

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Sixth annual book fair opens in Caracas, Venezuela
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 74/NO. 45 NOVEMBER 29, 2010

Preventable epidemic inflicts big toll in Haiti

BY ROLLANDE GIRARD

MIAMI—The death toll from the spread of cholera in Haiti surpassed 1,000 as of November 14 and will continue rising.

More than 16,000 people have been hospitalized, according to the country's health ministry. UN health officials expect the epidemic to last for years and predict 270,000 could fall ill from the disease.

Protests erupted in several areas November 15–16 demanding the UN military force leave the country and decrying the Haitian government for its miserable response to the social crisis. Many blame UN troops from Nepal for introducing cholera by using the same river to dispose of sewage waste that supplies drinking water to people in the Artibonite river valley where the disease originated. UN officials dispute any connection, although the cholera strain reportedly

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Meeting of G-20 bares trade tensions

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Trade conflicts and Washington's failure to win agreement for much of its agenda marked the November 11–12 Group of 20 meeting in Seoul, South Korea.

The G-20, as it is known, includes the imperialist governments of Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United States, and the United Kingdom, as well as China, Russia, Argentina, Brazil, India, Indonesia, South Korea, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and Turkey. The European Union is the 20th member. These countries account for more than 80 percent of worldwide production.

The Barack Obama administration wanted the meeting to set numerical limits on "trade imbalances," where countries with large trade surpluses like Germany and China would export less, enabling Washington with its huge trade deficit to step in to ex-

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Obama's Afghan war timetable: 2011 2014+ Gates: We'll still be 'out there killing'



AP Photo/Dusan Vranic

U.S. marine in Sangin, a town in Afghanistan's southern Helmand Province, November 12.

BY SETH GALINSKY

U.S. officials have been making the media rounds to emphasize that U.S. troops will not be leaving Afghanistan in 2011 and don't plan to hand over central responsibility to Afghan forces until the end of 2014 at the earliest.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates, with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton by his side, told ABC News November 9, "If the Taliban are telling

their supporters and their soldiers today, the Americans are leaving in July of 2011, they're going to discover very quickly . . . we're still there and we're still out there killing."

President Barack Obama's July 2011 date was always about giving "the Afghan government a sense of urgency," Gates said, not about withdrawal. Any drawdown of U.S. troops, he added, can only happen "based on the condi-

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Solidarity march supports locked-out unionists in Iowa



Militant/Lisa Rottach

Grain millers locked out by Roquette America and supporters march November 13 in Keokuk, Iowa. Workers are fighting attempt by company to impose union-busting contract.

BY REBECCA WILLIAMSON AND DAVID ROSENFELD

KEOKUK, Iowa, November 13—For the second time since Roquette America locked out 240 grain millers on September 28, hundreds of union supporters marched on Main Street here today in a spirited show of unity and solidarity.

Steelworkers, school workers, and meat packers were among those marching in support of the locked-out members of Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Internation-

al Union (BCTGM) Local 48G. Store owners and employees cheered on the demonstration and passersby constantly honked from cars.

"They woke a sleeping giant," said Wade Kehler, a locked-out worker. "The time is right for unions to help each other out. What happens to us has a direct bearing on other contracts. The community is behind us. When you stand up to a big entity like Roquette, you have to have numbers."

Workers at Roquette overwhelm-

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White House deficit panel: Slash programs, tax workers

BY CINDY JAQUITH

The bipartisan deficit-reduction commission appointed by President Barack Obama has proposed cuts to "outdated programs"—Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid—along with regressive tax measures that hit working people the hardest, the elimination of government jobs, and

a three-year wage freeze on government workers.

Commission chairs Erskine Bowles, a Democrat, and Alan Simpson, a Republican, announced the plan November 10. It will now be discussed by the commission as a whole, which is supposed to present Congress with a final report December 1.

"Americans have always been willing to sacrifice to make our nation stronger," the draft asserts in its open-

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Party-building fund goes over top: \$104,000!

BY TOM FISKE

MINNEAPOLIS—Supporters of the party-building fund for the Socialist Workers Party have pushed the fund over the top, collecting \$104,399 and exceeding the \$98,000 goal! Congratulations are due to all who participated.

The purpose of the fund is to aid the Socialist Workers Party in reaching out to workers, farmers, and young people.

The ruling rich have launched a

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Rally demands freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal

BY JOHN STUDER

PHILADELPHIA—More than 500 people picketed here November 9 outside a court hearing on whether the death penalty should be reimposed on Mumia Abu-Jamal, an African American political activist and journalist framed up and imprisoned 29 years ago on charges of murdering a cop.

In 1982, following a trial riddled with racist prejudice and police intimidation, Abu-Jamal was found guilty. The prosecution had pressed to keep as many Blacks as possible off the jury, using peremptory challenges to remove 11 of the 14 Black prospective jurors.

Since the trial, many of the witnesses presented by the prosecution against Abu-Jamal have recanted their testimony, saying that they were threatened by the police with imprisonment on outstanding charges if they did not incriminate him.

Prior to the trial, a court stenographer overheard Judge Albert Sabo saying, "I'm going to help them fry the nigger." Sabo, who was infamous for having sentenced the most people to death of any judge in the country at the time, imposed the death penalty on Abu-Jamal.

Since his arrest in 1981, Abu-Jamal and supporters of his defense have fought against the death sentence and for his freedom, explaining the frame-up nature of his conviction.

The current hearing before the U.S. Appeals Court for the Third Circuit concerns the judge's instructions to the jury in Abu-Jamal's original trial.

In 2002 U.S. District Court Judge William Yohn had ruled that these instructions made it more difficult for the jurors to decide against the death penalty. This victory for Abu-Jamal was upheld by the appeals court in 2008.

The Philadelphia district attorney appealed that decision to the U.S. Supreme Court, rather than setting a new trial for Abu-Jamal where he would be able to present new evidence.

In February 2010 the Supreme Court sent this decision back to the appeals court "for further consideration."

Actions in defense of Abu-Jamal over the last 28 years have fluctuated in size and often have dovetailed with other struggles against the death penalty, police brutality, and frame-ups.

New revelations of cop frame-ups

A general trend has been toward growing opposition to the death penalty. In recent years, hundreds of people sentenced to death have been proven not guilty, either as a result of DNA testing or other new evidence, or exposure of cop frame-ups.

In Philadelphia over the past few months there have been numerous revelations of cop brutality and frame-ups—including people arrested or beaten because they protested against police abuse of others.

On November 4 a lawsuit was filed challenging thousands of unconstitutional "stop and frisk" cop operations aimed particularly at the city's Black and Latino residents.



Militant/Janet Post

Hundreds rally in Philadelphia November 9 demanding justice for framed-up political activist Mumia Abu-Jamal, who has been imprisoned since 1981 on charges of killing a city cop.

Widespread publicity has been focused on the cop beating and frame-up in September of Askia Sabur, who was brutalized while he was standing outside a Chinese takeout restaurant waiting for his food. The cop assault was captured on video and has been viewed by more than 10,000 people on the Internet.

Abdus Sabur, the father of Askia Sabur, attended the rally for Abu-Jamal. "People all over the world are listening to what is happening here today," he told the *Militant*. "Along with many others, we are asking for the release of Mumia Abu-Jamal."

