’ government, one that would “join in the worldwide struggle for socialism and human solidarity.”

“The future is in the hands of working people,” Koppel said.

Socialist candidate in Atlanta fights firing

BY BILL ARTH

TUCKER, Georgia—“I protest Hormel Foods Corporation terminating my employment only days before the Nov. 8 election,” said Lisa Potash, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Atlanta city council president, in an open letter to her employer. “My firing is not just an attack on me but an attack on the right of all working people to participate in politics, including the right to campaign for public office.”

Potash was fired at the end of the day October 28 from her job as a utility worker in the precooked bacon department. In the “separation notice” the bosses handed Potash they said the reason for her firing was “probationary—no misconduct.” Potash had been employed by Hormel for 92 days. She was notified in writing when she was hired that she was “subject to a ninety (90) day probationary period.”

“My campaign is the reason I was fired, although Hormel will not likely ever admit to that,” Potash said in her open letter. She pointed out that her cam-

paign had been covered numerous times in the local media and she had appeared on television days before her dismissal debating her opponent, Lisa Borders. The SWP campaign “supports organizing unions where they don’t exist, and strengthening them where they do, as well as solidarity between working people across the globe,” Potash said.

United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 1996, which organizes Hormel workers, has filed a grievance against the firing as a violation of the union contract on the length of probation. Thirty of Potash’s co-workers have signed petitions calling for her reinstatement. “I don’t think it is fair,” said Hormel worker Alfred Kimber, who signed the petition.

Potash received 11 percent of the vote November 8. That day she joined a campaign team reaching out to Hormel workers outside the plant, including to win support for her fight for reinstatement.

Bill Arth is a member of UFCW Local 1996 and works at Hormel.

Philadelphia transit workers end strike

BY OSBORNE HART

PHILADELPHIA—More than 5,300 bus, subway, and trolley workers ended a seven-day strike November 7 against the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) here. The walkout ended after negotiators for the Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 234 and United Transportation Union Local 1594 reached a tentative deal with SEPTA bosses. Union members still have to ratify the contract.

Workers set up picket lines at barns, depots, and major transit terminals throughout the metropolitan area after contract negotiations broke down October 31. SEPTA serves more than 400,000 riders in the country’s fifth-largest city.

The central issue in the strike was management’s demand that union members pay 5 percent of health-care premiums, with future hires paying 10 percent. Under previous contracts, workers have given up wage increases and made other concessions to stick to no premium payments.

Union members with more than 27 months employment paid no health-

Cuban doctors in Central African nation

‘Our goal is to build Equatorial Guinea’s own health services’

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

MALABO, Equatorial Guinea—“We don’t just offer our medical services,” said Dr. Leonardo Ramírez, head of the Cuban internationalist medical personnel serving in this Central African country.

“Our goal is to strengthen Equatorial Guinea’s own health-care service, run by Guineans and for them. We collaborate in their training. This is a principle behind all our medical missions in countries around the world.”

Cuban volunteers, Ramírez said in an October 20 interview here, “work in health centers, clinics, and hospitals providing health services as well as training courses to raise the technical level of the medical personnel.” They also work to increase the health awareness of the population as a whole through activities in neighborhoods and radio broadcasts.

The Cuban medical mission is currently made up of 144 volunteers, 94 of whom are doctors. Around half are women. They work alongside Guineans in each of the country’s seven provinces and 18 districts—from the 200-bed hospital centers in the two largest cities, Malabo and Bata, to small practices in more remote rural areas.

Cuba’s medical collaboration in Africa started in the very first years of the revolution, when volunteer health brigades were sent to Algeria in 1963. At the end of 2004 there were some 1,200 Cuban doctors working in countries across the continent. In addition to Equatorial Guinea they are in Angola, Botswana, Cape Verde, Eritrea, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Conakry, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and areas in Western Sahara.

