

Rulers' response to Greek 'debt crisis' targets workers



Recent protest in Athens, Greece, against cuts in wages, pensions of government workers.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The latest plan announced October 27 by capitalist rulers in Europe to respond to the Greek government's inability to pay its debt obligations is a further illustration that a world financial destabi-

lization—rooted in declining production, trade and employment—has barely begun, with ruinous consequences for working people.

The plan, promoted above all by the rulers of Germany and France, technically avoids a default on interest and principal payments to banks and other holders of Greek debt throughout the continent. Bondholders, a category that roughly coincides with the biggest capitalist owners and ruling-class families, are asked to accept what's being called a 50 percent "haircut" on the Greek debt they hold. Those who choose not to accept the offer, betting they will eventually be paid in full, stand to lose much more. The European Central Bank and the

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New reader: 'So important for us to have our own voice'

BY MICHEL POITRAS

At the end of the fourth week of a seven-week international campaign to win 2,200 new and renewed subscribers to the *Militant*, we have reached a total of 1,338, or 61 percent of our goal. The drive finishes November 20. The best results last week came from a combination of going door to door in working-class districts and reaching out to workers resistance.

In Longview, Wash., site of a months-long battle by members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union against a union-busting effort by the EGT grain terminal, nursing instructor Sue Yarbrough decided to subscribe to the *Militant* when supporters from Seattle and San Francisco knocked on her door, wrote

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Midwest sugar workers: 'We're not backing down'

Donations raise spirits of locked-out unionists



Militant/Frank Forrestal

Locked-out American Crystal workers at October 28 protest in East Grand Forks, Minn.

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

EAST GRAND FORKS, Minn.—Passersby waved and honked as locked-out members of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union and their supporters picketed here along the Sornlie bridge. The October 28 picket is

a weekly reminder that most working people support the fight by 1,300 workers in the Upper Midwest against American Crystal Sugar.

By a margin of 96 percent on July 30, workers from five plants in Minnesota and North Dakota, and two

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Disclosure ruling in Wash. undermines political rights

BY JOHN STUDER

On October 17 Washington state officials made public the names of 138,000 people who signed petitions to place a referendum on the 2009 ballot, opening them to harassment and victimization for their views and associations and striking a blow to the

political rights of working people.

The release came hours after a ruling in favor of the state by U.S. District Judge Benjamin Settle, throwing out a lawsuit seeking to keep the names from being disclosed.

DEFEND RIGHTS OF WORKING PEOPLE!

—See editorial, p. 9

The petitions were signed by opponents of a Washington law that legalized domestic partnership for same sex couples. Some organizations that

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'Labor struggles resist bosses' drive to crush our unions, morale'

BY SARA LOBMAN

NEW YORK—"The bosses and their governments, driven by the deepening crisis of the capitalist system worldwide, have intensified their assault against working people. As a result, we are starting to see an increase in working-class resistance," noted Tom Fiske, a member of the Socialist Workers Party's National Committee, at a public event here titled, "Spreading Ties of Solidarity: Preparing for the Working-Class Battles to Come." The gathering raised money for the

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Fall 'Militant' subscription campaign Oct. 1–Nov. 20 (week 4)				
Country	quota	sold	%	2,200
UNITED STATES				
Washington	60	44	73%	1,338 should be
Los Angeles	150	100	67%	
Seattle*	175	116	66%	
Boston*	60	39	65%	
Des Moines*	165	106	64%	
New York*	260	157	60%	
Atlanta*	170	99	58%	
Miami	90	52	58%	
Twin Cities	140	80	57%	
Lincoln*	30	17	57%	
Chicago*	165	93	56%	
San Francisco*	170	87	51%	
Houston*	90	41	46%	
Philadelphia	90	39	43%	
Albuquerque†	3	1	33%	
Muscoda, Wis†	3	1	33%	
New Paltz†	15	5	33%	
Cincinnati†	4	1	25%	
Bloomington†	5	1	20%	
Total U.S.	1,845	1,079	58%	
UNITED KINGDOM				
Manchester	60	41	68%	
London	120	66	55%	
Total U.K.	180	107	59%	
CANADA*	85	63	74%	
NEW ZEALAND	80	47	59%	
AUSTRALIA	65	42	65%	
Total	2,255	1,338	61%	
Should be	2,200	1,257	57%	
* Raised goal † First time on scoreboard				

Forum in Philadelphia protests police brutality

Socialist candidate calls for prosecution of cops

BY JANET POST

PHILADELPHIA—“You hear about things like this happening, but you never think it could happen to you,” said Kimberly Bumpess at a Militant Labor Forum on police brutality here October 22. Bumpess is the mother of Lex Bumpess, a Black youth who was brutally beaten and then jailed by the Philadelphia police September 22.

Supporters demanding justice for Lex Bumpess march every Friday from 22nd Street and Allegheny Avenue, where the incident occurred, to the 39th District police headquarters. “Everyone is welcome,” said Kimberly Bumpess, a nurse and student at the Community College of Philadelphia.

She gave the following account of what happened to Lex, who was 20 years old at the time. He and his cousin Tyrell Jones were at a gas station when they were approached by police who asked for ID and searched their car, finding nothing. Lex Bumpess didn’t have his wallet with him, but gave his name.