Abu-Jamal's defense campaign has also been affected by shifts in political and legal emphasis and a number of changes in attorneys.

On November 5, days before the appeals court hearing, lead defense attorney Robert Bryan was removed from the case on Abu-Jamal's request. In 2001 Abu-Jamal dismissed lead attorney Leonard Weinglass. This move was accompanied by a shift away from focusing on the prosecution's failure to prove Abu-Jamal's guilt and the unconstitutionality of his trial. New defense arguments, instead, aimed at proving Abu-Jamal's innocence based on a declaration by Arnold Beverly, who said he was hired by corrupt police officers working for the mafia to kill Daniel Faulkner, the cop Mumia was convicted of killing.

Abu-Jamal is the victim of a relentless frame-up by the Philadelphia cops and prosecutors. Since his arrest, he has faced a systematic, well-financed countercampaign organized by the Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) and backed by Democratic and Republican politicians, such as current Pennsylvania governor Edward Rendell, who was Philadelphia district attorney when Abu-Jamal was framed.

These forces seek to maintain Abu-Jamal's unjust conviction and put him to death.

Coverage in the Philadelphia media the day after the appeals court hearing did not focus on the arguments at the hearing, nor on the large protest in the street. Instead they reported on a press conference organized at the FOP headquarters with the wives of a number of cops who have been shot. Faulkner's widow made an emotional appeal for speedy enforcement of the death penalty.

The November 9 rally on behalf of Abu-Jamal was one of the largest such actions held in Philadelphia in years.

"We now see a new generation coming out to organize for Mumia Abu-Jamal that wasn't even born when this fight started," Pam Africa, a leader of the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, told the *Militant*.

Janet Post contributed to this article.

THE MILITANT

Defend Cuba's socialist revolution

The 'Militant' reports on efforts by Cuba's revolutionary government to confront the country's economic challenges, achieve self-sufficiency in food production, and maintain its socialist course. Follow these developments in the pages of the 'Militant.'



Karen Karlsson

Urban farm in Havana, February 2010.

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the Militant's views.

After denial, Troy Davis appeal goes to high court

BY JANICE LYNN

ATLANTA—A federal appeals court November 5 rejected an appeal from Troy Davis, who was framed up and sentenced to death for the 1989 killing of Mark MacPhail, a white cop in Savannah, Georgia. Attempts to execute Davis, a 40-year-old Black man, have been stayed three times due to widespread international support for his release.

The three-judge panel of the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals refused to consider the evidence in the case, contending their court was not the correct venue and that Davis should appeal only to the U.S. Supreme Court.

In August 2009 the U.S. Supreme Court ordered the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Georgia to “make findings of fact as to whether evidence that could not have been obtained at the time of trial clearly establishes petitioner’s [Davis’s] innocence.” But in a blow to the presumption of innocence, a U.S. district judge upheld Davis’s conviction in August of this year, claiming the evidence wasn’t strong enough to prove his innocence.

This was despite prosecution witnesses who recanted their testimony given at the original trial and the lack of any physical evidence linking Davis to the killing. Three witnesses told how they were coerced by police to finger Davis. Others said they could identify another man as the one who killed MacPhail. The judge also blamed Davis’s defense, but not the prosecutors,

for not calling another possible suspect to the stand.

Davis had filed his latest appeal with both the 11th Circuit Court and the Supreme Court, which has yet to respond.

Associated Press reported that Martina Correia, Davis’s sister, said “the family would keep fighting until he’s declared innocent, an issue she said the courts have been afraid to confront.”

“It’s like passing a hot potato,” Correia said. “Troy’s case opens a big Pandora’s box about what’s wrong with the criminal justice system, and a lot of people just want to keep that box closed.”



Militant/Robin Mace

NAACP youth leader Kenneth Cohen addresses rally in New York as part of international day of protest demanding justice for Troy Davis, May 2009.

Supporters Monthly Appeal nears \$55,000 goal

BY SCOTT BREEN

SEATTLE—“Fifty-five thousand dollars a month by the New Year is in reach!” That is how Carole Caron of the Supporters Monthly Appeal steering committee described the North American-wide effort by supporters of the Socialist Workers Party to back the party’s ongoing work.

Since September 1, 165 contributors have boosted their individual monthly contributions to the Appeal and 13 new contributors have joined, for a combined increase of \$2,494. The monthly contributions now total \$53,900, leaving just \$1,100 to go to make the goal of \$55,000 a month.

“The commitment of nearly 500 regular contributors to the Socialist Workers Party, and the reliability of their monthly contributions, make this income one of the foundations of the party’s monthly operating budget,” explained Dave Prince, a leader of the SWP. “We can carry out our work

consistently and with confidence, expanding party-building activity throughout the country and collaborating with others around the world.”

The Appeal got significant boosts from contributors in New York City and the San Francisco Bay Area recently, with \$540 in raises from 40 contributors in November. “I see what the SWP is doing,” said Hank Scheer, a regular contributor from San Francisco. “I was in a position to raise and very much wanted to.”

In Seattle discussions with 30 contributors to the Appeal from here and Vancouver, British Columbia, were held over the week, with 18 raising their monthly pledges and two new contributors added, for a total increase of \$308 a month. A special Militant Labor Forum November 13 on the meaning of the 2010 elections, with Mary Martin, SWP candidate for U.S. House of Representatives, and Dave Prince speaking, helped kick off

the weekend effort of political discussions with contributors here.

Similar weekend programs, combined with visits by organizers of the Appeal, are planned for Los Angeles and Toronto. Other areas are also discussing their contributions toward making the goal.

In the course of the weekend activities in San Francisco, Kevin Shanahan, a school bus driver who regularly attends Militant Labor Forums and reads the *Militant*, decided to become a contributor. The SWP’s political analysis, he said, “is like a breath of fresh air.”

Join the effort! If you would like to become a contributor to the Supporters Monthly Appeal, please contact the nearest area in the directory of *Militant* distributors.

Scott Breen is a member of the Supporters Monthly Appeal steering committee.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Reportback from Sixth Venezuela International Book Fair. Speaker: Róger Calero, volunteer at Pathfinder booth at fair. Fri., Dec. 3. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 307 W. 36th St., 10th floor (use elevators on 37th St. side). Tel.: (212) 736-2540.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

Protest Moroccan Crackdown on Sahrawi People. The Fight for Independence of Western Sahara. Speaker: Linda Harris, Communist League. Sat., Nov. 27, 6 p.m. Upstairs, 281-7 Beamish St., Campsie. Tel.: (02) 9718 9698.

CANADA

Montreal

Not One Penny, Not One Person for Ottawa’s War in Afghanistan. Speaker: Beverly Bernardo, Communist League. Sun., Nov. 21, 4 p.m. 7107 St-Denis, Room 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

The Struggle against Military Rule in Myanmar. Speaker: Mike Tucker, Communist League. Fri., Nov. 26, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5 waged, \$2 unwaged. 4/125 Grafton Rd. Tel.: (09) 369-1223.

UNITED KINGDOM

Edinburgh

Communist Workers Movement versus Pan-Africanist Socialism. Fri., Nov. 26, 7 p.m. 105 Hanover St. Tel.: 0131 226 2756.