The current Cuban mission in Equatorial Guinea started its work in 2000. “Since then, more than 300 Cuban volunteers, mostly doctors, have practiced medicine here,” Ramírez said.

The Cuban medical brigades here are part of what is called the Comprehensive Health Program for Central America, the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia, an initiative the Cuban government launched in 1998 in wake of the social devastation following Hurricane Mitch.

Cuba’s collaboration stands in stark contrast to the theft by the imperialist powers of medical personnel from the semicolonial world. Dr. Agyeman Akosa, director general of Ghana’s health service, told the *New York Times* in an October 27 article that this “doctor drain” is leading to the virtual collapse of that country’s public health system. Ghana has lost 30 percent of its doctors to the United States, Britain, Canada, and Australia. It has only six doctors per 100,000 people.

Guineans training as doctors

As part of Cuba’s international solidarity, some 200 medical students

from Equatorial Guinea are currently studying in Cuba, and dozens more are being trained by Cuban teachers at the medical school of the National University in the city of Bata.

Twenty Guinean students flew to Cuba October 28 to spend their sixth and final year of medical studies doing practical work in hospitals in the western province of Pinar del Río. At the same time, 50 Guineans who studied for five years in Cuba returned home to complete their medical program working alongside the Cuban doctors in hospitals and clinics here. The 70 students will celebrate their graduation together next July.

Santiago Ndong from the town of Evinayong, one of the students preparing to leave for Cuba, described for the *Militant* what the first group of youth to enter medical school here felt they had conquered. “The first two years were very difficult for us,” he said. “For six months we didn’t even have textbooks, and we weren’t used to studying like that.

“But our Cuban teachers always treated us with respect,” he noted. “They called us *compañeros*.” Without them, “none of us would have made it,” Ndong said as the other students nodded in agreement.

“Next year there will be more than 70 students in the medical school,” Leonardo Ramírez said. “There are students in each year of study—so the number of doctors will continue to grow.”

Main health problems

The biggest single health problem, we were told over and over, is malaria. But they also confront typhoid fever, intestinal parasites, AIDS, yellow fever, river blindness, and respiratory ailments, as well as violence against women and alcoholism, according to Nancy López Salas, who is one of the Cuban medical volunteers here.

In February there was a cholera epidemic that hit Malabo particularly hard, said López, who works at a provincial hospital in Malabo as an adviser in charge of nursing. The health ministry launched a campaign in which the Cuban volunteers participated, and the epidemic was contained fairly rapidly.

Vicente Nze, one of the Guinean medical students headed for Cuba, described for the *Militant* how they all left their classrooms and joined in this campaign alongside their teachers. They went house to house promoting better sanitation and testing the water quality. This not only helped combat the cholera but gave the students valuable experience and confidence.

“We approach problems like malaria in a comprehensive way,” Ramírez said. “We start with preventive medicine and simple health practices as well as treating people with the illness.”

Asked about a fumigation effort carried out with funding by Marathon Oil—one of the U.S. energy compa-



Militant/ Arrin Hawkins

Students from medical school in Bata, Equatorial Guinea, getting ready to leave for Cuba to complete their final year of study. With them is Cuban volunteer Carlos Manuel Paz (front row, fourth from right), dean of medical school in Bata, and Ana Morales (front row, second from right), first secretary of the Cuban Embassy in Equatorial Guinea.

nies operating in this country—that helped reduce the incidence of malaria in recent weeks, Ramírez said, “Fumigation can be part of this, but in our opinion it’s not the best. It has bad side effects—toxins are emitted and the ecology is damaged. Children are particularly at risk. We favor biological controls and we’re working on the island of Annobón with a Cuban firm to develop a bacillus that destroys the mosquito larva’s digestive system. If the larva dies, there are no mosquitoes.”