The cop asked several times for him to repeat his name, saying, “Lex Bumpess, there’s no such name. Give a real name or we’re going to take you for a ride.” The cops put him in the police car and drove down the street with Jones following in his car. Jones later said, “When I saw the police car rocking, I knew they were beating Lex.”

When they got back to the gas station, Lex Bumpess opened the door of the police car, which “they apparently thought he was not supposed to do,” said Kim-

berly Bumpess. One cop punched him in the face and another attempted to use a Taser on him, according to eyewitnesses, she said. But Lex fought back, knocking a policeman to the ground.

More police were called to the scene, Kimberly Bumpess told forum participants. They tasered Lex, and kicked him in the head before a police van ran into him, the tire splitting his head open.

Kimberly was never told where her son had been taken. She finally located him at Temple University Hospital, but it wasn’t until October 17 that she was allowed to see him. Maxine Hayman, Lex’s friend, also spoke at the forum.

The cops raided Bumpess’s house October 21 without a warrant, on the pretext of investigating a robbery of a tow truck driver. They then harassed her children and ransacked the house, tearing apart the ceiling in Lex’s bedroom.

Bumpess told forum participants that when cops asked the tow truck driver



Militant/Janet Post

Speakers at Philadelphia forum on cop beating of Lex Bumpess. From left, Lex’s friend Maxine Hayman, his mother Kimberly Bumpess and SWP mayoral candidate Osborne Hart.

to name one of her children as the robber, the driver said three times, “I don’t know.” The cops told him, “Well, just pick one,” and then they took her son Elijah into temporary custody.

Lex Bumpess is now being held at Philadelphia’s House of Correction, charged with assaulting and disarming a police officer.

Houston socialist: Build solidarity with workers’ struggles

BY CINDY JAQUITH

HOUSTON—Recent mayoral candidates’ debates here showcased the opposing class interests behind the working-class, fighting perspective put forward by Amanda Ulman, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor here, and the politics of the other candidates representing the exploiters.

Ulman, who works in a forklift assembly plant, appeared with five other

candidates October 26 on the local ABC TV affiliate, Channel 13.

Asked how each would create jobs, Fernando Herrera, deputy Houston fire chief, said he would reduce municipal fees for businesses. David Wilson called for ending environmental and other regulations. Manufacturing executive John O’Connor blamed unemployment on “jobs going overseas to Asia and outsourcing.” Kevin Simms claimed he had contacts in Washington.

Incumbent Democratic Mayor Annise Parker played down her recent layoff of 750 city workers, emphasizing that no cops or firemen have lost their jobs.

Ulman talked about the kind of massive jobs program that is needed to both alleviate unemployment and combat the competition it fosters among working people. A real jobs program, she said, is something that workers will have to fight for and wrest from the bosses and their government. Such a struggle would strengthen workers’ fighting capacity and “advance the building of a revolutionary movement that can fight for workers power.”

At an October 23 candidates’ debate

hosted by the alumnae chapter of Delta Sigma Theta, a Black sorority, Ulman talked about the importance of building solidarity with 1,300 workers locked out by American Crystal Sugar in the Upper Midwest and striking Pioneer flour workers in San Antonio.

Ulman has joined workers on the picket lines in both battles, as has Jacquie Henderson, a machinist and SWP candidate for city council at-large, position 1. She also talked about the need for labor to campaign for the rights of immigrants and women, as part of strengthening workers’ solidarity.

Candidates were asked about their position on the many homes that have never been repaired from damage caused by Hurricane Ike in 2008. Herrera said the problem was “bad management.”

“In Cuba,” Ulman said, “when hurricanes strike, people are prepared and mobilized by the revolutionary government to minimize loss of life and property. Rebuilding homes and replanting crops is a collective effort. By taking state power in 1959 Cuban working people put human needs first, not profits. That’s what we need to do here.”

THE MILITANT

‘You can learn about all of these fights’

“Until you read the ‘Militant,’ you don’t know how vast and how widespread these fights are. In the ‘Militant,’ you can learn about all of them.”

—Sandi Cooper,
locked-out Steelworker,
Marietta, Pennsylvania.

Militant/Janet Post

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The Militant

Vol. 75/No. 41
Closing news date: November 2, 2011
Editor: Steve Clark
Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Naomi Craine, Harry D’Agostino, Seth Galinsky, John Hawkins, Cindy Jaquith, Doug Nelson, Jacob Perasso, Brian Williams, Rebecca Williamson.
Published weekly except for one week in January, two weeks in June, and two weeks in August.
The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.
Telephone: (212) 244-4899
Fax: (212) 244-4947
E-mail: themilitant@mac.com
Website: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.
Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

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

UN condemns 51-year embargo against Cuba

BY SETH GALINSKY

UNITED NATIONS—For the 20th year in a row, the U.N. General Assembly overwhelmingly voted to condemn the U.S. embargo of Cuba. Only the delegates from the U.S. and Israel voted against the resolution. Micronesia, Palau, and the Marshall Islands abstained.

Under the administration of President John F. Kennedy, Washington first banned all exports to Cuba beginning Oct. 19, 1960, except for some food and medicines, seeking to punish the Cuban people for the 1959 revolution, which ended U.S. domination of the island. In February 1962 Kennedy banned all U.S. trade. Every president has maintained the embargo ever since, at times strengthening or relaxing restrictions.

Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez pointed out that the embargo has cost Cuba “more than \$975 billion in damages” over the last five decades.