—SELLING OUR PRESS AT THE PLANT GATE—

BY ANGEL LARISCY

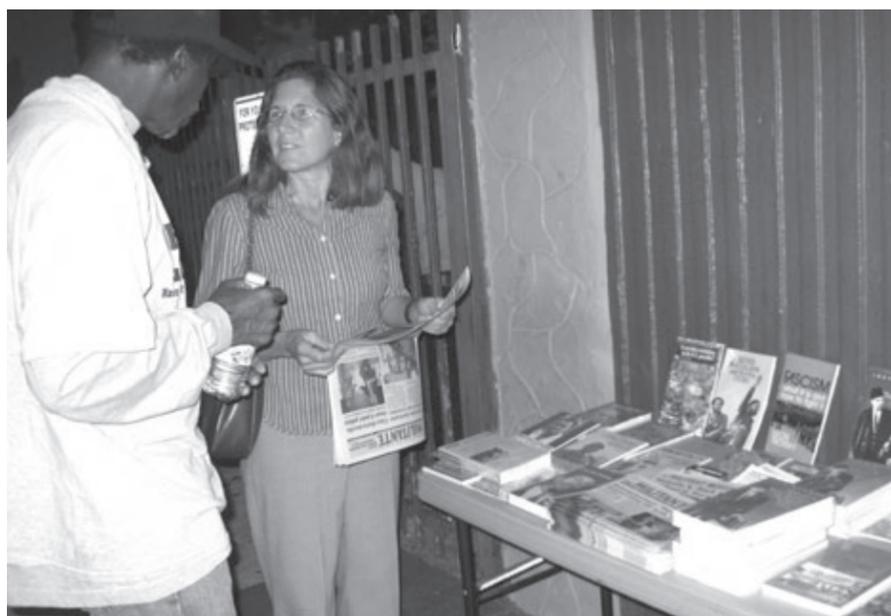
The *Militant* is regularly sold to workers outside factories and other worksites, a proud tradition that goes back many decades. Here are a few examples from around the country.

Becca Williamson and Helen Meyers sell each week by the Firestone tire factory parking lot in Des Moines, Iowa.

“This week we had a sign that said ‘Support workers locked out in Kekuk: Read the *Militant*,’” said Williamson. “Three people stopped to buy the paper and one gave a \$5 donation. A number of cars honked in support and gave us the thumbs up.”

Socialists who work in the plant report the regular presence of the *Militant* outside has helped them to meet more people and expand the readership of the socialist newsweekly.

Supporters of the *Militant* in Miami sell at International Longshoremen’s Association hiring halls in Miami and Ft. Lauderdale. Socialists set up from 5:30 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. on Saturday or Sunday mornings, with the permission of the union. “There are about 10 workers who maintain a subscription and others who buy the paper each week,” reported Bernie Senter. “We always sell a number of papers and all types of books on revolutionary, working-class politics, as well as get contributions for various funds.”



Militant/Bernie Senter

Deborah Liatos talks to longshore worker who is longtime subscriber to *Militant* outside International Longshoremen’s Association hiring hall in Miami.

A weekly sale outside the Perrigo pharmaceutical company in the Bronx, New York, has helped socialists who work there reach out to workers in the plant. Over the last two months, 18 workers have subscribed to the *Militant* for the first time, three renewed their subscriptions, and 21 bought copies of *Malcolm X*, *Black Liberation*, and *The Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes.

“Last week we sold four copies of the paper,” reports Steve Clark. “Two

of them were to workers we had discussions with before, but this was the first time they bought a copy. Many of the workers who’ve shown interest in the paper and book recognize, to one degree or another, the depth of the current capitalist crisis and the toll it’s taking on our class. We spend most of our time talking about what working people can do to resist these conditions.”

The *Militant* invites supporters of the paper to send in stories of sales at plant gates.

Check us out online!

TheMilitant.com

Guantánamo inmates win settlement from UK gov't

BY CINDY JAQUITH

As many as 16 people have won a financial settlement from the British government for its complicity with Washington in their unconstitutional detention and abusive treatment at the U.S. prison camp in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

UK justice secretary Kenneth Clarke announced the deal November 16, saying London was admitting no guilt but wanted to avoid “protracted” litigation and feared “compromising national security” if the cases went on longer. The settlement is reportedly in the millions of dollars.

The most prominent legal action is that of Binyam Mohamed, a British resident born in Ethiopia. He was arrested in Pakistan in 2002 and sent by U.S. forces to Morocco for 18 months of interrogation, with London’s knowledge. Among the abuses he endured was monthly torture that involved dozens of scalpel cuts to his genitals, which were then doused with a burning liquid. Eventually Mohamed ended up at Guantánamo.

Last year a British court ruled Mohamed’s treatment was “cruel, inhuman, and degrading” and ordered the release of CIA files on him that were in British possession. London did so, violating the understanding between the U.S. and British secret police that such shared files are never made public.

Mohamed sought redress in U.S. courts as well, but was not successful. No former or present Guantánamo detainees have been able to sue the U.S. government under either the George W.

Bush or Barack Obama administrations. Both have used “state secrets” as an excuse to prevent the cases from going to court, or claimed the agencies and individuals being charged enjoy immunity.

The White House said it had no comment on the British settlement.

Clarke said the British government is devising a system whereby spy files of interest in future court cases “would be seen and heard in secret hearings and withheld from interested parties and their lawyers,” the *Guardian* reported.

Washington offers to take Sudan off ‘terror’ list

BY ANGEL LARISCY

The Barack Obama administration recently announced it was holding out a carrot to Sudan—the possibility of being removed from the “State Sponsors of Terrorism” list. The price for getting on Washington’s good side is for the Khartoum government to go forward with a January referendum that will likely divide the country, and provide a more favorable situation for imperialist powers in the oil-rich nation.

The U.S. government also made clear that any hindrance of the thousands of African Union and United Nations armed forces stationed in Sudan will “reflect negatively on our abilities to carry out these steps.”

The “State Sponsors of Terrorism” list was begun under the James Carter administration in 1979. There are four countries on the list—Cuba, Iran, Sudan, and Syria. Along with sanctions



Kathleen Rhem

Prison camp at U.S. naval base in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, currently holds 174 detainees.

of various kinds, the list is used by Washington to maintain pressure on governments that fail to meet U.S. government demands politically or economically. A broader list of “countries of interest” is also maintained by the U.S. State Department. It includes Afghanistan, Algeria, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, and Yemen, in addition to the four on the “terrorism” list. Individuals traveling from any of these countries are subject to extra security measures when entering the United States.

Washington removed North Korea from the “State Sponsors of Terrorism” list in 2008 in order to pursue its efforts to convince Pyongyang to abandon its nuclear program.

While the U.S. government has made changes to the “terrorism” list over the years to advance its aims, it continues to forcefully insist Cuba

remain. President Ronald Reagan placed Cuba on the list in early 1982 and that designation has been maintained by every U.S. administration ever since.

Cuba is falsely accused of providing a safe haven for “terrorists” from around the world. In particular, the State Department justifies Cuba’s place on the list by claiming Havana allows rebel groups from Colombia to have a “permanent presence” in the country. The Colombian government, the United Nations, and the European Union, however, all point out that Havana, more than any other government, has helped advance negotiations to bring an end to the protracted guerrilla war in Colombia—sponsoring six rounds of negotiations since 2005.