Cuban doctors win respect

Ramírez said the Cuban volunteers and the people of Equatorial Guinea have developed “excellent ties of friendship. Many bonds unite us. We were both colonized by the same colonial power, Spain. We speak the same language. There are many similarities in our customs, and there’s a deep mutual respect. This is reinforced by the understanding by Guineans that we’re not going to abandon them.”

What Ramírez described was confirmed in a visit with the Cuban medical brigade in Luba, the main port on the west coast of Bioko Island, a couple hours’ drive from the capital.

“If there was any initial suspicion about us, it was soon dispelled by

the results of our work and how we work together with the people,” said Dr. Regla García, part of the Cuban team in Luba. The five-person brigade includes two general practitioners, a pediatrician, an analyst, and a nurse. They work in a small hospital of six medics with 14 beds, and see between 1,000 and 1,500 patients a year.

Being part of the mission “is the best experience of my life,” said Idalmis Gainza, the analyst. “Being here I really understand what the Cuban Revolution means to people far away from Cuba.”

“I’ve wanted to do something like this all my life, to learn more about the world,” García said. “But I had to wait until my children were old enough.” In some ways it’s been difficult, she said, spending two years away from family and co-workers. “But I’ve had tremendous support from my husband and my kids are 11 and 15, so they can manage without me.

“In fact,” she added, “my youngest wears my work as a badge of honor. He tells his schoolmates, ‘My mum’s an internationalist!’”

Ramírez said, “It has been a tremendous thing for Cubans to participate in this internationalist mission. Here we have to deal with many illnesses—like

Continued on page 9

Atlanta ... San Francisco ... Twin Cities ... New York

‘We Start with the World and How To Transform It’ Report from First Equatorial Guinea Book Fair

FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER, in October 2005 a book fair was held in the Central African country of Equatorial Guinea. Five supporters of Pathfinder Press took part, making its titles available. Their experiences in that country—a former Spanish colony and staging post for the slave trade, in an oil-rich region where Washington is today increasing its military buildup—shed light on the openings for militants in the new political situation being produced by intensifying conflicts among contending classes worldwide.

JOIN US in a discussion of the history and struggles of the peoples of Central and West Africa; the internationalist course and political weight of Cuba’s socialist revolution; the increased politicization of working people resisting the employers’ economic, social, and political assaults; the road forward in the fight for Black emancipation and women’s rights; and much more.

And after the Saturday evening meetings, come back for more informal discussion and a brunch on Sunday! Bring co-workers, friends, and family!

Speakers: Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press, and Arrin Hawkins, Martín Koppel, and Brian Taylor, participants in First Equatorial Guinea Book Fair

ATLANTA: meeting Nov. 12,
barbeque Nov. 13

TWIN CITIES: meeting Dec. 3,
brunch Dec. 4

SAN FRANCISCO: meeting Nov. 19,
brunch Nov. 20

NEW YORK CITY: meeting Dec. 10,
brunch Dec. 11

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Malcolm X: There is no polite rebellion

In response to the recent events in France (see front-page article) and the description by capitalist politicians and most media of young people protesting police brutality there as “rioters” and “criminals,” we are printing an excerpt from a relevant speech by Malcolm X. It replaces the regular Books of the Month column for this week. The portion below appears in February 1965: The Final Speeches by Malcolm X. It is from a talk entitled “The oppressed masses of the world cry out for action against the common oppressor,” which Malcolm presented at the London School of Economics Feb. 11, 1965, to a packed meeting sponsored by the school’s Africa Society. Copyright ©1992 by Betty Shabazz and Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY MALCOLM X

It is only being a Muslim which keeps me from seeing people by the color of their skin. This religion teaches brotherhood, but I have to be a realist—I live in America, a society which does not believe in brotherhood in any sense of the term. Brute force is used by white racists to suppress nonwhites. It is a racist society ruled by segregationists....