In a September meeting with Latino groups, President Barack Obama claimed, “We’re prepared to show flexibility [toward Cuba] and not be stuck in a Cold War mentality dating back to when I was born.” At the same time he said there would be no “new relationship with Cuba” unless the Cuban government takes “the proper steps to open up its own country.”

“Despite the false image of flex-

ibility the current U.S. administration attempts to portray, the blockade and sanctions remain intact,” Rodríguez told the Assembly. “They are fully implemented and their extra-territorial character has been intensified in recent years.”

“The increased persecution of Cuban financial transactions around the world,” noted Rodríguez “is a distinctive feature of the Obama administration.”

In a report on the embargo to the U.N., the Cuban government notes that U.S. companies’ subsidiaries in third countries are banned from carrying out any kind of transaction with companies in Cuba. Washington says that even non-U.S. companies are prohibited from selling any product or service to Cuba “if more than 10 percent of their technology consists” of U.S. components. Ships that dock at Cuban ports are banned from entering U.S. ports.

In January the Obama administration froze \$4.2 million destined for Cuba from the U.N. Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which combats the three diseases in 150 countries. Washington backed down amid protests by the Cuban government and others. In May the Treasury Department issued a four-year license allowing release of the funds.

In August the Treasury Department fined the French shipping company CMA CGM \$640,000 for shipping services to Cuba, Sudan and Iran. That same month the Treasury Department forced JPMorgan Chase Bank to remit more than \$88 million to resolve charges that it had wired money to Cubans and made a loan involving Iran.



Granma/Juvenal Balan

Cuban pediatrician Silda del Toro with new-born baby rescued from a collapsed building after the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti. “Our capital is as human beings and human values of solidarity,” said Cuban doctor Jorge Balseiro in Montreal during his cross-Canada tour.

Cuban doctor tours Canada

BY JOE YOUNG

MONTREAL—Cuban doctor Jorge Balseiro opened a two-week tour of Canada here October 14 speaking on Cuba’s internationalist mission in Haiti.

In the four months after the earthquake, which devastated Haiti on Jan. 12, 2010, Balseiro was the director of the Cuban-staffed field hospital in the town of Leogane.

Cuba has had medical personnel in Haiti since 1998. At the time of the earthquake, more than 300 Cuban health workers there moved into action. The number in Haiti was rapidly increased to over 1,500. They were joined by more than 300 Cuban-trained doctors from other countries.

Cuba’s medical personnel responded to the cholera epidemic, which broke out in October 2010, treating

about one-quarter of all cases in Haiti. Today there is a medical staff of 767 Cubans in the country.

“Our capital is as human beings and human values of solidarity,” Balseiro told an audience of 65 at the Haitian community center La Perle retrouvée. Cuba’s internationalist aid stands in stark contrast to the callous indifference of Washington and other wealthy capitalist governments. “There is a world crisis. We suffer as well as others. It is not a question of rich or poor but of the will to do something.”

Balseiro also spoke at the University of Quebec, Marianapolis College, La Maison d’Haiti, and the Office of the Haitian Community. The tour was organized by the Canadian Network on Cuba and the Table de Concertation Quebec-Cuba.

The medical team Balseiro was part of is called the Henry Reeve brigade. Reeve was an American who fought for Cuba’s independence at the end of the 19th century. At the time of Hurricane Katrina, which devastated New Orleans in 2005, Cuba offered to immediately send a volunteer medical contingent of 1,100 doctors with 26.4 tons of medicine and medical equipment, Balseiro explained.

Washington refused the offer. Afterwards, then Cuban President Fidel Castro proposed that the contingent become permanent and be named after Reeve. Since then the brigade has gone to a number of countries.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Legalize Undocumented Workers! Speaker: Arlene Rubinstein, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Nov. 11, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5. 4025 S Western Ave. Tel.: (323) 295-2600.

TEXAS

Houston

U.S. Imperialism Steps Up Intervention in Africa. Speaker: Angel Lariscy, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Nov. 11, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 4800 W 34th St., Suite C-50L. Tel.: (713) 688-4919.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

From Alabama to Washington State: Defending Immigrant Rights. Fri., Nov. 11, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 5418 Rainier Ave. S Tel.: (206) 323-1755.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

The Struggles and Social Explosions in North Africa and Middle East. A Party-Building Fund event. Speaker: Ma’mud Shirvani. Sat., Nov. 12. Dinner, 5:30 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. 143 Kennedy St. NW Suite 15. Tel.: (202) 536-5080.

CANADA

Montreal

Support Farmers’ Actions in Defense of Canadian Wheat Board. Speaker: John Steele, Communist League. Fri., Nov. 4, 7:30 p.m. 7107 St-Denis, Suite 204 (above Marché oriental). Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

UNITED KINGDOM

London

Imperialists Hands Off Libya! Speaker: Pamela Holmes, Communist League. Fri., Nov. 11, 7 p.m. Donation: £3. First floor, 120 Bethnal Green Road (entrance in Brick Lane). Tel.: 02076 132466.

Fund event puts Atlanta over top

BY OMARI MUSA

More than 30 participants attended the SWP Party-Building event in Atlanta. The featured speaker was SWP leader Maggie Trowe, who talked about how the defensive battles that workers are involved in today are beginning to change our class.

Two new contributors to the party fund were among those in attendance.