Washington currently imprisons five Cubans who were framed up for their efforts to monitor counterrevolutionary groups in southern Florida with a history of armed attacks and acts of sabotage against Cuba. There is an international campaign to free those known as the Cuban Five—Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, René González and Fernando González—who were given long sentences for their work in defense of Cuba.

Party-building fund raises over \$104,000!

Continued from front page

frontal assault on basic living conditions of workers, from jobs and wages to pensions, health care, housing, and essential public services. Workers are confronting the consequences of the dictatorship of capital and its drive to defend the interests of the wealthy bondholders, bankers, and industrialists.

The SWP explains that working peo-

ple need to respond by building a mass revolutionary movement to take political power out of the hands of the capitalist class and use that power to begin organizing a socialist society that functions in the interests of the vast majority.

More workers are looking for answers that explain the roots of the economic depression they are living through. This was reflected in the

support for the fund this year.

“One of my coworkers from the John Deere factory gave a \$50 contribution,” said Rebecca Williamson from Des Moines, Iowa. “He first bought a subscription to the *Militant*. He likes our party and our political perspective. After he bought a copy of *Teamster Rebellion*, he read the whole book in four days.”

Ten people who bought copies of the book *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes contributed an extra \$5 to the party-building fund in Des Moines.

“Our meeting to support the party-building fund on October 16 was the biggest meeting of its kind in Seattle for quite some time,” reported Mary Martin. “Forty-three people attended, including five who we had met recently during street and campus campaign activity.”

Every branch of the Socialist Workers Party made its quota. Four branches raised their quotas during the drive.

“By the third week of the eight-week drive it was clear the initial response we were receiving indicated the Twin Cities branch would go over its original \$7,000 quota,” said Diana Newberry, an organizer of the fund effort in Minneapolis. “So we raised our target to \$7,500 and exceeded that by \$200.”

Newberry said “the success of the fund drive shows that working people are attracted to the party because it joins in struggles to defend the working class from the effects of the capitalist crisis. They also see the party as essential in the fight of working people to take political power.”

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Party-building fund Sept. 11–Nov. 9

City	Quota	Paid	%
Miami	\$3,000	\$3,439	115%
Houston	\$3,000	\$3,235	108%
Des Moines*	\$3,000	\$3,228	108%
Los Angeles	\$8,000	\$8,528	107%
Chicago	\$10,000	\$10,450	105%
Seattle	\$8,600	\$8,966	104%
Washington*	\$8,000	\$8,309	104%
San Francisco	\$13,500	\$14,011	104%
New York	\$20,000	\$20,593	103%
Twin Cities*	\$7,500	\$7,705	103%
Philadelphia	\$3,600	\$3,652	101%
Boston*	\$3,800	\$3,840	101%
Atlanta	\$7,800	\$7,843	101%
Other		\$600	
TOTAL	\$99,800	\$104,399	107%
Should be	\$98,000	\$98,000	100%

* Raised quota

Myanmar elections protested in New Zealand

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Sixty people marched here November 6 to protest military domination of parliamentary elections in Myanmar (formerly known as Burma) that took place the following day. Although final results are not in, election officials are predicting supporters of the military swept the polls.

Myanmar has been under repressive military rule since a coup in 1962. These elections are the first since 1990, when the National League for Democracy (NLD) won. The military junta annulled those results, however. The NLD boycotted the current elections. NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi, under house arrest for close to two decades, was released this November 13.

Twenty-five percent of seats in the Myanmar parliament are reserved for the military.

—JANET ROTH



Militant/George Fyson

ON THE PICKET LINE

Tomato pickers in Florida win wage increase

Farm workers in Florida's tomato industry have won a penny-per-pound raise as part of a pact between the Coalition of Immokalee Workers and the Florida Tomato Growers Exchange.

The agreement provides workers more rights and better health and safety conditions on the job, according to the coalition.

The group has fought since the 1990s to compel the big growers to improve wages and working conditions. Fast food companies such as McDonald's and Burger King had earlier agreed to a pay raise, but up until now the Florida growers continued to hold out.

Florida tomatoes supply 90 percent of the U.S. winter crop.

—Cindy Jaquith

D.C. nurses call one-day strike over contract, understaffing

Nurses at Washington Hospital Center, the largest private hospital in the Washington, D.C., area, have voted by 90 percent to hold a one-day strike the day before Thanksgiving.

National Nurses United represents the 1,600 nurses at the 926-bed facility. The union said in a statement it was taking the action to force negotiations for a new contract. The hospital faces chronic nurse understaffing, according to the union.

A veteran nurse, who did not want to be identified for fear of hospital retaliation, told the *Washington Post* labor and delivery is supposed to have two nurses attending every birth, but "we do it when we can—it just depends." In the pulmonary step-down unit, one nurse is responsible for four



Kimberly Artech

Nurses picket May 11 outside Washington Hospital Center in Washington, D.C.

patients on respirators, double the number from a decade ago, said nurse Blondina Mays.

In October the hospital imposed wage cuts, eliminating the shift dif-

ferential for those who work evenings, nights, or weekends.

National Nurses United has also been involved in recent one-day strikes in Minneapolis and Philadelphia.

—Angel Lariscy

March in Iowa backs locked-out unionists

Continued from front page

ingly rejected the company's last minute contract offer in September, which many here called a union-busting contract. It would have given the company the ability to undermine seniority, bring in temporary workers, cut the pay of new hires, and jack up health insurance payments by workers. While contract negotiations have taken place since the lockout began, the company has not budged from its "final" offer.

The march of 350 people on a cold and blustery day was only one of many examples of solidarity. Several religious figures in the area have launched a food drive for the union workers, called "Helping Hands for the Communities," with a goal of raising \$10,000 to supply food and personal items to those in need. Donations of money, food, and firewood for the picket lines have poured in from both unions and individuals.

"We are fighting for the wages of new hires to not be cut. This is for our sons and grandsons," said Greg Milligan, a member of Local 48G who used to work for Case New Holland in Burlington, Iowa, assembling back hoes. He took part in a union fight against a lockout by that company in 2004. "We set up picket lines 24/7 and held strong. After five months we got our jobs back, but the pay for new hires was decreased by five dollars," he said.

Union solidarity

Scott Hanson, a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 617 at Pinnacle Foods, came to the march with 20 other members of his local. "If this can happen to them it can happen to any one of us," he said. "Our contract comes up in two years." Pinnacle workers organized a 50-50 raffle to benefit Local 48G. The winner of the raffle gave back his prize money to help the locked-out workers.

Solidarity reached the locked-out workers from across the Atlantic Ocean this week. Leaders of the union representing Roquette workers in France, where the company is based, sent letters of support. "The FGA-CFDT strongly condemns the lockout decided by management," wrote Bruno Vanonni, national secretary of the French food processing union. In a separate letter, Francis Courbois, a representative of the French Democratic Confederation of Labor (CFDT), wrote, "We support our American colleagues and will not hesi-

tate to help them by any lawful means."

