

Keep pace in ‘Militant’ subscription campaign

BY MICHEL POITRAS

At the end of its third week, the international campaign to win 2,200 new and renewed readers to the *Militant* reached a total of 1,116. This is 51 percent of our goal. While still well ahead of schedule, sales slowed down last week—something we need to pay close attention to.

Ongoing labor resistance from Alabama to the Midwest, from Montreal to Washington state, the deepening economic crisis in Europe, and the unceasing assaults by bosses and their governments on working people’s livelihood and rights continue to spur the interest of workers, farmers and youth in a working-class paper that builds bonds of solidarity among fighters and charts a course toward

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Fall 'Militant' subscription campaign				
Oct. 1–Nov. 20 (week 3)				
Country	quota	sold	%	2,200
UNITED STATES				
Washington	60	40	67%	1,116

Washington gloats over killing of Gadhafi

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

“One of the world’s longest serving dictators is no more,” President Barack Obama gloated following the killing of Moammar Gadhafi October 20.

After two months of fighting in

IMPERIALIST HANDS OFF LIBYA!

—See editorial, p. 9

Sirte, Gadhafi’s hometown and last city under his control, a U.S. Predator drone and French fighter jet bombarded a large convoy leaving the city.

“The strike destroyed at least 11 of the vehicles,” reported the *New York Times*, “with as many as 50 bodies scattered about and the charred remains of victims still sitting in the driver’s seat.” Gadhafi, who was part of the convoy, tried to flee on foot, but was captured by a soldier from the Misrata Military Council, according to Associated Press.

Footage aired on Arab TV networks showed Gadhafi wounded but

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Victorious India auto strike unites ‘permanent’ and ‘temp’ workers

BY JOHN STUDER

On October 21 striking workers at the Maruti Suzuki complex in Manesar, 30 miles south of New Delhi, won a double victory, gaining de facto recognition of their union—the Maruti Suzuki Employees Union—and forcing the company to bring back 1,200 temporary workers fired for supporting the union.



Sit-down strike at massive Maruti Suzuki plant in Manesar, India, October 13, demanding return of temporary workers. Strikers won that demand and de facto recognition of union.

‘Without better contract, we’ll continue fighting’

1,300 battle bosses’ union-busting campaign



Workers at Bridgestone/Firestone plant in Des Moines, Iowa, raised \$1,383 at plant gate collections October 11-12 for workers locked out by American Crystal Sugar in Upper Midwest.

BY NATALIE MORRISON

MOORHEAD, Minn.—Locked out members of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union maintain around-the-clock pickets here outside the gates of American Crystal Sugar, but especially at the two shift changes when scabs are brought in to maintain production.

“In the past, the company would see what gate we are at and switch to the gate to where we didn’t have pickets, so now we make sure we’re at all the gates,” Brad Knapper, one of 1,300 workers locked out by American Crystal since August 1, told the *Militant*.

American Crystal bosses imposed a lockout after union members rejected by 96 percent the company’s concession

Continued on page 3

Rally protests new Alabama law targeting immigrants

BY JACOB PERASSO

BIRMINGHAM, Ala.—Some 3,500 people rallied at the Fair Park Arena here October 22 against the state’s anti-immigrant legislation HB 56, which went into effect in September.

“We want to work here. We don’t

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U.S. imperialists seek to curb China’s rising power	7

Ford vote: UAW ratifies another concession pact

BY ILONA GERSH

CHICAGO—The United Auto Workers announced October 19 that its members voted to approve a national pact with Ford Motor Company covering some 41,000 workers by a 63 percent margin.

The concession contract initially appeared to be headed toward rejection, after large locals in Chicago and Michigan turned it down. The tide turned when UAW officials began to tour locals and push harder for the agreement, warning that a “no” vote could lead to a strike or lockout.

Officers of UAW Local 249 at Ford’s Kansas City truck plant posted a message on the local’s website saying that rejecting the contract would threaten “house payments,” “car payments,” and “Christmas presents.”

Union tops touted the contract as making Ford more competitive in the world market. “As the nation’s economy remains stalled and uncertain and its employment rate stagnates, we were able to win an agreement with Ford that will bring auto manufacturing jobs back to the United States from China, Mexico, and Japan,” said UAW President Bob King.

The union’s collaboration was praised by Mark Fields, Ford’s president of the Americas, in an October 19 statement. “This agreement is proof that, by working together with our UAW partners,” he said, “we can invest in our plants and people, and make a very positive impact on the U.S. economy.”

The UAW contract with General Motors was approved September 28 by a

similar margin. Voting began at Chrysler plants on October 25.

The Ford and General Motors contracts are virtually the same, including signing bonuses, productivity bonuses, and “inflation protection” bonuses, but no increases in the wages for workers hired before the September 2007 contract.

The second tier of workers, hired in September 2007 or after, will get a \$3.50 wage increase over the four years of the contract. Their wages will be capped at \$19.28 per hour, just 70 percent of what more senior workers get.

The *Militant* spoke with a few workers at Chicago’s assembly plant where union members voted 77 percent to reject the contract.

“I’d like to have the cost of living increase back in my base wage,” said Sue Margraf, a toolmaker with 22 years of seniority. “They are trying to buy us with the bonuses.”

The new contract allows the auto companies to reduce their hourly labor rate by hiring thousands of workers at lower wages. Some of the jobs they fill will be new, while others will replace veteran workers paid to retire early with buyouts of between \$10,000 and \$100,000.

“I voted for the contract,” explained John Williams, a utility worker with 13 years at the plant. “It took care of my needs. My doctor visits went down from \$75 to \$20. The money is OK, because house and car are paid for. But I have a family with medical issues.”

“We gave a bunch of concessions last time and they made \$6 billion in profits last year,” said Thomas Daughterty, a



Militant/Maggie Trowe

Maura DeLuca, left, talks with Ford worker during recent contract vote in Kansas City, Mo.

relief worker with 17 years of seniority. “I’d like to see my son work at Ford, but I’m not sure of the \$19 cap on wages.”

“When they divide workers into competing groups, that’s when we get into trouble,” said Noel Juarez, an as-

sembly worker for 11 years. “I think it started when the union let the auto companies build new nonunion plants in the South. And now first-tier workers and second-tier workers are permanently divided.”

Strike wins at Suzuki in India

Continued from front page

Suzuki Employees Union recognized in June. In response, the company suspended 11 workers. The unionists then went on a 13-day sit-down strike, winning the workers’ jobs back.

On August 29 the company locked out the workers, demanding they sign a “good conduct bond” pledging not to “indulge in any activity that would hamper the normal production in the factory.” Anyone Suzuki charged with violating the bond could be fired. Dozens of militants were also suspended.

The workers refused to sign and went on strike. Twelve hundred contract workers joined them. On October 1 a deal was struck for all permanent and temporary employees to return to work.

At Maruti Suzuki, permanent workers average \$600 a month, while temps make \$140.

When workers returned to the plant, they found that the company had not recalled contract workers or the suspended employees.

Some 1,500 permanent workers oc-

cupied the plant, conducting a “tools-down” strike October 7. Hundreds of temporary workers mobilized outside the factory every day. Workers at three other Suzuki-owned plants shut down production in solidarity.

On October 14, 1,500 city cops entered the plant, demanding the workers leave. The workers decided to end their occupation but continued the strike.

A week later the company gave in. It agreed to rehire the temporary workers and 64 permanent employees suspended for pro-union activities, grant de facto recognition to the union, and provide transportation to and from work.

“This is a story that needs to be told,” the October 14 issue of the weekly *Tehelka* wrote, “not because it is a classic case of divide and rule, but because the classic trick failed.”