Party-Building Fund week 3 of 7			
Area	Quota	Collected	%
Seattle	\$9,000	\$5,648	63%
Los Angeles	\$8,500	\$4,640	55%
Atlanta	\$8,000	\$4,357	54%
Des Moines*	\$3,200	\$1,735	54%
Miami	\$3,200	\$1,563	49%
Houston	\$4,000	\$1,749	44%
San Francisco	\$14,000	\$5,280	38%
Chicago	\$10,000	\$3,544	35%
Lincoln	\$200	\$60	30%
Washington	\$7,500	\$2,090	28%
New York	\$20,000	\$5,420	27%
Boston	\$3,800	\$860	23%
Twin Cities	\$6,000	\$1,264	21%
Philadelphia	\$3,700	\$750	20%
Other		\$850	
Total	\$101,100	\$39,810	40%
Should Be	\$100,000	\$42,857	43%
* Raised goal			

Oscar Silviano, a 36-year-old from Mexico who works as an apartment cleaner, was one of them. “Whenever the bosses want to fire immigrant workers, whether it’s because they want to fight for safety or whatever, they use the excuse that their ‘number is no good,’” he said. “People are looking for a way to fight, for a solution to the problems we face. We have to unite.”

“I didn’t know of the existence of the party before,” said Rajeew Karajgikar, who moved to the U.S. from India 20 years ago. “There is disillusionment in the American Dream. From my vantage point, this party has a platform that could get a resonance in this country today.”

Rachele Fruit reported that Atlanta’s goal for the fund was \$8,000. “We had pledges of \$8,550 and then we got a check for \$1,000! We raised \$483 in new pledges at the meeting and now we’re up to \$10,033.”

Fourteen copies of the new Pathfinder booklet *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free* were also sold at the meeting.

More than 50 attended the fund meeting in New York City October 29. (See article on page 8.) Tom Fiske, a leader of the party spoke on “Spreading Ties of Solidarity: Preparing for the Working-Class Battles to Come.” Some \$3,000 was collected at that meeting.

Our History Is Still Being Written

The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution

Book Presentation

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‘Militant’ subscriptions

Continued from front page

Mary Martin.

“It’s so important for workers to have a voice,” Yarbrough said. “So often we don’t. People used to say you could always get a job nursing. This isn’t so now. We graduate hundreds who have to travel far to even hope to find a job.”

The Longview team sold 12 subscriptions to ILWU members at picket lines or to other workers while going door to door, along with five copies of *Teamster Rebellion* by Farrell Dobbs, one of five books offered at a reduced price during the drive. (See ad below.)

Socialist Workers Party members have begun contacting locked-out sugar workers in the Red River Valley whose subscriptions are beginning to expire. Since the fight began at the end of July, some 150 subscriptions to the socialist newsweekly have been sold to embattled workers and their supporters.

“During the weekend,” Frank Forrestal said, “five renewals were sold in Drayton, N.D., and East Grand Forks, Minn.” Forrestal met with Clayton Bronson in Drayton, who had already mailed his renewal directly to the *Militant* office in New York. “I like reading the paper because it doesn’t give you a false sense of hope,” said Bronson. “You learn that others are in a similar situation and you are not alone in the world.” Bronson volunteers a lot of his time in the union trailer organizing picket duty.

Of the five renewals, Forrestal said, one was for one year and two for six months. In addition, he found that several subscribers have been urging other sugar workers to subscribe or buy revolutionary books from Pathfinder Press.

In Miami, a longshoreman renewed his subscription at the regular weekly sale SWP members do outside the International Longshoremen’s Association union hall. “That worker,” wrote Tom Baumann, “is working with us to set up a meeting with his union to discuss the battle waged by locked-out sugar workers in the Midwest.”

The bulk of subscriptions in Miami have been from door-to-door sales, said Baumann. “We met a nonunion Verizon

worker on Saturday in Ft. Lauderdale who got a subscription, *Teamster Rebellion*, and made a \$5 contribution toward the Socialist Workers Party Party-Building fund.”

Campaigners for the SWP candidates around the country sold dozens of subscriptions to the *Militant*, speaking with workers about the deepening crisis of capitalism and the party’s revolutionary fighting perspective. (See list of candidates below.)

John Steele wrote from Montreal that last weekend he and another member of the Communist League went to Sudbury, a nickel mining town in northern Ontario. The team sold 11 single copies of the *Militant* and one subscription to nickel miners at two mine entrances. “In the two-and-a-half days we were there,” Steele said, “we also picked up one renewal from a retired rail worker and four subscriptions going door to door.”

“In addition,” he wrote, “four subscriptions came in from supporters of the *Militant* in Vancouver, British Columbia, including two to longshoremen sold at the Vancouver hiring hall, along with copies of *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* by Jack Barnes and *Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay* by Leon Trotsky,” a central leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution.

From Auckland, New Zealand,

UK unemployment rises, living standards fall

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON—Government figures October 11 report a jump in unemployment in the United Kingdom. Youth unemployment has risen sharply, with 16-24 year olds comprising 40 percent of those out of work. Those unemployed for more than a year, both young and over 50, continue to grow.

Meanwhile, living standards are falling at a rate unparalleled since the 1920s. Workers with the lowest incomes are being hit the hardest. Real wages have declined over the last six years, with prices rising twice as fast as



Militant/Mike Fitzsimmons

Amanda Ulman, SWP candidate for Houston mayor, shows landscaper George McAfee *Militant* and Malcolm X, *Black Liberation*, and the *Road To Workers Power* at Occupy Houston action.