Marchers gathered at the Keokuk Labor Temple, which houses a meeting hall, bar, and the offices of several local unions. Over a megaphone, Pat Mahoney, president of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 2005, which organizes school workers in Keokuk, told the crowd, "We believe in the old union concept, an injury to one is an injury to all! If you pick on one, you pick on all."

"This is nothing but union busting!" shouted Pat Courtney to the rally. Courtney is a state senator and retired member of the United Auto Workers union.

David Rosenfeld, who was the 2010 Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of Iowa, was invited to speak to the crowd after the march. He reported that his Steelworkers union local at the Firestone plant in Des Moines would conduct a gate collection for the locked-out workers.

"During my campaign, whether on radio or TV, at a mosque in Cedar Rapids, or at Iowa State University, I explained that this fight is the most important thing happening in Iowa," Rosenfeld told the crowd. "Not only because the workers at Roquette are standing up to union busting. But because of the solidarity of other workers and unions who are standing up with them."

"We need to build a fighting labor

movement. One that fights for all workers. One that inspires all workers," he concluded to applause. "The only place to start doing this is where workers stand up and fight back."

Steve Underwood, the president of Local 48G, told the *Militant* that the company "claims they are meeting production demands." But according to Underwood, picketers report that the combination of salaried employees and replacement workers has been unable to produce more than a fraction of pre-lockout production levels.

Two days after the start of the lockout, union workers learned that the company had cancelled their health insurance. After six weeks on the picket line, many workers have begun looking for other jobs. They are finding that to be a difficult task. Lee County, home to Keokuk, has an 11 percent unemployment rate, the highest in the state of Iowa.

A bake sale after the march raised \$450. Marchers were encouraged to join a fund-raising hog roast and a benefit concert later in the week. Messages of support and donations can be sent to: BCTGM Local 48G, 301 Blondeau Street, Keokuk, IA 52632, or e-mailed to bctgm48g@qwestoffice.net. Phone: (319) 524-1249; Fax: (319) 524-1751.

Alyson Kennedy contributed to this article.

Union crew strikes NBC reality TV show

Some 50 members of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees walked off the job of the NBC reality show "The Biggest Loser" in early November after the company failed to recognize the union in spite of all crew members signing union cards.

After the company hired replacement workers, more than 100 crew members and supporters picketed November 15 in Calabasas, California, where the show is filmed. The driver of the catering truck that provides food for the crew and the two trainers who work on the show refused to cross the picket line.

—Angel Lariscy

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25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



November 28, 1985

MANAGUA, Nicaragua—"There are still more battles to wage," explained Nicaraguan Minister of Defense Humberto Ortega, "but the course is clear."

"We have been able to put the mercenaries on the defensive," he told the nation recently, referring to the CIA-sponsored counterrevolutionaries, who are waging war against Nicaragua.

He repeated the evaluation that Sandinista leaders have made previously: the counterrevolutionary forces, or *contras*, have begun to suffer a "strategic defeat."

The defense minister rejected Washington's campaign to present Nicaragua's ties with Cuba as illegitimate.



November 28, 1960

"If the white segregationists now rioting in Louisiana were to try the same thing in Cuba they would find themselves very quickly in the revolutionary jug or under observation in mental hospitals where they belong," declared [*Afro-American* correspondent] William Worthy at a Harlem meeting Nov. 17 sponsored by the New York Chapter of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee.

He said that "overt racial discrimination has been eliminated in Cuba by the revolutionary government partly because they really enforce the antidiscrimination law and partly because of the economic and social reforms which have been carried out."



November 30, 1935

TOLEDO, Ohio, November 26—At the mass meeting of the Toledo Chevrolet workers, held this Saturday afternoon, the Chevrolet men unanimously rejected the company's proposal of a seven and a half hour day, four-day week, three shifts—a proposal which would automatically throw 900 of the Chevrolet employees out into the street.

The Chevrolet executive committee is already establishing contacts with the "Committee for Industrial Unionism" with the aim of immediately organizing Saginaw and Muncie and other unorganized General Motors plants in the Detroit area.

The prospects are that hell will be popping loose around these parts.

London: students march against education cuts

BY ÖGMUNDUR JÓNSSON

LONDON—Tens of thousands of students filled the streets here November 10, denouncing government cuts to school funding and plans to triple the maximum tuition universities can charge. The youthful and determined protesters came in busloads from across England, Scotland, and Wales.

When the National Union of Students (NUS) and the University and College Union called the demonstration, they expected 20,000 people. The NUS said more than 50,000 took part. Chanting, “No ifs, no buts, no education cuts!” protesters marched through the government district.

Alongside official placards saying “Fund our future. Stop education cuts,” there were a wide range of handmade signs. “Keep university universal,” said one; “Education for the masses, not the upper classes,” another read. Several said, “Your profit, our debt.”

Devangana Kalita, from Sussex University, told the *Militant*, “Those who will take the hit are not those who are responsible for the crisis.”

“Seeing what happened in France, something has to break,” said Sarah Warriner, referring to the recent widespread strikes and demonstrations there against the hike in the retirement age.

The government’s October 20 austerity program cuts funds for higher education by 40 percent, as part of a sweeping assault that includes raising the retirement age, slashing government jobs, reducing housing funds, and other cutbacks.

Funding for university arts, humanities, and social sciences is to be ended altogether. A number of protesters highlighted this, with one group leading a chant of “Save our arts school.”

The maximum tuition that universities can charge will rise from £3,290 to £9,000 (£1=US\$1.61). As is the case today, money would be lent to students by the government and then loan payments would be deducted from graduates’ salaries. They would be required to pay back 9 percent of what they earn above a threshold of £21,000 per year. If the debt is not paid off after 30 years it will be wiped out.

The government claims the lowest-paid 25 percent of graduates will pay less than they currently do, pointing to a rise in maintenance grants for students from

households earning less than £25,000. In addition, the government will institute a raise in the threshold at which graduates have to start paying back their loans, and a “progressive tapering” system where those earning less pay less interest. This is in line with the “fairness” argument that the government has used to justify other budget cuts.

Near the end of the marching route, a small group of protesters broke through the glass front of the building that houses the Conservative Party headquarters and took over the lobby for several hours. This sideshow has become the main focus of media attention, with only passing mention made of the tens of thousands who joined the largest protest against the government’s austerity measures so far in the United Kingdom.

Pamela Holmes contributed to this article.



Militant/Ögmundur Jónsson

Tens of thousands of students rallied in London November 10 to protest government plans to triple university tuition and cut higher education funding by 40 percent.

Haiti: Preventable epidemic kills hundreds



AP Photo/Emilio Morenatti

UN troops from Brazil patrol refugee camp outside Port-au-Prince, Haiti, November 15, following protests by Haitians against government and UN military presence.

Continued from front page matches one found in South Asia.

Some of the protests took place in and near Cap-Haitien on the northern coast. Demonstrators set up burning barricades and torched a police station. At least two young men were killed by UN troops, one of them shot in the back, a local official told AFP news service. UN soldiers dispersed demonstrators with tear gas. UN humanitarian coordinator Nigel Fisher and Haitian president René Préval called on demonstrators to cease their protests.