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THE MILITANT

‘There is a war on workers today’

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*—Byron Jacobs
longshoreman,
Longview, Washington*



Militant/Clay Dennison

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

2 The Militant November 7, 2011

Australia rally protests restrictions on welfare

BY LINDA HARRIS

SYDNEY, Australia—More than 100 people joined an October 8 rally in the Bankstown suburb here to protest restrictions on how welfare recipients can spend the payments they receive. Chanting “Not in Bankstown, not anywhere!” and waving placards reading “Basic rights, not BasicsCards,” protesters marched through the shopping center.

The Labor federal government of Prime Minister Julia Gillard is planning to expand “income management” to Bankstown and four other working-class suburbs and towns with high unemployment across Australia in July 2012. It will target people judged by the government welfare agency Centrelink to be “vulnerable to financial crisis.”

Half of their payments will be made through “BasicsCards,” which can be used only for “essential” items at government-approved stores.

Income management was introduced in the Northern Territory in 2007 when the Liberal government of Prime Minister John Howard sent troops and cops to take over 73 Aboriginal communities. It was extended under Labor Prime Minister Kevin Rudd as part of the continued intervention. Between 50 and 70 percent of benefits and pensions of Aborigines living in the 73 designated areas were “quarantined” onto the BasicsCard.

At the rally Barbara Shaw, an Aboriginal leader of the fight against the intervention in the Northern Territory, described her experience using the BasicsCard in Alice Springs. BasicsCard holders have to stand in a separate line. “If you don’t have enough on the card

they refuse to serve you. That is very humiliating,” she said. “We have to keep campaigning, making sure our voices are heard.”

The protest was called by the coalition “Say No to Government’s Income Management, Not in Bankstown, Not Anywhere,” which is supported by more than 50 organizations, including unions, churches, Aboriginal and community groups.

“What people need is better access to transport and health services, not income management,” coalition spokesperson Margaret Goneis told the rally.

“This will rob people of their independence and self-respect. They want to control our lives,” said Carol Carter, a local Aboriginal elder.



Militant/Bob Aiken

March in Sydney, Australia, October 8 protests restrictions on how welfare recipients can spend payments. “They want to control our lives,” said Carol Carter, an Aboriginal elder.

Locked-out sugar workers keep fighting

Continued from front page

contract demands. The workers affected are employed at plants in the Red River Valley of Minnesota and North Dakota and in two smaller plants in southern Minnesota and Iowa.

“If we don’t get a fair contract we are going to keep fighting,” Richard Larson, who is locked out at the American Crystal plant in East Grand Forks, said in a phone interview. He was referring to the

resumption of negotiations October 24. “We want the language in the contract about outsourcing out. If we don’t stop it now it will just get worse the next contract.”

In addition to concessions in wages and health benefits, the company’s contract offer included stipulations that would allow bosses to increasingly contract out union jobs and thereby weaken the union.

American Crystal hired a scab-herding agency, Strom Engineering, to replace the union workers during the lockout, which the bosses appear to have planned far in advance. For months leading up to the contract vote, the company brought in future replacement workers to “shadow” union workers in the plants. “Tens of millions of dollars have been spent so far and tens of millions more will have to be spent to maintain the lockout,” pointed out John Rott, one of the pickets here.

Preparing for a possibility of a longer struggle, the union has organized a hardship committee of two workers from each plant. Tami Knapper, a union volunteer and wife of Brad Knapper, said the committee uses money donated to the solidarity fund to make sure “locked-out workers can continue to make their mortgage payments, their car payments and other bills.”

Tens of thousands have been donated from unions, individual workers and others. Members of the United Steelworkers raised \$1,383 outside the Bridgestone/Firestone plant in Des Moines, Iowa, October 11-12 by asking workers to back their union brothers and sisters standing up to American Crystal.

Union teachers here as well as in Crookston and East Grand Forks have been organizing weekly food donations. Tami Knapper said that most of this food goes to the locked-out workers in North Dakota who have been denied unemployment compensation by the state government.

“Thank you to everyone who helped make our food drives and deliveries of all the food and goods collected for our locked-out brothers and sisters at the North Dakota factories,” wrote Debra Kostrzewski from Argyle October 22 in the opinion section of *Inforum*, the daily newspaper in the Fargo-Moorhead area. “We and they cannot express the gratitude felt for those gestures. The financial support we have received is amazing. The personal donations, change collected by children and checks received from our union brothers and sisters of different national and international unions all across the nation is phenomenal.”

Donations to the sugar workers can be sent to BCTGM Local 167G, 100 N 3rd, Suite 50, Grand Forks, ND 58203. Write checks to BCTGM 167G with “2011 BCTGM lockout” in the memo line.

Successful SWP fund-raising event in Seattle nets \$4,100

BY OMARI MUSA

“We’ve had a crash course in what capitalism is,” Jake Whiteside told a meeting of 50 participants at an October 22 Socialist Workers Party event in Seattle that raised some \$4,100 for the party. Whiteside is vice president of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 21 in Longview, Wash. The local is in a fight against a union-busting campaign by EGT Development at the port there.

Jason Lundquist, a member of the local’s labor relations committee, thanked the *Militant* for telling the union’s side of this battle. He talked about how the court backed the cops, who assaulted members of Local 21 and the Ladies Auxiliary. “The laws have never been on the side of labor and sometimes you have to do what is right to protect your rights,” he said.

Margaret Trowe was the main party speaker. She has been active in spreading solidarity with sugar beet workers fighting a lockout by American Crystal Sugar in Minnesota and North Dakota. This struggle, she said, “is part of the sea change going on in the working class.”

“I think it’s great to hear of the support outside of Longview and I appreciate the positive input from the *Militant* to get the message out on our fight,” Amanda Bornstedt-Niemi, an ILWU supporter from Longview, told participants. She bought copies of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* and *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?*

Nearly \$3,000 was collected at a fund meeting in Los Angeles the same day. The featured speaker was Frank Forrestal, who has been writing for the *Militant* on the fight by 1,300 workers

against American Crystal Sugar.

Participants at a similar event in Miami included a longtime *Militant* reader who is a member of the International Longshoremen’s Association and a woman party members met at an Occupy Miami protest. SWP leader Joe Swanson was the featured speaker.

Responding to a comment about a friend who prefers not to have a union, Swanson said, “I wouldn’t downgrade this worker for his attitude. Most workers we meet today are not in unions and others have had experiences with unions that function as job trusts. It’s in the course of fighting together against the bosses’ attacks that workers will build solidarity and gain the experience needed to make our unions instruments that defend the entire working class.”

Party-Building Fund week 2 of 7

Area	Quota	Collected	%
Des Moines*	\$3,200	\$2,275	71%
Lincoln	\$200	\$60	30%
Washington	\$7,500	\$2,170	29%
San Francisco	\$14,000	\$3,525	25%
Los Angeles	\$8,500	\$1,635	19%
Twin Cities	\$6,000	\$914	15%
New York	\$20,000	\$2,906	15%
Atlanta	\$8,000	\$1,117	14%
Miami	\$3,200	\$413	13%
Houston	\$4,000	\$419	10%
Chicago	\$10,000	\$1,004	10%
Seattle	\$9,000	\$628	7%
Boston	\$3,800	\$90	2%
Philadelphia	\$3,700	\$0	0%
Other		\$550	
Total	\$101,100	\$17,706	18%
Should Be	\$100,000	\$28,571	29%
* Raised goal			

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

San Francisco

The Unfolding Class Struggle in North Africa, the Arab East, and Israel. A Party-Building Fund meeting. Speaker: Paul Mailhot, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Nov. 12, 7:30 p.m. 6 p.m.: program, 7:30 p.m. 5482 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

The Road to Workers Power: Vote Socialist Workers! Speakers: John Naubert, Socialist Workers candidate for Seattle Port Commissioner; Mary Martin, SWP candidate for Seattle School Board. Donation: \$5. Fri., Nov. 4, 7:30 p.m. 5418 Rainier Ave. S Tel.: (206) 323-1755.