[W]here the government fails to protect the Negro he is entitled to do it himself. He is within his rights. I have found the only white elements who do not want this advice given to undefensive Blacks are the racist liberals. They



Residents of Harlem run to escape police rampage that followed demonstration on July 18, 1964, to protest killing by cops of 15-year-old James Powell in New York.

use the press to project us in the image of violence.

There is an element of whites who are nothing but cold, animalistic racists. That element is the one that controls or has strong influence in the power structure. It uses the press skillfully to feed statistics to the public to make it appear that the rate of crime in the Black community, or community of nonwhite people, is at such a high level. It gives the impression or the image that everyone in that community is criminal.

And as soon as the public accepts the fact that the dark-skinned community consists largely of criminals or people who are dirty, then it makes it possible for the power structure to set up a police-state system. Which will make it permissible in the minds of even the well-meaning white public for them to come in and use all kinds of police methods to brutally suppress the struggle on the part of these people against segregation, discrimination, and other acts that are unleashed against them that are absolutely unjust.

They use the press to set up this police state, and they use the press to make the white public accept whatever they do to the dark-skinned public...

They have all kinds of negative characteristics that they project to make the white public draw back, or to make the white public be apathetic when police-state-like methods are used in these areas to suppress the people’s honest and just struggle against discrimination and other forms of segregation.

A good example of how they do it in New York: Last summer, when the Blacks were rioting—the riots, actually they weren’t riots in the first place; they were reactions against police brutality.¹ And when the Afro-Americans reacted against the brutal measures that were executed against them by the police, the press all over the world projected them as rioters. When the store windows were broken in the Black community, immediately it was made to appear that this was being done not by people who were reacting over civil rights violations, but they gave the impression that these were hoodlums, vagrants, criminals....

But this is wrong. In America the Black community in which we live is not owned by us. The landlord is white. The merchant is white. In fact, the entire economy of the Black community in the States is controlled by someone who doesn’t even live there. The prop-

erty that we live in is owned by someone else. The store that we trade with is operated by someone else. And these are the people who suck the economic blood of our community.

And being in a position to suck the economic blood of our community, they control the radio programs that cater to us, they control the newspapers, the advertising, that cater to us. They control our minds. They end up controlling our civic organizations. They end up controlling us economically, politically, socially, mentally, and every other kind of way. They suck our blood like vultures.

And when you see the Blacks react, since the people who do this aren’t there, they react against their property. The property is the only thing that’s there. And they destroy it. And you get the impression over here that because they are destroying the property where they live, that they are destroying their own property. No. They can’t get to the man, so they get at what he owns. [Laughter]

This doesn’t say it’s intelligent. But whoever heard of a sociological explosion that was done intelligently and politely? And this is what you’re trying to make the Black man do. You’re trying to drive him into a ghetto and make him the victim of every kind of unjust condition imaginable. Then when he explodes, you want him to explode politely! [Laughter]

¹ On July 16, 1964, a 15-year-old Black youth, James Powell, was shot and killed by a New York police officer. Two days later, a demonstration at a central Harlem police station demanding the officer’s arrest was broken up by police, and the organizers were arrested. Police then rampaged through the area, beating, arresting, and shooting residents, killing one. For five days, police battled residents of Harlem and the predominantly Black community of Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn.

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Truth can't only be the truth, it must be told

Continued from front page

entered. Millions perceive a future of sharpening crises marked by economic depression, wars, and the class conflicts these conditions generate. The rulers of the United States and other imperialist countries are unable to find an alternative to overcome this course. As a result, the ruling propertied families face a crisis of confidence. Bourgeois politics is increasingly marked by factionalism, demagoguery, instability, and coarsening of the discourse of capitalist politicians. All these are elements of the new situation that's politicizing growing layers of the working class and its allies around the world.

As the letters column below indicates, many readers appreciate the *Militant's* weekly news and analysis of world politics—not just the labor coverage but also the reports from Equatorial Guinea, the U.S. Gulf Coast, and more.