George Fyson reported that members of the Communist League have sold four subscriptions going door to door in the suburb of Glen Innes, a large area of public housing.

“A government agency,” reported Fyson, “has recently told some 150 of the tenants that they have to move else-

where because it wants to sell the land for high value development.” One of them is Moana Okotai, who bought a *Militant* subscription. She said that the new houses “will sell for half a million dollars or more—beyond what we can afford. They want to move us like cattle.”

wages, according to official figures.

“We got a 1.5 percent rise this year, about 1 percent after tax,” said Samuel Kargbo, a worker at Allied Bakeries in east London. “Prices are rising at over 5 percent. Enough said.”

Every indication is that the decline of jobs and living standards will continue, affecting millions of working people. Three and a half years after the 2007-2008 recession, gross domestic product remains more than 4 percent below the prerecession peak. The so-called recovery is slower than during the recession of the early 1930s.

The National Institute of Economic and Social Research pointed out that the “recovery” is “the weakest of any since the end of the First World War.” Manufacturing output is actually declining overall.

With profits squeezed over a long period, business confidence is low, and companies shy away from borrowing to invest in capacity-expanding plants

and equipment. Bank lending continues to decline. Government figures now reveal that the 2007-2008 recession was deeper than originally calculated: the GDP decline was more than 7 percent.

A quarter of a million public sector jobs have already been axed. This will rise by hundreds of thousands in the next four years, according to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. A government pledge that cuts in public sector jobs would be compensated for by a growth in the private sector has proven to be false. Women have been disproportionately hit by public sector job cuts, and unemployment among women is rising particularly fast.

More than half of Britain’s trade is with the European Union, making it quite vulnerable to the so-called sovereign debt and banking crisis in Europe—itself rooted in a longer term crisis of production.

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

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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.

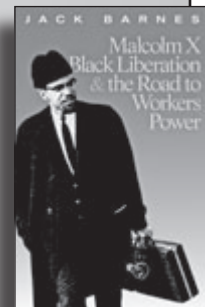
Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?

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

Vote SWP November 8

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Kevin Dwire, City Council At-Large

HOUSTON

Amanda Ulman, Mayor (on ballot)

Jacquie Henderson, City Council At-Large, Position 1

MIAMI

Naomi Craine, Miami City Commission, District 2

PHILADELPHIA

Osborne Hart, Mayor

SAN FRANCISCO

Lea Sherman, Mayor (official write-in)

Carole Lesnick, District Attorney

Gerardo Sánchez, Sheriff

SEATTLE

John Naubert, Port of Seattle Commissioner, Position 2 (official write-in)

Mary Martin, Seattle School Board, District 6 (official write-in)

ON THE PICKET LINE

ILWU longshore workers in Wash. win int'l solidarity

LONGVIEW, Wash.—International solidarity actions and messages of support are increasing for International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 21 workers fighting union busting at the EGT Development grain terminal here.

EGT has refused to hire ILWU workers in violation of a lease agreement with the Port of Longview. Instead, EGT hired members of Operating Engineers Local 701 through a subcontractor under inferior conditions and without a contract. The ILWU has maintained picket lines outside EGT since June.

On October 21 Maritime Union of Australia youth members demonstrated in solidarity with the ILWU in Longview. The group “Young MUA” protested the presence of the STX Jasmine ship at Australia’s Port of Newcastle. The STX Jasmine, based from the Port of Longview, belongs to STX Pan Ocean, one of the owners of EGT.

While a contingent of MUA members held banners on the dock, Maritime union member Ben West told the ship’s captain that there will be more actions if the Longview dispute is not resolved.

Messages of solidarity and support have also been received from the Panama Canal Pilots Union, and dockworkers in Norway and Denmark.

“We appreciate the solidarity that we are getting from throughout the world. The ILWU has a lot of friends,” Local 21 President Dan Coffman told the *Militant*. “What the police have done to unionists here sends a message to labor in the world. Our response is ‘Don’t tread on the union, its officers and members.’”

Coffman was referring to the numerous cop assaults and arrests carried out against union members in the course of months of peaceful protests at the port.

—Mary Martin

Calif. port drivers: ‘Recognize us like the union we already are’

SAN PEDRO, Calif.—About 125 people rallied outside the Toll Group shipping company here October 27 in support of truck drivers who are fighting against work conditions and for union recognition. Sixty-two of the company’s 75 drivers for the Los Angeles and Long Beach ports have signed on to be represented by the Teamsters.

“They pay us \$12 an hour,” Xiomara Perez, who has worked at Toll Group for three years, told the *Militant*. “At the trucking yard in Wilmington, they have portable toilets instead of bathrooms and no separate toilets for women. There’s no place to eat our lunch, no water to wash our hands, we have to bring our own drinking water. We say, enough! We want the company to recognize us like the union we already are.”

“I have been waiting a long time for this,” said Remberto Martinez. “I worked at another place for 10 years. I started talking about organizing and the company let me go. Here, I met people who think like me. We started out like grains of sand, then we started little by little to talk to others.”

The company refused petitions signed by 1,000 harbor area residents urging better conditions for the truckers.