CANADA

Montreal

From North Dakota to Washington State to Montreal: The Dictatorship of Capital Meets Growing Resistance. Speaker: Beverly Bernardo, Communist League. Fri., Oct. 28, 7:30 p.m. 7107 St-Denis, Suite 204, 2nd floor (above Marché oriental). Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

—CALENDAR—

NEW YORK

Manhattan

The World Capitalist Crisis: What Way Forward for the Working Class? Speaker: Steve Clark, managing editor of *New Internationalist*, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory. Sat., Nov. 12, 2 p.m. Free admission. 224 East 125 St., Harlem (one block east of Pathmark). Tel. (212) 629-6649. Sponsored by New York Public Library.

Protest in Alabama

Continued from front page

want to leave,” said María Esther Jiménez, a young worker who spoke from the floor of the meeting. “We buy everything we have here, we don’t take anything. The United States profits from us.”

“We must work together,” Anthony Johnson of the Birmingham Metro NAACP told the crowd, drawing the connection between the fight for immigrant rights and the fight of Blacks against racism. “We must fight together, until HB 56 is repealed.”

On October 12 a one-day strike by Latino workers centered in the northeastern part of the state protested the law. Soon afterward a federal court granted an injunction against parts of the law, including a section that requires schools to determine the immigration status of students and parents.

The Justice Department has asked the courts to overturn the legislation because it invades the federal government’s “exclusive authority over immigration.”

The Barack Obama administration has implemented some of the harshest anti-immigrant measures in decades. Immigration and Customs Enforcement carried out more than 2,200 immigration audits in 2010, compared to 1,400 in 2009 and less than 500 in 2005. These expanded audits have forced the firings of thousands of immigrant workers.

ICE recently announced that last year it carried out the highest number ever of “removals,” a type of deportation that increases the risk of felony charges, prison sentences and fines for those who are deported if they return. And the administration continues its drive to encourage local cops to help enforce immigration law and implement mandatory fingerprinting to check the immigration status of anyone booked in local jails.

Several speakers at the rally pointed to the civil rights movement of the 1960s to end Jim Crow segregation as an example of a successful struggle

with relevance today. A moment of silence was held for Fred Shuttlesworth, the Black rights leader who passed away earlier this month. A bilingual leaflet honoring Shuttlesworth was distributed at the meeting. “Shuttlesworth fearlessly stood up to racist politicians and inspired millions to come out of the shadows and demand their dignity and rights,” the flyer read.

Speakers and participants at the rally included Luis Gutierrez, Democratic Party congressman from Illinois; Birmingham City Councilor Jonathan Austin; and Birmingham School Superintendent Craig Witherspoon.

The rally was organized and promoted by La Jefa radio station.

Seth Galinsky contributed to this article.



Militant/Jacob Perasso

Some 3,500 people at October 22 rally in Birmingham against Alabama’s recently passed immigration law. Speakers drew connection between fight for immigrant and Black rights.

Libraries, bookstores order Pathfinder books

BY MARY ELLEN MARUS

“Please send a list of 10 titles you would recommend, including titles that deal with unions,” wrote the manager of a major independent bookstore in Los Angeles. He was responding to a mailing promoting books on revolutionary working-class politics by Pathfinder Press. The letter sent to potential commercial buyers and librarians highlighted titles that explain the roots of the worldwide capitalist economic and social crisis.

The mailing is part of Pathfinder’s fall sales effort in the United States and Canada. Orders from bookstores and libraries now total 34. The goal is to win 90 orders by December 12, 45 of these from independent and campus bookstores.

In Vancouver, British Columbia, nine orders have been won so far, including six from high school libraries. The author of this article had a wide-ranging discussion with two high school librarians in Vancouver on how Pathfinder books help explain the connection between what’s happening in world politics and the crisis of capitalism. The li-

brarians talked about the fight by teachers at the school against a wage freeze and ordered 16 books.

According to Floyd Fowler in Atlanta, a librarian there is interested in organizing a meeting on Pathfinder’s upcoming book *Making a Revolution Within the Revolution: From the Santiago Underground to the Federation of Cuban Women*.

Based on Pathfinder promotional work in New York, a librarian at the 125th Street Library in Harlem is helping to organize a meeting on the roots of the economic crisis featuring Steve Clark, managing editor of *New International*, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory distributed by Pathfinder Press.

Speaking with salesperson Katy Lerougetel, the political science buyer

at the University of Quebec library in Montreal ordered the French versions of the *New International* series, *Teamster Rebellion* and *The Communist Manifesto*, as well as the entire Communist International series.

A new civil rights museum in Greensboro, North Carolina, in a former Woolworth’s store where a landmark sit-in for Black rights occurred in 1960, ordered \$400 worth of books. Since opening in February 2010, they have sold 40 copies of *Malcolm X*, *Black Liberation*, and *the Road to Workers Power*.

In Miami the owner of a Haitian bookstore ordered the French editions of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions* by Jack Barnes and *Teamster Rebellion* by Farrell Dobbs.

Keep pace in ‘Militant’ drive

Continued from front page

building a revolutionary movement to establish workers power.

According to Mary Martin from Seattle, a total of 11 subscriptions were sold over the past week to members and supporters of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 21 in Longview, Wash., who are fighting a union-busting campaign by EGT Development at the Port of Longview.

Janice Lynn reported members of the Socialist Workers Party from Atlanta sold 22 subscriptions and 71 single copies of the *Militant* at an October 22 demonstration of 3,000 in Birmingham, Ala., against the state’s new anti-immigrant law. They also sold four copies of the Spanish edition of *Malcolm X*, *Black Liberation*, and *the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes, as well as one copy in Spanish of *Teamster Rebellion* by Farrell Dobbs. These two titles are part of five books offered at reduced rates during the subscription drive.

“Six more subscriptions,” wrote Lynn, “were sold going door to door in apartment complexes in the Birmingham area, along with 16 single copies of the *Militant* and two additional copies of the *Workers Power* book, one in English and one in Spanish.”

In New York City 22 subscriptions and 83 single copies of the socialist paper were sold to some 350 Verizon workers and supporters in downtown Manhattan October 21 protesting the lack of progress in contract negotiations

since their two-week strike last August. One worker bought a one-year renewal.

Seven subscriptions were sold to people attending two performances in the Bronx and Harlem of “Abracadabra,” a play about the Cuban Five. (See article on page 6.) These events were part of an October 15-29 tour by La Colmenita (The Little Beehive), the National Children’s Theater of Cuba.

“We sold our second subscription to the *Militant* to a striking McGill University support staff worker,” wrote John Steele from Montreal. (See article on page 5.) The Communist League in Canada is now at 50 of its goal of selling 85 subscriptions through the drive.

From Sydney, Australia, Linda Harris wrote that members of the Communist League sold 10 subscriptions, including two renewals, at the “Occupy Sydney” protest. “A young worker who drives a forklift,” said Harris, “came up to our table and signed up for the *Militant* and bought *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?* by Mary-Alice Waters,” another of the books offered at a discount during the drive.