Cholera had been nonexistent in

Haiti for at least 50 years. But abysmal living conditions for millions have deteriorated in the wake of the January 12 earthquake that killed more than 200,000 people. More than 1 million remain homeless.

Hurricane Tomas passed through Haiti November 5, killing 20 people and flooding areas of the country. This helped disperse the waterborne disease, which has spread to the capital of Port-au-Prince and most of the country.

One case has been reported in neighboring Dominican Republic, but the disease is not expected to become epidemic there because of the country’s better conditions and higher level of development.

Cholera can lay dormant for several days and kills in hours, but is easy to eliminate with modern sanitation. It can be cured by rehydration and in extreme cases with inexpensive antibiotics. However, millions in Haiti lack access to soap and clean water; health-care facilities are few and far between and medical supplies and personnel are scarce.

The Cuban medical mission was among the first to care for patients suffering from cholera in the Artibonite region. Additional nurses and medical assistants were rapidly sent to strengthen the Cuban contingent’s response to the spread of the disease. Cuba’s continuing medical brigades contrast sharply with the highly

publicized medical efforts from the United States immediately after the earthquake, which all but disappeared within a couple months.

Whatever the original source, it’s clear the spread of the epidemic is rooted in Haiti’s underdevelopment, resulting from decades of imperialist plunder and domination.

Less than 40 percent of billions of dollars of aid pledged after the earthquake has been delivered. Some \$1.15 billion promised by Washington has still not been sent.

Many workers in Miami have family in Haiti. Selitane Senelus from St. Louis du Nord came to the United States just before the earthquake. “Schools were closed in the region where I’m from after nine children from the region died from cholera,” she said. “A lot of people still don’t know what to do if they get infected. They don’t have a radio to inform them and don’t have money to buy clean water. In some areas, people have to walk for several hours to get to a hospital.”

“The real problem in Haiti is the lack of infrastructure,” said Jean Baptiste Silas, a socialist and airport car service driver in Miami, who had been involved in struggles of peasants and for democratic rights before he left Haiti. “There are no water treatment plants and no electricity, which forces people who need to cook to cut trees to make charcoal. The mango trees are being cut and people lose the fruits they could have eaten. This causes even more erosion, which brings more flooding.”

This easily preventable disease is on the rise around the world, along with other seemingly natural calamities forced on working people as economic and social breakdowns mount as a consequence of the deepening worldwide crisis of capitalism. There was a cholera outbreak in Peru in 1991 that spread to 16 countries throughout Latin America, killing 9,000 and infecting nearly a million people over several years. According to the World Health Organization every year 3 million to 5 million are infected with cholera and 100,000 to 120,000 people die from it.

New International no. 13

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Sixth int'l book fair opens in Venezuela

Pathfinder Press sales off to strong start

BY BETSEY STONE AND ROGER CALERO

CARACAS, Venezuela—Thousands streamed through the grounds of the Sixth Venezuela International Book Fair here the first weekend after its November 12 inauguration. The book fair, the largest cultural event in the country, will run through November 21.

“Let’s remind ourselves that the book fair is not only a commercial fair for the exhibition and sale of books. Above all, it’s a cultural celebration,” said Christian Valles, president of the National Book Center of Venezuela at the opening press conference. The center hosts the event.

Fair visitors can browse and purchase books, magazines, and other publications from more than 100 exhibitors from Venezuela and abroad. They also attend dozens of workshops, poetry readings, musical performances, and other activities.

At the opening ceremony, Francisco Sesto, Venezuela’s minister of culture, highlighted efforts made by publishing houses and other government institutions that have increased access to literature and culture.

Every year fair organizers dedicate the event to a specific country. This year that designation is shared by Colombia, Mexico, and Argentina, the three countries in Latin America that together with Venezuela are marking

the bicentennial of their independence from Spain.

While the participation of international diplomatic delegations and publishing houses is greater this year than in previous ones, there are fewer exhibiting stands and spaces for presentations, panels, and other activities. This year, the *bono-libro* was also eliminated. These were coupons distributed through social programs and government institutions that could be used to purchase books at the fair, which benefited many workers and working-class youth.

Book and pamphlet sales by Pathfinder Press, which for the sixth consecutive year has a stand at the book fair, are off to a strong start, with 454 books sold the first weekend.

The top seller is *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* with 97 copies sold so far, followed by *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?* with 61 copies. Other sought-out titles include *The Communist Manifesto*, *Abortion Is a Woman’s Right*, and *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*.

The explanation that the roots of the economic crisis and the expanding imperialist wars can be found in the dictatorship of capital, and the perspective of building revolutionary parties that can lead struggles to overthrow capitalist rule, have provoked lively discussions



Militant/Betsy Stone

Audience at panel discussion on feminism at Sixth Venezuela International Book Fair, one of many programs organized as part of fair.

between fair visitors and the international team of socialist workers staffing the stand.

Rubén Martínez, a worker in a cosmetics plant in Caracas, was one of those who bought *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes. “The U.S. is the biggest power, and it’s not functioning right, making war, and taking away peoples’ rights,” he said. “I’m hoping to learn how this can be changed.”

Leafing through the many photos portraying the history of the Black movement in the United States, Ingrid Selga, a member of the Afro-Venezuelan Youth Network, said the lessons contained in the book would be valuable for her group, which is fighting for the rights of Afro-Venezuelans.

A colorful display of photos at the Pathfinder stand portrayed the strikes, protests, and other struggles by working people and youth in the United States in response to the capitalist rulers’ assault on working conditions and standards of living. These came as a surprise to many visitors.

After volunteers at the booth explained how the two books complement each other, a number of people took advantage of a special discount to buy both *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* and *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*. The latter book describes the struggle to build a party of communist workers, rooted in the industrial unions.

Working people of all ages stopped by the booth and carefully considered the content of the books and what the Pathfinder volunteers told them. A middle-aged waitress said, “I am glad I could be part of these discussions with workers like you from the United States. Five years ago, I really couldn’t read, I really didn’t know anything, and I really wasn’t interested.” She described how she has become more interested in what is happening in the world and bought a copy of *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?* by Mary-Alice Waters.

In addition to poetry readings and other cultural performances, there are many panel presentations on topics ranging from “The importance of reading and the inappropriate use of the internet” and “Women in the war for independence” to “A bicentennial facing the future: What, how, and who blocks our independence today in Latin America.”

At a well-attended program on feminism, Alba Carosio, director of the Women’s Studies Center at the Central University of Venezuela, explained that

a proposal to decriminalize abortion has stalled in the National Assembly. A proposed new penal code would allow abortion under all circumstances up to the 12th week of pregnancy, and up to 20 weeks in cases of rape, fetal deformation, or risk to the woman’s life. This legislation still has not been debated in the National Assembly.

Many of those attending the program were university students, who snatched up copies of *Abortion Is a Woman’s Right*, published by Pathfinder. More than 30 copies of the pamphlet were bought in the first three days of the fair.

Héctor García, a teacher at the National Institute of Women, came to the Pathfinder stand looking for pamphlets by Mary-Alice Waters, after having read Waters’ pamphlet *Feminism and the Marxist Movement* in a public library in Caracas. He went away with *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women* and *Is Biology Woman’s Destiny?* by Evelyn Reed.