—Ellie García

Construction workers strike to defend union hiring in Quebec

MONTREAL—Thousands of Quebec construction workers walked off the job October 24 and 25 to defend union control of hiring. The Quebec Construction Commission, a governmental body, reported that 150 worksites were closed the first day of the strike. Union officials called on workers to return to work October 26.

The workers were protesting Bill 33, which would eliminate the system where the unions assign workers to employers. Instead, control over hiring would be given to the Quebec Construction Commission, which includes representatives of both the unions and companies.

The strikers were mainly members of the Quebec Federation of Labour-Construction and the Quebec Provincial Council of Construction Trades (International). Together the two unions represent 110,000 of 155,000 construction workers in the province. Although union officials said that they did not organize the job action, the unions could face a \$70,000 a day fine for promoting an “illegal” walkout.

The attack is part of a broader government antiunion campaign in the construction industry under the pretext of fighting corruption.

—Joe Young

UK bakery workers prepare six days of strikes against two tiers

MANCHESTER, England—“If we don’t make a stand now, it’ll only get worse,” union secretary Julie Summersgill told the *Militant* after members of the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union from Park Cake Bakeries here met October 29 to plan six days of strike action November 8-10 and December 6-8. The 600 company workers at Oldham



Militant/Arlene Rubinstein

Truck drivers rally in San Pedro, Calif., in fight for union recognition and better conditions.

and 200 in Bolton voted for the strikes by a 2-1 margin.

David Gilmartin, union chair at the Oldham plant, said they are standing up to the company’s decision to hire 30 workers at minimum wage with no guaranteed hours. “It’s really to avoid the new legislation for agency workers,” referring to the October 1 European Union law, which says workers hired through employment agencies should have the same pay and conditions as their “permanent” coworkers. With nearly 400 agency workers at the plant making minimum wage with no guaranteed hours, Gilmartin added, the company can claim the agency workers’ conditions are comparable to the new hires.

“The company claims this doesn’t affect all of us, but it’s not true,” said Julie Summersgill, who has worked at the plant for more than 20 years. The bosses recently fired two employees who refused to train new hires until the matter is settled with the union, she said.

—Pete Clifford

Qantas airlines threatened lockout in drive against union

SYDNEY, Australia—In a move hailed by big business figures here as a “watershed” moment in industrial relations, Qantas Chief Executive Alan Joyce grounded the airline’s entire fleet of 108 planes on October 29 to prepare

a lockout of its workers in the midst of contract negotiations.

The shutdown was aimed at union pilots, maintenance workers, baggage handlers and ground staff who had carried out rolling strikes over the last several months. Joyce said that Qantas took “our own industrial action to bring it to a head.”

Some 68,000 passengers were stranded in 22 cities around the world by the sudden cancellation of all Qantas flights.

Citing “damage to the national economy,” the federal Labor government convened an emergency hearing of its labor tribunal, Fair Work Australia. On October 31 the tribunal ordered the cessation of industrial action by both sides—giving Qantas what it wanted: a ban on strikes by the workers. If no agreement is reached, the dispute will go to compulsory arbitration.

In August, in the face of intensified international competition, Qantas announced plans to cut 1,000 jobs, shift more operations offshore and base two new low-cost subsidiary carriers in Asia.

Unions covering pilots and licensed mechanics, along with the Transport Workers Union, which organizes ground and catering staff, are seeking guarantees to maintain jobs, pay and conditions.

—Ron Poulsen

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



November 14, 1986

Municipal elections were held throughout Greece on October 12 and 19 in one of the calmest atmospheres in the history of Greek elections. In a country where voting is compulsory, large numbers of registered voters stayed away from the polls—28 percent in the main cities and 25 percent in the countryside.

The elections were held one year after the PASOK (Panhellenic Socialist Movement) government instituted far-ranging austerity measures that reduced wages and social benefits by an estimated 10-15 percent while greatly increasing the cost of public services.

Workers have also suffered under the government’s attacks on democratic rights, including curtailment of the right to strike.



November 13, 1961

Jim Crow justice is functioning as usual in Monroe, North Carolina. Two all-white juries barely complied with the formality of leaving the box for deliberation before handing down verdicts Nov. 2 convicting a 17-year-old Negro youth of shooting a policeman in the leg and acquitting a white man of raping a Negro woman.

Sentenced to three-to-five years was Albert Rorie, who had been active in the anti-segregation picketing which led to the white-supremacist rioting and shooting on Aug. 27. Rorie denied having a gun or shooting his accuser.

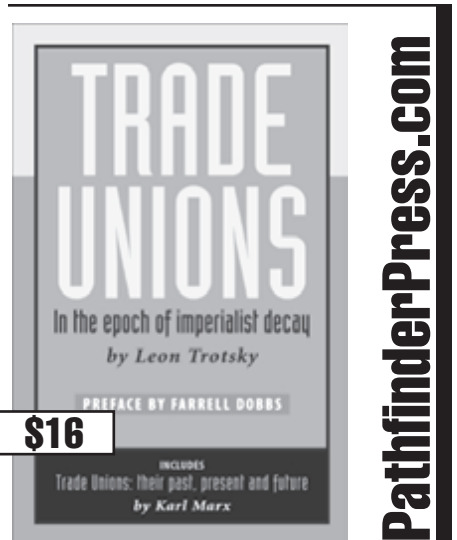
Acquitted of the rape charge was Henry J. Phifer, identified by Rosa Fundurburk, 22, as one of two white men who had chased her into a wheat field and raped her.