Militant supporters in Albuquerque, N.M., and Cincinnati, Ohio, have joined the scoreboard this week, rising the global goal to 2,255! The campaign ends November 20.

This weekly column depends entirely on notes, reports and stories that distributors send us on experiences introducing the *Militant* to workers, farmers and youth. E-mail them by Tuesday at 8:00 a.m., New York time.

Special offers with Militant subscription

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by Farrell Dobbs ~~\$19~~ \$10 with subscription

The story of the strikes and union organizing drive the men and women of Teamsters Local 574 carried out in Minnesota in 1934, paving the way for the continent-wide rise of the Congress of Industrial Organizations as a fighting social movement.

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

by Jack Barnes ~~\$20~~ \$10 with subscription

This book helps us understand why it is the revolutionary conquest of power by the working class that will make possible the final battle for Black freedom—and open the way to a world based not on exploitation, violence, and racism, but human solidarity. A socialist world.

The Changing Face of U.S. Politics Working-Class Politics and the Unions

by Jack Barnes ~~\$24~~ \$10 with subscription

A handbook for those seeking the road toward effective action to overturn the exploitative system of capitalism and join in reconstructing the world on new, socialist foundations.

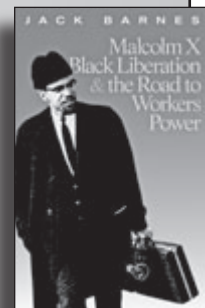
Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?

by Mary-Alice Waters ~~\$7~~ \$5 with subscription

The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning

by Jack Barnes ~~\$3~~ \$2 with subscription

Contact distributors on page 8—subscription rates on page 2



Pathfinder Press

ON THE PICKET LINE

Verizon workers in New York demand contract without cuts

NEW YORK—Some 350 Verizon workers and supporters from other unions and Occupy Wall Street marched here October 21 to protest the lack of progress in contract negotiations. The Verizon landline division workers are organized by the Communications Workers of America and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

Union members went on strike August 7. They returned to work August 22 without a new contract, but under terms of the expired one. Verizon is demanding deep concessions from the 45,000 workers on the East Coast covered by the contract.

“The company is still pushing a higher deductible for the health care plan,” said John Zeolla, business agent for CWA Local 1120. “They still want to freeze our pensions.”

“My father fought for what we have today,” said Kyle Mangan, with 13 years seniority at Verizon. “I won’t let them take it away.” Other unions participating included American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 1537, Civil Service Technical Guild Local 378, and National Writers Union, United Auto Workers Local 1981.

“Verizon is not budging,” CWA Local 1101 shop steward Anita Long said. “We have the support of the public and we have the support of Occupy Wall Street.”

“Everything is going up: taxes, insurance, gas,” said Vinn Manger, who installs fiber optics. “It’s unfair.”

The march began at the Verizon building on West Street and went to Zuccotti Park, home of Occupy Wall Street protesters, and then to a Verizon Wireless retail store.

Along the way, they chanted “Hey hey, ho ho, Verizon greed has got to go!” “We are the 99%!” and “What’s disgusting? Union busting.”

—Dan Fein and Rebecca Williamson

Montreal: University workers win support despite injunction

MONTREAL—The 1,700 staff at McGill University, on strike since September 1, are reaching out for solidarity in response to a September 23 court injunction banning “shouting, chanting, marching, picketing, displaying signs or posters, gesturing or assembling” within 80 feet of many campus locations. On October 21 another injunction was issued banning picketing “at any off-campus McGill events.”



Militant/John Steele

McGill University strikers distribute flyers at football game in Montreal September 11.

“Students deserve to hear both sides of the issues,” said Joël Pedneault, vice president of external affairs for the Students’ Society of McGill University.

The key issues in the strike are parity with other universities in Montreal, protection of benefits and pensions, and shift premiums for evening and weekend work. It takes workers at McGill 37 years to reach the top of their classifica-

tion, compared to 10 to 15 years at other Montreal universities.

Strikers comprise clerical workers, library assistants, IT technicians and other support workers. They are members of the McGill University Non-Academic Certified Association, which is affiliated to the Public Service Alliance of Canada.

On October 15 strikers set up picket lines near the campus targeting Homecoming Week attendees. They also joined day care workers rallying for wage increases downtown that day. Some brought picket signs to Occupy Montreal actions the same afternoon.

On October 20 hundreds of strikers and supporters set up picket lines around the entrances to a university hospital construction site. Many of the construction workers stopped working or refused to cross the picket line and joined the pickets.

McGill pretends that it’s business as usual on campus. But according to strikers, students have come to the picket line with cell phone photos of library shelves overflowing with books not re-stacked. Some smaller campus libraries have been closed since the strike began.

On October 12 Bell Canada employees joined the picket lines. Hydro-Quebec workers also expressed solidarity.

—Michel Dugré and Katy LeRougetel

Hunger strikes drew attention to prison treatment

BY BETSEY STONE

SAN FRANCISCO—Prisoners at Pelican Bay in northern California ended their hunger strike October 13. The same day more than 50 of their supporters rallied at City Hall in Los Angeles.

“We have to keep this struggle going,” Daletha Hayden, whose son was recently placed in solitary confinement in Tehachapi State Prison, told the *Militant* in a phone interview.

“They had to do the hunger strike,” said Patricia Aguilar, whose husband has been in solitary confinement at the Pelican Bay State Prison for 16 years. “They are dying a slow death every day being caged like animals in 8 by 10 foot cells, with no windows, for 23 hours a day.”

Thousands of prisoners in California joined in hunger strikes this year—a three-week action in July and another that began September 26. Their central demand was to end long-term solitary confinement in the notorious Security Housing Units (SHUs), where thousands are held with little human contact.

They also demanded an end to group punishment, improvements in medical care and food, as well as the right to have wall calendars, wear warm clothes and take correspondence courses.

Black, Latino and Caucasian prisoners prepared the strike, formulated demands, communicated with supporters outside prison walls and negotiated with prison authorities.

Prisoners ended the most recent hunger strike after the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation promised a review of the status of SHU prisoners sentenced to solitary as a result of being “validated” as belonging to a gang.

Prison authorities “validate” gang membership by using so-called evidence such as tattoos, possession of Aztec drawings, speaking to or exercising with a gang member or being fingered as a gang member by another prisoner.

To get out of the SHU, prisoners are required to “debrief,” that is to finger

fellow inmates as gang members. Many refuse to give or make up information that will do harm to others.

The SHU status of prisoners is reviewed every six years. However, “an excuse is found to keep them in and they really only get out by naming someone else as an alleged gang member,” said Aguilar.

“There is no transparency. The guards do what they want with the prisoners,” said Meredith Drennan in a phone interview. His son participated in both hunger strikes.

During the strike leaders of the protest at Pelican Bay were moved from the SHU into segregated units where they faced worse conditions. One reported that he was moved with only a jumpsuit, thin mattress and thin blanket, with the air conditioner running full blast in 50

degree weather.

According to Kendra Castañeda, whose husband took part in both hunger strikes at Calipatria State Prison, authorities retaliated against the strikers by refusing them fluids and medical care. Prisoners at Calipatria, who are in units where they are denied radios and TVs, remained on strike a couple days longer than the other hunger strikers.

“It is a privilege, an honor to be part of the struggle, to be part of history for the betterment of all those inside these cement walls,” a prisoner at the Calipatria State Prison wrote to the Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity coalition in Oakland.

Wendy Lyons and Arlene Rubinstein of Los Angeles contributed to this article.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



November 7, 1986

SUNNYVALE, Calif.—Members of International Association of Machinists District 508 voted to reject a contract offer by Lockheed Missiles and Space Co. A total of 57 percent of the valid votes authorized a strike.