This is the time to go back to every individual and each group of workers, farmers, students, and oth-

ers who have shown such interest and ask them to subscribe and help sign up others. Sign up friends, relatives, acquaintances, co-workers, and fellow students to get the *Militant* every week. Build on regular sales at gates of factories where socialists and other militants work by expanding the number of those who subscribe to the paper. Join other distributors in subbing through literature tables on the street or door-to-door in workers districts, rural areas, and campuses. Approach all those who backed Socialist Workers Party candidates in the recent U.S. elections and ask them to subscribe. In short, let's not leave any stone unturned in tapping all the potential to significantly expand the *Militant's* readership.

The truth must not only be the truth, it must also be told, Cuban president Fidel Castro once said. And to be told, it's not enough to print it. It has to be distributed.

Help get the *Militant* regularly into the hands of the thousands seeking the facts and political clarity.

LETTERS

Captivating write-up

What a captivating write-up in the November 7 *Militant* about the Equatorial Guinea book fair and Pathfinder's participation in it.

It was interesting reading about the social conditions and the challenges facing young people and women there. It brought to mind some comparisons and circumstances in the rural parts of Grenada during the years of the revolution there in the early 1980s, including adherence to superstition—or obea, as it's called in the Eastern Caribbean.

What would the world be like if the *Militant* weren't around to inform people about social developments in places like Equatorial Guinea. Keep up the good work.

Baxter Smith

Baltimore, Maryland

Outstanding article

I think the article on the Equatorial Guinea book fair is an outstanding article. Not only because it contains an excellent description of the fair along with a thumbnail sketch of Equatorial Guinea's history but

because it gives you a real sense, through this description, of some of the real conditions and problems facing the workers and peasants of Africa and how African working people are thinking about and grappling with these challenges.

The imperialists' press, along with most of the "left" in the imperialist world, have a "pity the poor African-African as victim" approach toward covering news in Africa—if they pay any attention to it at all.

This piece stands in marked contrast.

Chris Nisan

St. Paul, Minnesota

Donation for Katrina coverage

Please accept this contribution to the Hurricane Katrina fund appeal. Your coverage was unique and inspiring, a genuinely revolutionary working-class perspective, reflecting the ability to help workers see the future in the present.

Sylvie Charbin

Montreal, Quebec

'Militant' gets around

I have been discussing the Teamsters organizing drive at the Port of Miami with a Teamster member who is a UPS driver and delivers at my worksite. He works out of a UPS warehouse in Hialeah, a working-class and largely Cuban-American suburb of Miami.

I mentioned a *Militant* article about the drive was on the Teamsters website. I suggested he get a *Militant* subscription and gave him a copy to read.

He liked the coverage and the paper and showed it around the Hialeah warehouse and to a couple of shop stewards. They liked it too and posted the *Militant* up on the Teamsters union bulletin board in the warehouse. He told me he is going to send in the money for a subscription to the paper.

The *Militant* gets around.

Theresa Kendrick

Miami, Florida

No fee, no putting out fire

Enclosed is a contribution toward your work covering the social disaster in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. I was reminded of the class nature of emergency responses by an article in

the Minneapolis *Star-Tribune*.

"Carl Berg failed to pay a \$25 annual fee for rural fire protection and, as a result, firefighters let his house burn to the ground last month near International Falls, Minnesota," the article said. Berg is an unemployed 50-year-old worker who can barely walk due to an accident. He said he survives on food stamps and could not afford the fire protection.

Firefighters arrived on the scene but according to the rules of the county were not allowed to put it out unless the fee was paid. They are only allowed to intervene to prevent the fire from spreading to another property. So they watched while almost everything Berg had went up in smoke.

Berg, along with his daughter and grandson, escaped unharmed.

According to the *Star-Tribune*, there are hundreds of rural residences in the area without fire protection. This is a small part of the social crisis of capitalism that cries out for a working-class solution.

Thank you for your efforts to provide that.