December 12, 1936

MINNEAPOLIS—When the Pacific Coast longshoremen were having their first round with the bosses in the late summer of 1934, the Minneapolis General Drivers Union Local 574 was in the midst of its third strike within the year; a strike which, like the San Francisco general strike, made national labor history, and which won a victory two years ago, it may truthfully be said that the turmoil generated by the drivers’ strike has not ceased to this day.

The General Drivers Union Local 574 was expelled from the International Teamsters Union (in April 1935). Fifteen months later the outlaw union made labor history by winning reinstatement in the International on the most honorable terms.



Minn.: Somalis convicted on FBI frame-up charges

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

MINNEAPOLIS—Following a massive FBI frame-up operation, two Somali women from Rochester, Minn., were convicted in U.S. District Court here October 20 of funneling money to al-Shabab, an armed Islamist group in control of southern Somalia.

The U.S. government designated al-Shabab as a “terrorist organization” in 2008. The group is at war with the U.S.- and U.N.-backed Transitional Federal Government, which controls the capital, Mogadishu.

Amina Farah Ali, 35, and Hawo Mohamed Hassan, 64, were each charged with conspiracy to provide material support to a designated terrorist organization. Ali also faced 12 counts of sending \$8,608 to al-Shabab, and Hassan faced one count of support to a foreign terrorist organization and two counts of lying to the FBI. Both were found guilty of all counts.

More than 150 Somalis gathered outside the courthouse the day of the convictions to support Ali and Hassan, reported the *Pioneer Press*.

Each terrorism charge carries a 15-year maximum prison sentence, while lying to the FBI carries an eight-year maximum. The two could face a maximum of 30 years in prison, according to federal sentencing guidelines.

Both U.S. citizens, Ali and Hassan organized door-to-door fund-raising and held teleconferences, they say to garner humanitarian aid.

Somalia, which has had no functioning government for two decades, is stricken with drought, famine and displacement. As many as 3.7 million are at risk of starvation, the majority in the al-Shabab-controlled south, according to the U.N.

The trial is part of one of the largest so-called counterterrorism investiga-

tions in the U.S. Over a 10-month period the FBI wiretapped some 30,000 phone calls, and carried out searches of the two women’s computers and emails, homes and trash.

Much of the “evidence” presented to the jury consisted of government-translated selections of parts of conversations and FBI testimony.

Hassan’s right to remain silent or have an attorney present during FBI questioning was violated by FBI Special Agent Kevin McGrane. The agent claimed that he did not read her rights because she was not in custody. “I usually give my interviewees enough rope to hang themselves,” McGrane said to the court.

Washington state deals blow to political rights

Continued from front page

support domestic partnership, including WhoSigned.org and KnowThyNeighbor.org, announced they intended to put the signers’ names and addresses on a public website.

The suit was filed by James Bopp Jr., a prominent conservative lawyer, on behalf of Project Marriage Washington, a group that circulated the petitions in opposition to the rights of same-sex couples.

KnowThyNeighbor.org has posted the names of hundreds of thousands of signers of similar petitions in Massachusetts, Florida and Arkansas. “Finding the names of friends, neighbors, family, coworkers, etc. helped trigger many into a state of activism,” says the group’s statement. “Uncomfortable but desperately needed conversations continue to take place every day as a result.”

The lawsuit documented dozens of examples of death threats, threats of violence, acts of vandalism, loss of employment and job opportunities, and as-



AP Photo/Jim Mone

Supporters of two Somali women who were framed-up and convicted on charges of conspiracy to aid al-Shabab, protest outside the courthouse in Minneapolis, October 20.

saults directed against individuals and their families, as well as organizations and churches, who express their opposition to the right of same-sex couples to marry.

Judge Settle disregarded the constitutional rights of privacy, free speech and political association of the 138,000 people who signed the petition in favor of his support for disclosure. “If just a few instances of harassment were used as the standard for preventing the release of names, then disclosure would become the exception, rather than the rule,” he argued.

After the ruling, Bopp announced he was planning to appeal. But the decision by state officials to immediately release the names makes an appeal more difficult.

In 2010 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that disclosure laws like the one in Washington were legal. However, it sent the law back to federal Judge Settle, saying he should rule on whether the petition signers would face harassment.

Arguing that signing a petition “necessarily entails political speech and association under the First Amendment,” Clarence Thomas was the only Supreme Court justice who voted against the ruling. The decision “severely burdens those rights and chills citizen participation in the referendum process,” he said.

During the lawsuit the Washington legislature adopted a bill making the state’s disclosure laws even more onerous, forcing political groups to publicly divulge contributors’ names who give even smaller amounts and strengthening criminal and civil penalties for failure to comply. The bill was signed into law in April by Gov. Chris Gregoire.

SWP fight against disclosure

Among the disclosure cases cited in the lawsuit was that of the Socialist Workers Party, which since 1979 has successfully fought to maintain the privacy of its contributors, winning exemption from disclosure on the federal, state and local levels, including in Washington state. A central argument in the ongoing fight to maintain this exemption is the finding of another 15-year legal battle, won by the SWP in 1986, that exposed a decades-long campaign of harassment, spying and disruption by the FBI and other political police agencies.