The contract called for maintaining the two-tier pay system that has weakened the union. It also called for a wage freeze, even though the company is reporting high profits. Instead of raises, the company dangled lump-sum bonuses of 12 percent this year and 5 percent the next two years in front of the workers.

“We pay bills monthly. You try and tell your bill collectors to wait till you get your bonus and see what they say,” District President Ken Benda pointed out. “Even a 4 percent raise each year would pay more over the life of the contract than this bonus.”



November 6, 1961

General Maxwell Taylor, Kennedy’s special military advisor, has returned from Saigon with a request from the government of Ngo Dinh Diem for U.S. combat units to be committed to the guerrilla warfare in South Vietnam.

The U.S. government has already sunk \$1.5 billion into Diem’s government and already has a group of U.S. military men “in the field” against the guerrillas. But even the U.S. commercial press cannot conceal the fact that Diem’s government is hated by the mass of the people of South Vietnam.

It is an outrage that U.S. soldiers should be sent to risk their lives defending such a regime against the justified wrath of the Vietnamese population. The request for further commitment of U.S. forces should be refused and all forces and aid presently committed should be immediately withdrawn.



December 5, 1936

A state of peonage and terrible exploitation of the Negro turpentine workers in Florida were revealed in a graphic report to the American Federation of Labor convention at Tampa.

At MacClenny, thirty miles west of Jacksonville, workers there “stated categorically that all the Negro people in this community were held in slavery.

“None is allowed to leave the place. The owner has two stool pigeons who . . . even slip under the shackles at night and listen in on the conversation.

“Any desire on the part of inmates to escape is effectively thwarted. Men may suffer beatings, their lives may be threatened if they attempt to leave. The turpentine workers are forced to toil from day-light until they can no longer see at night. They receive 50 cents to \$1 a day.”

Lawyers explain conditions imposed on René González

1 of Cuban 5 denied return to Cuba under supervised release

BY MICHEL POITRAS

In recent interviews two lawyers for the Cuban Five described the punitive conditions of René González's supervised release. González, one of five Cuban revolutionaries framed up by the U.S. government and imprisoned since 1998 on fabricated "conspiracy" charges, completed his prison term October 7.

Supervised release is in fact an additional sentence on top of the prison term for federal inmates. It imposes onerous conditions similar to parole. Supervised release has been in use since 1987 when parole, which involves an early release, was ended for federal prisoners.

After serving more than 13 years behind bars, González is the first of the five revolutionaries released under supervision of the federal court's probation office. The other four—Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and Ramón Labañino—are still in prison, serving sentences ranging from 17 years and nine months to double life plus 15 years.

The Cuban Five were living and working in southern Florida, gathering information on counterrevolutionary groups operating from there with the knowledge and complicity of Washington. These groups have a long history of violent and murderous attacks on Cuba and on supporters of the Cuban Revolution in the U.S. The five were arrested in 1998 FBI raids and have been imprisoned ever since.

Philip Horowitz, René González's lawyer, was interviewed by Gloria La Riva of the National Committee to Free the Cuban Five days after González's release. Richard Klugh, Hernández's lawyer, was interviewed by Bernie Dwyer from Radio Havana Cuba on October 14.

René González's supervised release, Klugh said, "was part of the original sentence. It is part of every sentence. What was decided at the last moment was that unlike other foreign nationals whose families live outside of the United States, René would not be permitted to join his family" in Cuba.

On September 16 U.S. District Judge Joan Lenard, who presided over the 2001 trial, denied a motion by González that he be allowed to return to Cuba upon his release from prison.

The denial is "unusual," said Horowitz. René González has dual Cuban and U.S. citizenship. "It is common for a defendant who is not a citizen of the United States to be deported and serve his supervised release, on paper only, in their home country." He added, "René offered before his release to renounce his United States citizenship and, in exchange, to return to Cuba. The offer was

not accepted by the government."

"There is to my knowledge," stressed Klugh, "no prior case in the history of the United States in which someone who has foreign nationality, as René has, whose family lives in a foreign country and whose wife cannot travel to the United States, has been barred from reuniting with his family." Olga Salanueva, René González's wife, was deported in 2000 and has since repeatedly been denied entry by Washington. Adriana Pérez, the wife of Gerardo Hernández, has also been prevented from entering the country to visit her husband for more than 13 years.

Klugh mentioned that it was also "unusual" for René González to have been put in the "hole," or solitary confinement, the last night he spent in prison. "I have not previously encountered that occurring in any other situation," he said.

As for the conditions of his supervised release, both lawyers said they are typical. "He cannot violate any laws and he must report to the probation officer once a month and he must maintain a residence," explained Klugh. In addition, René González has to obtain permission to travel outside southern Florida.

On the other hand, explained Horowitz, "there are no restrictions on René's freedom of speech, unlike when he was in jail."

"The judge added a condition in [González's] case that was noted from the beginning as being unusual," said Klugh. "He was barred from associating with terrorist associations. . . . It's always been perplexing as to what the meaning of that part of the order was unless it meant he was to cease investigating acts of terrorism against Cuba."

"At this point, we're not going to appeal the judge's September 16 ruling to a higher court," said Horowitz. "René has decided to let his conduct show to Judge

Mexico conference says 'Free the Cuban Five'



Militant/Gerardo Sánchez

MEXICO CITY—More than 600 people from some 25 countries attended the Sixth Continental Conference in Solidarity with Cuba, held here October 6-9. On the last day participants joined a march to demand an end to the U.S. embargo against Cuba and freedom for the Cuban Five.

"We hold activities including press events and demonstrations," said Leronel Mortime, a member of the Committee in Solidarity with Cuba in Haiti. "Every year we have five days of activities in solidarity with Cuba in July."

Some 400 Mexicans participated in the conference, including more than 20 members of the Independent Regional Peasant Movement. Representatives of the country's major political parties attended the opening session.

There were more than a dozen participants from the U.S. as well as Brazil, Venezuela and Colombia. Smaller numbers came from elsewhere in Latin America and the Caribbean. Well-known singer Anthony "Gabby" Carter, known as the King of Calypso, came from Barbados. His song demanding freedom for the Cuban Five can be viewed on YouTube. Ricardo Alarcón, president of Cuba's National Assembly, addressed the conference, as did Elizabeth Palmeiro, wife of Ramón Labañino, one of the Cuban Five.

—LAURA GARZA

Lenard that he is a person who deserves to be able to return to Cuba. And he is out to prove it. At the appropriate time I'll renew my request that he be permitted to serve the rest of his supervised release in Cuba. There is no timetable for that."

As for the legal position of the other four, Klugh explained, "They are all pursuing relief from extraordinary violations of fundamental rights to a fair trial" from "an illegitimate effort by the United States [government] to create an environment that was so hostile and prejudicial to the five that they could not possibly receive a fair trial."

Since October 2010, each of the four has filed a habeas corpus motion re-

questing that his conviction and sentence be vacated, based on information that became public after the trial. Several well-known Miami journalists who published inflammatory articles about the five revolutionaries before and during the trial were paid by the U.S. government.

"We are awaiting," added Klugh, "a further response by the United States regarding the petitions filed by Ramón and Fernando and it is anticipated that they will file their response at the end of November."

Richard Klugh will address a November 5 forum in solidarity with the Cuban Five in New York City. (See advertisement on this page.)