In addition to participating in the book fair, volunteers at the Pathfinder Press stand have been invited to participate in a series of meetings with university students, workers, and activists in the state of Aragua.

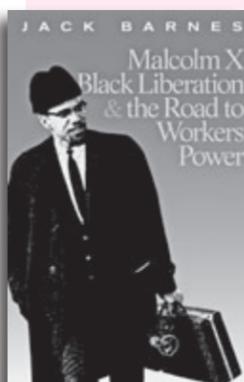


Militant/Betsy Stone

John Hawkins, left, talks with people visiting Pathfinder book stand at Venezuela International Book Fair. Top sellers at booth include *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?*, *The Communist Manifesto*, *Abortion Is a Woman’s Right*, and *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*.

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by Jack Barnes



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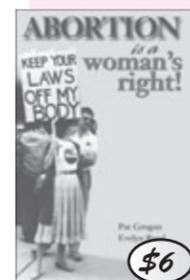
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by Pat Grogan & Evelyn Reed

Why abortion rights are central not only to the fight for full emancipation of women, but to forging a united and fighting labor movement.

\$6

Mandela on U.S. imperialism in Africa in 1950s

Below is an excerpt from *The Struggle is My Life* by Nelson Mandela, one of *Pathfinder's Books of the Month* for November. The book contains his writings and speeches in the fight against the apartheid regime in South Africa, from the time he joined the African National Congress Youth League in 1944 to his release from 27 years of incarceration in 1990. The piece below is from an article he wrote in March 1958, titled "New Menace in Africa." It takes up the growing threat posed by U.S. imperialism to the mass struggles against colonial rule that had won political independence for many countries in Africa. Copyright © 1990 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Eli Weinberg

Congress of the People rally in Kliptown, South Africa, 1955, where Freedom Charter, programmatic document of African National Congress, was adopted. It declares, "South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white." U.S. imperialism, Mandela wrote in 1958, "threatens to destroy newly won independence of people of Asia and Africa."

BY NELSON MANDELA

Quite naturally the colonial peoples all over the world have in various ways waged ceaseless battles against foreign domination. In many areas this battle has been decisively won whilst in others

off the imperialist yoke and are now independent states. Egypt, the Sudan, Ethiopia, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Ghana are no longer dependencies of foreign powers. In Algeria, Nigeria, Somalia and Uganda self-government in the near future is anticipated. All over the world the people are astir and the struggle for political progress is gathering momentum by the day. Imperialism has been weighed and found wanting. It has been fought and defeated by the united and concerted action of the common people.

Whilst the influence of the old European powers has sharply declined and whilst the anti-imperialist forces are winning striking victories all over the world, a new danger has arisen and threatens to destroy the newly won independence of the people of Asia and Africa. It is American imperialism, which must be fought and decisively beaten down if the people of Asia and Africa are to preserve the vital gains they have won in their struggle against subjugation.

The two world wars, which weakened the old powers and which contributed to the growth of the political and economic influence of the USA, also resulted in the growth of the anti-imperialist forces all over the world and in the intensification of the struggle for national independence. The old powers, finding

themselves unable to resist the demand by their former colonies for independence and still clinging desperately to their waning empires, were compelled to lean very heavily on American aid. The USA, taking advantage of the plight of its former allies, adopted the policy of deliberately ousting them from their spheres of influence and grabbing these spheres for herself. An instance that is still fresh in our minds is that of the Middle East, where the USA assisted in the eviction of Britain from that area in order that she might gain control of the oil industry, which prior to that time was in the control of Britain. . . .

Imperialism in disguise

American imperialism is all the more dangerous because, having witnessed the resurgence of the people of Asia and Africa against imperialism and having seen the decline and fall of once powerful empires, it comes to Africa elaborately disguised. It has discarded most of the conventional weapons of the old type of imperialism. It does not openly advocate armed invasion and conquest. It purports to repudiate force and violence. It masquerades as the leader of the so-called free world in the campaign against communism. It claims that the cornerstone of its foreign policy is to assist other countries in resisting domination

by others. It maintains that the huge sums of dollars invested in Africa are not for the exploitation of the people of Africa but for the purpose of developing their countries and in order to raise their living standards.

Now it is true that the new self-governing territories in Africa require capital to develop their countries. They require capital for economic development and technical training programmes, they require it to develop agriculture, fisheries, veterinary services, health, medical services, education and communications. To this extent overseas capital invested in Africa could play a useful role in the development of the self-governing territories in the continent. But the idea of making quick and high profits, which underlies all the developmental plans launched in Africa by the USA, completely effaces the value of such plans in so far as the masses of the people are concerned. The big and powerful American trade monopolies that are springing up in various parts of the continent, and which are destroying the small trader, the low wages paid the ordinary man, the resulting poverty and misery, his illiteracy and the squalid tenements in which he dwells, are the simplest and most eloquent exposition of the falsity of the argument that American investments in Africa will raise the living standards of the people of this continent.

The American brand of imperialism is imperialism all the same in spite of the modern clothing in which it is dressed and in spite of the sweet language spoken by its advocates and agents. The USA is mounting an unprecedented diplomatic offensive to win the support of the governments of the self-governing territories in the continent. It has established a network of military bases all over the continent for armed intervention in the domestic affairs of independent states should the people in these states elect to replace American satellite regimes with those who are against American imperialism. American capital has been sunk into Africa not for the purpose of raising the material standards of its people but in order to exploit them as well as the natural wealth of their continent. This is imperialism in the true sense of the word.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

it still rages. The imperialist countries have been driven out from practically the whole of Asia and the Pacific regions. China, India, Ceylon, Burma and the United States of Indonesia have won their national independence. In Africa a large number of territories have thrown

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Solution: Working-class solidarity

The proposals released by President Barack Obama's deficit-reduction commission mirror austerity measures put forward by governments in Europe and elsewhere. Capitalist rulers around the world have only one answer to the crisis of their economic system—make the working class pay.

At the same time, as the recent G-20 summit shows, rivalry among capitalist and wannabe capitalist powers is intensifying. These conflicts are not resolvable, as they flow from the very workings of the capitalist world economy itself. The future is one of fiercer trade wars that can eventually escalate to shooting wars.

Recent remarks by AFL-CIO president Richard Trumka criticizing the deficit commission's proposals reflected the nationalist framework that infects the labor movements of imperialist countries. "If we actually want to address our economic problems," he said, "we need to end tax breaks that send American jobs overseas."

The working class has no country and no interest in helping "our" capitalists compete against the wealthy rulers in other nations. On the contrary, among other

demands, we call for canceling the Third World debt, which is one of the ways the imperialist system perpetuates underdevelopment and which hangs as a heavy burden on fellow toilers throughout the world.

Workers everywhere can learn from the concrete example of proletarian internationalism shown in the decades-long course carried out by the working people of revolutionary Cuba, from the role of its volunteer soldiers that when to Angola and helped defeat South Africa's apartheid army in the late 1980s to Cuban medical personnel who are on the front lines today combating Haiti's cholera epidemic.

The jobs program we need starts with a massive, federally funded public works program to employ millions at union-scale wages, building affordable housing, hospitals, schools, and infrastructure.

If the profit-driven capitalist system proves incapable of providing a means of livelihood for workers, it only begs to be replaced by the rule of working people—a socialist system based on international working-class solidarity and the needs of the billions who inhabit this earth.