Bill Scheer

Minneapolis, Minnesota

News in brief

Since the *Militant* went bilingual in June it has cut back its size. The good thing is that the articles are more focused and to the point. But I imagine it's more difficult to cover fully some important developments. For example, the reelection of Berisha this summer and other developments in Albania, or the class struggle in China: a recent announcement by China's minister of Public Security said that last year there were 74,000 workers' mobilizations and protests in the industrial zones—some 200 a day! Such news, I think, can be included in an In Brief column, which the *Militant* has had in the past.

Bobbis Misailidis

Athens, Greece

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.

A solid pro-business front on U.S. high court

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

With Senate hearings set to open soon on President George Bush's nomination of Samuel Alito to replace Sandra Day O'Connor on the U.S. Supreme Court, a slew of articles in the press have depicted the nominee as "pro-business." A November 1 *Los Angeles Times* article, for example, headlined "Court Nominee Has Free-Market Bent," described Alito as "often expressing skepticism about government regulation of business." The nominee "has a strong free-market philosophy likely to please corporate America," it said. The implication that others on the high court, like O'Connor, don't have such a "bent" is aimed at winning support for the Democratic Party.

Alito's "pro-business slant," however, is the same as that of all nine justices on the high court. In fact, O'Connor, who voted to uphold the *Roe v. Wade* ruling decriminalizing abortion and who is often described as a "moderate," has a solid record of rulings that were "the most pro-business of any justice," said the July 10 *Newsday*.

O'Connor consistently voted "to curb what she viewed as excessive financial awards to plaintiffs in the form of punitive damages and forcing prosecutors to prove that companies intended to break the law to win criminal convictions," noted a July 2 *Washington Post* article. In 1992, O'Connor wrote the majority opinion in *Gade v. National Solid Waste Management Association*, forbidding states from enforcing more stringent job safety standards than those mandated by the federal government. She struck down a provision in the Americans with Disabilities Act that let disabled state employees sue for discrimination.

Embracing the liberals' arguments on Alito is the *People's Weekly World*, which reflects the views of the Communist Party USA. An article in its November 5 issue said the nomination is an "offensive against mainstream democratic and progressive America."

Those singling out Alito's record cite his 1991 dissenting opinion while on the Third U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in the *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* case, where he backed a requirement by the state of Pennsylvania that women must inform their husbands before obtaining an abortion. Groups like Planned Parenthood say this shows that if confirmed Alito would vote to overturn *Roe*.

Supreme Court rulings, however, are not determined by a judge's record but by shifts in the class struggle and prevailing social attitudes. The *Roe v. Wade* ruling was a product of the women's liberation movement and the general radicalization at the time. The rise of the Black movement and other social struggles, in addition to the influx of women into the workforce since World War II, helped create an atmosphere that spurred changing views on abortion.

Foster Farms walkout

Continued from front page

largest private employer, processing half a million chickens a day. It is one of the largest chicken processing plants in the United States.

While the overwhelming majority of the 2,000 workers in the plant are employed by Foster Farms, pickets said that over the last two years the company has brought in hundreds of workers supplied by a contractor.

"It is criminal that the contract workers are paid only \$6.75 an hour while the contractor earns much more off them," said Juan Caballero, a long-time union supporter in the plant.

The company has used the hiring of contract employees to create divisions among the workers in the plant in order to gut seniority and keep everybody's pay low, unionists said. A worker with many years in the plant, for example, will be sent home early while a contract worker stays on the job. During the two walkouts, the company hired more contract workers as replacements for those protesting.

Workers who walked out November 3 were to return to work on Monday, November 7, and are prepared to come out again if no progress is made in negotiations with the bosses. "We feel that we have hit the company hard," Alvarez said. "We don't know what will happen on Monday, but everyone is ready to continue this fight for justice."

Arrin Hawkins, Martín Koppel, Brian Taylor, and Mary-Alice Waters contributed to this article.