Piri Thomas, writer and working-class activist

BY JOHN STUDER

Piri Thomas, well-known for *Down These Mean Streets*, a searing autobiography of a young Puerto Rican growing up in New York published in 1967, died October 17 at the age of 83.

Thomas was a writer, a fighter for Puerto Rican independence, a defender of victims of capitalist injustice, a former prisoner who campaigned against the indignities and injustices

of U.S. jails, and a critic of the policies of U.S. imperialism at home and abroad. He spoke and performed at thousands of schools, political rallies, prisons and other places, reading his

works and campaigning against the brutalities of capitalism.

Born of Cuban and Puerto Rican parents at Harlem Hospital in New York, the staff named him John Peter,

in what Thomas called just the first of many efforts by U.S. institutions to "assimilate" him. His mother named him Piri.

His family—his mother was a garment worker and his father was unemployed—struggled during the depression years of the 1930s. In his books Thomas described how he got by hustling on the city streets, rebelling against racist injustice and conditions imposed on working people he saw all around him.

Thomas got out of the New York street life for a few years, serving in the Merchant Marine in the Jim Crow South. On



Christopher Felver/Corbis

Piri Thomas, writer of *Down These Mean Streets*, in 2000.

Continued on page 9

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U.S. imperialists seek to curb China's rising power

BY JOHN STUDER

In the latest military provocation aimed at China, 3,000 U.S. and Filipino marines launched October 17 two weeks of military drills in the South China Sea. The maneuvers include a practice invasion of the Spratlys, an island chain claimed by Beijing, with overlapping claims by the governments of Vietnam, Taiwan, the Philippines, Brunei and Malaysia.

The Spratlys sit in the middle of trade routes through which more than half of the world's supertanker commerce travels and atop vast oil reserves. "One of the most important tasks of American statecraft over the next decade," wrote Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in the November issue of *Foreign Policy*, will "be to lock in a substantially increased investment—diplomatic, economic, strategic and otherwise, in the Asia-Pacific region."

"China represents one of the most challenging and consequential bilateral relationships the United States has ever had to manage," she added.

Washington has been taking steps to counter China's growing power by cementing relationships with governments surrounding its borders, from India and Pakistan to the west, throughout Southeast Asia and the South Pacific to the south, and Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan to the east.

Washington has "actively supported India's look East efforts, including through a new trilateral dialogue with India and Japan," Clinton wrote.

On October 17 the Indian government announced it was expanding its military armaments along the "China front," installing its first offensive tactical missile deployment near the border. These batteries will allow New Delhi to launch missiles inside the Tibet Autonomous Region. They will be backed by two divisions of troops. Indian authorities said that move was being "fast-tracked."

New Delhi has been expanding military alliances with other regimes in the area, the October 18 *Wall Street Journal* reports, "to counter China's rising assertiveness in the region, especially the resource-rich South China Sea." These moves come as the Indian government is increasing oil and gas exploration in those waters.

In September Washington completed a \$5.9 billion arms deal with Taiwan to upgrade its air force, munitions and missiles arsenal, which the Chinese Defense Ministry called a "serious obstacle to developing normal exchanges."

At the same time, the military aid falls short of all that Taiwan had requested.

South Korea is building a new 586,000-square-yard naval base on Jeju Island, which provides easy access to the South China Sea. U.S. naval vessels will use the base as well.

The base has elicited protests in South Korea, which have delayed its construction. Among their objections, demonstrators charge that the base is part of Washington's "anti-China strategy." In 1950 Jeju Island was the scene of a slaughter by U.S. troops and forces of the South Korean puppet regime of more than 30,000 workers and peasants suspected of siding with the anti-imperialist struggle.

On October 11 the U.S. Senate voted overwhelmingly to threaten Beijing with a series of tariffs against Chinese imports unless the Chinese government took measures to increase the relative value of its currency, a move that would lessen the competitive price advantage of Chinese exports in the world market. The bill was tabled in the House.

The *New York Times* that day reported politicians in Washington "cannot find alignment" on "how best to address that problem, while maintaining America's relationship with its biggest lender and a major trading partner."

Decades later, Senate apologizes for anti-Chinese act

BY PATTI IYAMA

SAN FRANCISCO—Nearly 70 years after the U.S. government repealed its anti-Chinese immigration laws, the U.S. Senate unanimously voted October 6 to apologize for Washington's decades of systematic racist discrimination against Chinese. A similar measure is pending in the House.

In 1882 Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which banned most Chinese from the country for the next 10 years and denied them citizenship. Merchants, scholars, teachers, and officials were exempt. The bill was extended for another 10 years in 1892. In 1894 the bill was broadened to include all Chinese laborers without exception and in 1902 the exclusion was extended indefinitely and remained enforced until its repeal more than four decades later.

The act was the first federal law that excluded a single group of people based on race. Until that law, U.S. borders had been open.

The history of discrimination against Chinese in the U.S. is not commonly known. Chinese immigration began with the Gold Rush of 1848 in California. At this time the working class in the United States was still in large part being formed through immigration, as the existing labor force could not keep pace with the mushrooming urban factories and vast railroad construction. Chinese workers were superexploited and to a large extent segregated from the rest of society. Between 1850 and 1882, some 370,000 young Chinese men came to the U.S.

From the moment of their arrival the Chinese were limited in their employ-



Capt. Caleb D. Eames, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Marines

U.S. and Philippine marines conduct drills in South China Sea, provocatively aimed at Beijing. Washington seeks to maintain unchallenged dominance now slipping from its grasp in Asia.

ment, denied basic constitutional protections and liberties, segregated into ghettos, subject to lynchings and pogroms, and not allowed to become citizens of the United States. In 1854 the California Supreme Court barred Chinese from testifying in court against Caucasians, in effect sanctioning all kinds of crimes against the Chinese, including assault, theft, and murder, which served to keep them "in their place." The phrase "a Chinaman's chance," originating in this era, meant no chance at all.

The periods of stepped-up agitation against the Chinese corresponded with periods of national economic decline in the U.S., in 1873-77, and again in 1882-86. The anti-Chinese campaigns were organized and directed by government officials and leaders of the Democratic Party, who convinced sections of the labor movement, especially craft unions, to join the protests around the slogan "The Chinese must go!"

This anti-Chinese crusade gained momentum as a result of the biggest setback inflicted on the working-class in U.S. history. In 1877, 12 years after the end of the Civil War, Union troops, which were backing Radical Reconstruction governments in the South, were withdrawn. These radical regimes had repealed Black Codes, which forced ex-slaves into contract labor gangs on plantations, and carried out other measures in the interests of the toiling classes of all races.

The withdrawal of the Union Army had the intended effect—these governments were crushed through a rein of terror by racists gangs such as the Ku Klux Klan.

As a result, writes Farrell Dobbs in *Revolutionary Continuity: Marxist Leadership in the U.S.*, "the rural poor and working class were forcibly divided along color lines. The value of labor power was driven down and class solidarity crippled. Jim Crow, the system of extensive segregation, was legalized. Racism spread at an accelerated pace through the entire United States."

Chinese resist racist treatment

Between 1850 and 1906 from the Pacific Coast to the Rocky Mountains, Chinese were violently driven onto railroad cars or steamships and marched out of town or killed in nearly 200 roundups, with 34 incidents in California alone after 1882. About 200 Chinese were lynched in California between 1849 and 1902.

The Chinese resisted, suing for the restoration of their property and demanding vigilantes be prosecuted, organizing strikes and food boycotts, passively resisting by refusing to register or pay fines, defending their communities with arms, and even a general strike in California in 1893.

The Chinese Exclusion Act was not repealed until Dec. 17, 1943, when the U.S. needed China as an ally in the war against Japan.