Troops in Afghanistan for years to come

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tions on the ground."

Washington has been pressuring its allies to keep troops in Afghanistan to back the U.S.-led war.

Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper had pledged to withdraw some 3,000 Canadian troops, who operate in southern Afghanistan, by the end of 2011. On November 11, however, Harper said Ottawa would keep up to 1,000 Canadian troops there to train Afghan forces.

Canadian troops have suffered the highest per capita casualties of all the NATO forces in the country, according to the *Washington Post*.

Since U.S. general David Petraeus took over command of the war effort from Gen. Stanley McChrystal in late June, U.S.-led forces have stepped up commando raids and aerial bombings, conducting some 2,600 air attack sorties, 50 percent more than in the same period last year.

U.S. special operations soldiers have killed 339 midlevel Taliban commanders and 949 Taliban fighters in Kandahar in the last three months, according to U.S. commanders.

Washington is trying to transform the Afghan army and police into an effective fighting force. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, over the last year the size of the Afghan army has increased from 97,000 to 138,000

and the number of cops from 85,000 to 120,500.

Washington has raised salaries and cut training time in an effort to stem attrition, which has been as high as 140 percent per year among the police and is currently about 24 percent in the Afghan army. U.S. lieutenant general William Caldwell told the media that to reach NATO's goal of 56,000 more Afghan soldiers and cops by next October, his command will need to sign up 141,000 new recruits.

Although 40 percent to 50 percent of the Afghan population is Pashtun, most Afghan soldiers are Tajik, Hazari, or Uzbek. In August, just 66 of 3,708 army recruits were Pashtuns. In southern Afghanistan, where the Taliban is based, few Afghan army soldiers speak the local Pashtun language; they communicate using interpreters hired by the U.S. military.

Not confident that the Afghan army and police will ever be able to take the lead in fighting the Taliban, the Pentagon launched the Afghan Local Police Initiative this summer. Its goal is to organize at least 20,000 people into private, tribal-based militias.

Dominated by local warlords, the militiamen are given three weeks training, AK-47 rifles, a uniform, and some cash.

Beverly Bernardo in Montreal contributed to this article.

U.S. government 'deficit' commission

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ing patriotic appeal.

The commission proposes indexing the retirement age to life expectancy, projecting a retirement age of 68 by 2050 and 69 by 2075. Anyone retiring earlier would not receive full Social Security benefits.

The cost-of-living allowance (COLA) for Social Security benefits would be reduced by further manipulating the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The draft claims the current CPI "overstates inflation," because when the price of a product goes up, people can just buy a cheaper substitute.

A major source of Social Security spending cuts projected in the draft is attributed to the ambiguous phrase "progressive changes to benefit formula."

The draft proposes accelerating cuts that were approved in Obama's health "reform" law. This includes money for Medicare Advantage; home health care; and for hospitals that treat low-income patients, which are already scheduled to lose 25 percent of their federal funds by 2015. Medicaid funds spent on long-term nursing-home care would be capped.

For the first time, veterans without service-related disabilities and those with low incomes would have to make a copayment for medical treatment. Insurance premium payments by retired government employees

would increase.

Payments to doctors treating people on Medicare and Medicaid would be reduced, meaning more physicians would turn away these patients. There would be a cap on the amount of employer-provided health care that is tax deductible, leading many bosses to reduce their workers' coverage.

The plan calls for reducing the number of federal employees by 10 percent through attrition, amounting to 200,000 people. The amount government employees still working would pay toward their pensions would go up.

The proposal also lists cuts to military spending, many of which have already been adopted, like replacing military personnel engaged in commercial activities with civilians and reducing the number of U.S. troops in Europe and Asia. The draft also proposes the same three-year freeze on the pay of all civilian employees of the Defense Department as is being imposed on other government workers.

The plan nearly doubles the federal tax on gasoline to 34 cents per gallon by 2013. It reduces the corporate tax rate from 35 percent to 26 percent, and the highest income tax rate from 35 percent to 23 percent. It eliminates tax deductibles like earned income tax credit and child-care credits and increases charges at federal parks and the Smithsonian museums.

G-20 meeting

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port more to these markets.

German chancellor Angela Merkel harshly criticized the U.S. plan. "Our export success proves how competitive German products are," she told the *Die Welt* newspaper. "Trade balances are also indicators of performance."

With veiled threats of protectionism, President Obama responded, "Countries with large surpluses must shift away from depending on exports. No nation must assume the road to prosperity depends on exports to the U.S." The administration has said doubling U.S. exports over the next five years is at the center of its economic agenda.

Washington also failed to win G-20 support for its longstanding campaign to force China to boost the value of its currency, the renminbi, in relation to the dollar, which would reduce Chinese exports to the United States. Instead, the U.S. government's dollar policy, recently announced by the Federal Reserve, came under sharp attack. At issue is the decision to print \$600 billion to purchase U.S. Treasury bonds. Government officials from China, Germany, and other countries have charged that this move undermines the dollar and destabilizes other currencies.

Zhang Tao, director of the international department of the People's Bank of China, told the *Financial Times* November 11 that Washington "should not force others to take medicine for its own disease."

The G-20 also refused to offer duty-free and quota-free access to their markets for the least developed semicolonial countries. Washington, for example, insists on keeping in place trade barriers limiting imports of garments from Bangladesh.

"Embarrassment in Seoul," was the title of the November 13 *Wall Street Journal* editorial summing up the meeting's results. "Has there ever been a major economic summit where a U.S. President and his Treasury Secretary were as thoroughly rebuffed as they were at this week's G-20 meeting in Seoul? We can't think of one," the *Journal* editors wrote.

"Mr. Obama and Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner came to Seoul blaming the rest of the world for U.S. economic weakness. America's problem, in their view, is the export and exchange rate policies of the Germans, Chinese, or Brazilians. And the U.S. solution is to have the Fed print enough money to devalue the dollar so America can grow by stealing demand from the rest of the world," the *Journal* said.

Another political blow to the Obama administration was its failure to secure a trade pact with the South Korean government. At the last G-20 meeting in Toronto five months ago, Obama had set the Seoul summit as the deadline for signing such an agreement.

The George W. Bush administration signed a trade pact with Seoul in 2007, but it was never implemented. Obama campaigned against the pact in 2008. Since then his administration has been seeking to renegotiate its terms to increase sales of U.S. cars and beef in South Korea. U.S. officials, for example, have been demanding that South Korea "accept slightly weaker U.S. emissions standards as long as imports remain below a certain level," reported the *Washington Post*.

Meanwhile, the European Union has completed its "free trade" pact with Seoul on terms similar to what the Bush Administration negotiated in 2007.

Corrections

In the November 15 issue, the article "French Gov't Passes Retirement Age Hike" incorrectly states that in the mid-1990s Alain Juppé was the Socialist Party prime minister in France. He was a member of President Jacques Chirac's conservative Rally for the Republic party. In the November 1 issue the article "Elections in Sweden Reflect Capitalist Crisis" incorrectly said the Social Democratic party's coalition had not lost two elections in a row prior to the most recent two elections. However, they lost the election in 1976 and then again in 1979.