The victorious fight against Jim Crow and the colonial revolutions in Africa and Asia in the 1960s struck a blow against racist discrimination and racist attitudes against Blacks, Asians, and other non-Caucasian people in the United States. Overtly racist laws of the past are today officially denounced by the capitalist rulers, while racism in less blatant forms remains a cornerstone of the U.S. imperialists' divide-and-rule strategy at home and ideological justification for wars of conquest and domination abroad.

In 1988 Japanese-Americans won an apology and reparations for their incarceration in concentration camps during World War II.

This most recent apology for Washington's systematic anti-Chinese discrimination takes place as the U.S. rulers face a rising China that is slowly but surely challenging the imperialists' military hegemony in the Pacific. At the same time, on the economic front, the simultaneous rivalry and interdependence between the two powers continues to deepen.



Chinese railroad workers in the Sierra Nevada, 1877. Between 1850 and 1882, some 370,000 young Chinese men came to the U.S. where they faced intense discrimination. They left a proud legacy of resistance. In 1893, for example, they organized a general strike in California.

'Debt is a cleverly organized reconquest of Africa'

Below is an excerpt from Thomas Sankara parle, the French-language edition of Thomas Sankara Speaks and one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for November. Sankara was the central leader of the 1983-87 revolution in Burkina Faso, West Africa.

The excerpt is taken from a speech Sankara gave on July 29, 1987, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, at the 25th conference of the Organization of African Unity, the predecessor of the African Union. Here he calls for nonpayment of the onerous foreign debt imposed on imperialist-dominated African countries. Copyright © 1988 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY THOMAS SANKARA

The roots of the debt go back to the beginning of colonialism. Those who lent us the money were those who colonized us. They were the same people who ran our states and our economies. It was the colonizers who put Africa into debt to the financiers—their brothers and cousins. This debt has nothing to do with us. That's why we cannot pay it.

The debt is another form of neocolonialism, one in which the colonialists have transformed themselves into technical assistants. Actually, it would be more accurate to say technical assassins. They're the ones who advised us on sources of financing, on underwrit-

ers of loans. As if there were men whose loans are enough to create development in other people's countries. These underwriters were recommended to us, suggested to us. They gave us enticing financial documents and presentations. We took on loans of fifty years, sixty years, and even longer. That is, we were led to commit our peoples for fifty years and more.

The debt in its present form is a cleverly organized reconquest of Africa under which our growth and development are regulated by stages and norms totally alien to us. It is a reconquest that turns each of us into a financial slave—or just plain slave—of those who had the opportunity, the craftiness, the deceitfulness to invest funds in our countries that we are obliged to repay. Some tell us to pay the debt. This is not a moral question. Paying or not paying is not a question of so-called honor at all. . . .

[N]one of the debt can be repaid. The debt cannot be repaid, first of all, because, if we don't pay, the lenders won't die. Of that you can be sure. On the other hand, if we do pay, we are the ones who will die. Of that you can be equally sure. Those who led us into debt were gambling, as if they were in a casino. As long as they were winning, there was no problem. Now that they're losing their bets, they demand repayment. There is talk of a crisis. No, Mr. President. They gambled. They lost. Those are the rules of the game. Life goes on. [Applause]

We cannot repay the debt because we have nothing to pay it with. We cannot repay the debt because it's not our responsibility. . . .

The debt is also the product of confrontations. When people talk to us today about economic crisis, they forget to mention that the crisis didn't appear overnight. It has been with us for a long time, and it will deepen more and more as the popular masses become increasingly aware of their rights in face of the exploiters.

There is a crisis today because the masses refuse to allow wealth to be con-



Margaret A. Novicki/Africa Report

"The richest people are the biggest thieves. They are the ones who exploit the people," said Thomas Sankara. "We can't accept their morals." Above, greeting a crowd in Orodara, Burkina Faso, 1986.

centrated in the hands of a few individuals. There is a crisis because a few individuals hold colossal sums of money in foreign banks—enough to develop Africa. There is a crisis because in face of these individual fortunes, whose owners we can name, the popular masses refuse to live in ghettos and slums. There is a crisis because people everywhere refuse to stay in Soweto when Johannesburg is directly opposite them. That is, there is struggle, and the deepening of this struggle leads to worries among the holders of financial power.

They ask us today to collaborate in the search for stability. Stability to the benefit of the holders of financial power. Stability to the detriment of the popular masses. No, we can't be accomplices in this. No, we can't go along with those who suck the blood of our peoples and who live off the sweat of our peoples. We can't go along with their murderous ventures.

Mr. President:

We hear talk of clubs—the Club of

Rome, the Club of Paris, the Club of Everywhere. We hear talk of the Group of Five, of Seven, of the Group of Ten, perhaps the Group of One Hundred. Who knows what else? It's normal that we too have our own club, our own group. Starting today, let's make Addis Ababa a similar seat, the center from which will come a breath of fresh air, the Club of Addis Ababa. We have the duty to create the united front of Addis Ababa against the debt. This is the only way we can say today that, by refusing to pay, we're not setting out on a course of war but, on the contrary, a fraternal course of explaining the facts as they are.

What's more, the popular masses of Europe are not opposed to the popular masses of Africa. Those who want to exploit Africa are the same ones as those who exploit Europe. We have a common enemy. Our Club of Addis Ababa

must tell both sides that the debt cannot be paid. When we say the debt cannot be paid we are in no way against morality, dignity, or respect for one's word. It's our view that we don't have the same morals as the other side. The rich and the poor don't share the same morals. The Bible and the Koran can't serve in the same way those who exploit the people and those who are exploited. There will have to be two editions of the Bible and two editions of the Koran. [Applause]

We can't accept their morals. We can't accept their talking to us about dignity. We can't accept their talking to us about the merits of those who pay and about a loss of confidence in those who don't pay. On the contrary, we must explain that it's normal these days to favor the view that the richest people are the biggest thieves. A poor man who steals commits no more than larceny, a petty crime, just to survive, out of necessity. The rich are the ones who rob the tax revenue and customs duties. They are the ones who exploit the people.

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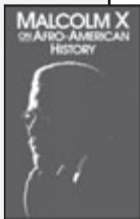
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Imperialist hands off Libya!

Following what appears to be the execution of Moammar Gadhafi at the hands of bourgeois opposition forces with imperialist backing, President Barack Obama boasted that Washington achieved its objectives “without putting a single U.S. service member on the ground.”

Increasingly the favored liberal “prescription” for advancing the U.S. rulers’ political-military objectives abroad is covert hunter-killer operations by CIA operatives, special forces, “contractors” and aerial drones—a course with dangerous consequences for working people worldwide.

The imperialists’ pretext of helping to bring down an oppressive tyranny is a hypocritical lie. Helping to cement a “stable” bourgeois regime beholden to them and restricting space for toiling masses to fight for their own interests are their objectives.

Imperialists’ bitter enmity with the Gadhafi regime began when it was established in 1969 with the overthrow of King Idris by lower echelons of the officer corps. The hated monarchy had been set up by London at the end of World War II. Its fall was a blow to imperialism and a step forward for working people.

In 1970 the new Libyan government closed down U.S. and British military bases, and nationalized all foreign banks and oil reserves—the country’s main source of wealth. Italian domination of the economy was swiftly brought to an end.

What was established was another bourgeois,

anti-working-class regime demagogically claiming to champion the anti-imperialist struggle. Like other similar bourgeois nationalist regimes in the Middle East, Gadhafi entered into growing conflicts with imperialist powers, leading to Washington’s 1986 bombing of Tripoli, Libya’s capital, and imposition of sharp economic sanctions in the 1990s.

At the end of 2003, faced with blunt threats by Washington and London after the invasion of Iraq, the Gadhafi government toned down its anti-imperialist rhetoric, abandoned its nuclear weapons program, paid billions of dollars to victims of terrorist attacks attributed to Libya, and opened up its natural resources to imperialist exploitation. To no avail. When the civil war began, the imperialist hyenas and jackals moved at once to take out their old foe and vie among each other for access to oil resources, markets and influence in what they intend to make a pliable regime.

Amid the overthrow of the Gadhafi government and the ensuing struggle among competing bourgeois forces, toilers and other oppressed layers will have an opportunity to fight for increased space to organize and advance their own interests. Imperialist powers, the enemies of working people the world over, always have been and always will be an obstacle to this struggle.

Working people should condemn the intervention by Washington, Paris and London in Libya’s civil war and demand imperialist hands off!

White House gloats at Gadhafi death

Continued from front page

alive as opposition soldiers “hit him and pulled his hair to drag him to the ground,” according to Reuters. “Someone in the crowd shouted ‘keep him alive, keep him alive,’” but “Gadhafi then goes out of view and gunshots are heard.” He was hit with a bullet to the head and another to stomach. Further footage showed rebel fighters rolling Gadhafi’s lifeless body on the ground before loading him into an ambulance.

Another video circulated a day later shows Gadhafi’s son and former national security adviser, Muatassim, sitting upright smoking a cigarette after capture. He was shot dead shortly afterward “in the upper part of his chest from a short distance,” reported al-Arabiya.

Under the NATO flag, imperialist forces from the U.S., France and Britain seized the opportunity to take out a longtime foe and strengthen their influence in the country when the civil war broke out in Libya eight months ago. They carried out some 10,000 bombing missions in the country.

Washington self-styled its role as “leading from behind.” In the opening weeks of the assault, the U.S. military knocked out Gadhafi’s air defenses, paving the way for London and Paris to then carry out the bulk of the air assaults. U.S. aircraft have controlled the skies, carried out surveillance, and provided munitions and refueling for NATO combat plans. U.S. aerial drones conducted surveillance and air strikes.

Obama boasted that Washington achieved its objectives “without putting a single U.S. service member on the ground.”

But on the ground, CIA operatives and U.S. “contractors,” together with British and French special forces have carried out a number of key functions, including pinpointing targets for airstrikes.

Libya shows “more of the prescription for how to deal with the world as we go forward than it has been in the past,” declared Vice President Joseph Biden during a speech in Plymouth, N.H.

The killing was described by Associated Press as “the latest in a string of foreign policy victories this year for the [Barack] Obama administration,” alongside Washington’s assassinations of Osama Bin Laden by U.S. special forces in Pakistan and of U.S. citizen Anwar al-Awlaki by aerial drone in Yemen.

With Gadhafi’s death, the tenuous unity forged among disparate groups opposed to the old regime has been unraveling.

The National Transitional Council, formed in March in the eastern city of Benghazi, won recognition from Washington and other imperialist powers as Libya’s legitimate rulers. The council, which includes former members of Gadhafi’s cabinet who resigned after the civil war began, has sought to stabilize capitalist rule.

But disagreements with the NTC are sharpening. In Tripoli, the nation’s capital, the Tripoli Military Council plays a more central role. It and other local militias, including from Misurata and Zentan, have been occupying parts of the capital for the past two months, refusing calls by the NTC to leave or disarm.

LETTERS

Keep writing on China

Don’t stop on this China thing! My son is going there next year and I have a new interest in the internationalist opinions in regard to China.

Michael Ellsworth
Denver, Colorado

A tool to raise consciousness

I am a prisoner. I’m asking that you continue sending me the *Militant* for six more months. I’m going to try and have one of my family members pay for it within the next week. I try to raise political consciousness

among my fellow prisoners and the *Militant* has become one of my most useful tools. I try to expose people to Marxist analyses of current events so that people recognize the capitalist-imperialist

system as the true enemy. The *Militant* does a great job at showing that. Thank you for all the work that you do and your commitment to the struggle.

A prisoner
California

‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

The Prisoners’ Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the Militant and earmarked “Prisoners’ Fund” to 306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

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.

Piri Thomas

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an earlier trip to the South, Thomas recalled, when the bus hit the Mason-Dixon line, the driver ordered all the “coloreds” to get to the back of the bus. Thomas didn’t move, replying proudly, “I am Puertorriqueño.” The driver retorted, “I don’t care what kind of nigger you are,” and forced him to move.

He returned to *el barrio* in New York when his mother was dying in the “poor people’s ward” at Metropolitan Hospital, and resumed hustling and petty theft. During a robbery, Thomas wounded a cop and was convicted on felony charges and sent to Sing Sing state prison for seven years.

Thomas transformed himself while incarcerated, becoming the writer and political activist he remained for the rest of his life. He began composing *Down These Mean Streets* in prison.

After the book was published, it caused an uproar. For years it was banned from school and city libraries. In 1976 the Island Tree School Board in Levittown, N.Y., voted to ban the book, along with works of Langston Hughes, Alice Childress, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., and Bernard Malamud.

Throughout his life Thomas joined protests and speakouts against the U.S. occupation of Puerto Rico. “Black slaves were brought to the Caribbean islands in the same European-forged chains which dragged other native Africans to the cotton fields of the South of the United States,” Thomas wrote on his website, where they were intermingled with “a large number of Chinese” brought “as cheap labor, one minuscule half-step removed from the bonds of human slavery.” This, Thomas explained, formed the “basis for nationhood” for Puerto Rico.

He spoke out for working people, against capitalist exploitation. “When the economy goes into a slump,” he wrote in 1997, “Americans of all colors fall into worse living conditions.” He pointed to the propertied rulers as the source of the problem, the “2 percent of the population” that takes 98 percent of the wealth. And he added, “Who created their wealth in the first place?”

Thomas despised the way ex-prisoners were discriminated against. He organized an extensive fight to regain his right to vote after he was paroled, which he won in 1968.

He joined the fight to win freedom for Mark Curtis, a packinghouse worker in Des Moines, Iowa, and member of the Socialist Workers Party, who was framed up and railroaded to prison in 1988 while participating in actions in defense of undocumented workers.

Thomas spoke at a rally of 400 on the eve of Curtis’s trial, along with Jack Barnes, national secretary of the SWP; Edna Griffin, a long-time fighter for Black rights in Des Moines; Susan Mnumzana of the African National Congress; and others.

Eight years later, when Curtis won parole, Thomas joined a San Francisco meeting to celebrate his return to the class struggle. Thomas said that he talked to Curtis at the meeting about his experiences in prison. “Now,” Thomas said, “we’re celebrating our brother’s return to the struggle, and I am glad to be part of this today.”

He spoke out in defense of political activists imprisoned for their efforts all over the world. In 2001 he joined two members of the Irish political party Sinn Fein at a Militant Labor Forum in San Francisco. He read two poems by Bobby Sands, and spoke about the similarities between the Puerto Rican struggle against U.S. imperialism and the fight for a united Ireland against the British.

In an editorial noting Thomas’s death, the New York *Daily News* said, “Author and poet Piri Thomas knew a very different New York City than the one we know today.” That statement stands in sharp contrast to Thomas’s view. “The reason that *Down These Mean Streets* continues to be controversial,” he wrote, “is that it shows the truth that is still happening today.”

Thomas’s family and friends are organizing celebrations of his life and work, to be held in San Francisco, New York and Orlando, Florida.

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