The SWP’s victory against government encroachments on constitutional

protections came on the heels of mass proletarian struggles for Black rights, as well as the popular movements against the Vietnam War, for women’s rights and other progressive struggles of the 1960s and ’70s.

Every few years the SWP has refiled and won these exemptions based on extensive evidence of harassment of the party by cops, rightists and other enemies of working people. In the midst of the government’s mounting assaults on workers’ rights, the Federal Election Commission appears to be laying the groundwork to push back the party’s right to maintain the privacy of its contributors.

In 2009 the SWP filed for extension of its exemption, submitting documentation of 77 incidents of attack, harassment, or threats that were more extensive than it did for the last two exemption requests in 2003 and 1996. These included the 2004 firebombing of its headquarters in Hazleton, Pa., along with nine other physical attacks on party campaign officers or campaigners, and the firing of three SWP candidates and one campaign supporter for their political views.

Despite this overwhelming evidence of increased harassment, the Federal Election Commission extended the exemption for only four years, instead of the six years it had approved over the last two decades, on the basis that the incidents “appear to be of lesser magnitude” than those of prior exemption requests. One of six commission members voted against any extension. Ellen Weintraub, who voted for the shorter extension, said, “I hope someday, perhaps next time, this will not be necessary.”

Florida judge temporarily halts drug testing for aid applicants

BY JOHN STUDER

A Florida federal judge has issued a temporary injunction against that state’s mandatory drug testing of all applicants for state aid. In three dozen states this year, officials have introduced bills to impose drug testing on those seeking unemployment, welfare, food stamps, public housing and other social programs.

Judge Mary Scriven ruled October 24 in favor of a lawsuit filed by Luis Lebron, a 35-year-old unemployed veteran who is caring for his four-year-old son and his disabled mother. Lebron is represented by the American Civil Liberties Union of Florida.

In the three months that Florida’s new law has been on the books, 21,000 people have been forced to take drug tests and pay for it themselves. Thirty-two have tested positive and been barred from state aid.

“Judge Scriven’s ruling made Florida authorities remove all references to the drug test program from its website and stop all the testing,” Maria Kayanan, associate legal director of the ACLU in Florida and lead counsel for Lebron,

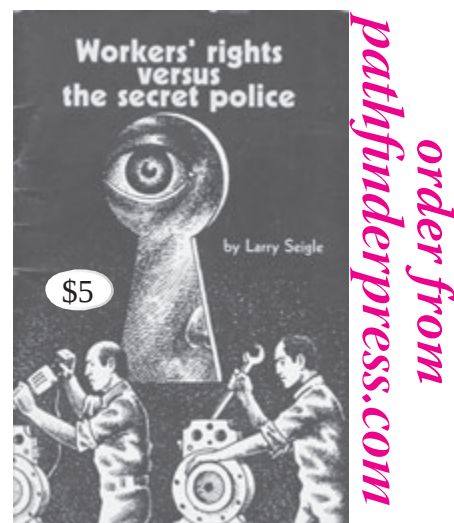
told the *Militant*.

“Judge Scriven rejected a pamphlet by Tarren Bragdon that the state submitted,” Kayanan added, “claiming that welfare applicants are more likely to use drugs and that mandatory drug testing will save money. This pamphlet has been advanced in a number of other states to justify adopting similar laws.”

Scriven pointed out that the arguments advanced by the state for their mandatory testing program—that the “war on drugs” requires steps to search out and deny state funds that aid the “drug trade”—could be used by the government to “impose drug testing as an eligibility requirement for every beneficiary of every government program.”

The judge ruled that “such blanket intrusions cannot be countenanced under the Fourth Amendment” to the U.S. Constitution, which protects against “unreasonable searches and seizures.”

While Judge Scriven’s ruling is only a temporary bar to the program, she wrote that there is a “substantial likelihood” that it will be made permanent if the state insists on fighting for continued drug testing.



Fred Shuttlesworth, proletarian fighter

Helped lead Black rights struggle that permanently strengthened working class in U.S.

BY JOHN BENSON
AND JOHN STUDER

BIRMINGHAM, Ala.—Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth, a central leader of the mass proletarian movement for Black rights that smashed Jim Crow and permanently strengthened the fighting capacity of the working class by raising self-confidence among African-Americans and laying the basis for greater unity in struggle between workers of all races and nationalities, died here October 5. He was 89 years old.

Over the October 22-24 weekend, family, former combatants and Birmingham city officials organized three days of tributes, marches and rallies here to celebrate his life and the battles he fought.

Shuttlesworth is best known for his leadership in the pivotal 1963 confrontation with Jim Crow segregation and racist brutality that has come to be known as the Battle of Birmingham.

This monumental battle ushered in a new stage in the fight for Black rights. Tens of thousands of workers entered the fray with mass actions and direct confrontations.

Birmingham was a large center of heavy industry in the mostly rural South. It had the highest ratio of factory workers in the nation, with a deeply rooted union consciousness.

More than 60 percent of workers in the area's steel mills and coal mines were Black. Shuttlesworth's Bethel Baptist Church was located in one of the city's Black working-class neighborhoods.

In April 1963 Shuttlesworth won the agreement of Martin Luther King Jr. and other civil rights leaders to support the campaign in Birmingham.

Thousands of workers and young people confronted the racists. When the police, led by Public Safety Commissioner Eugene "Bull" Connor, tried to arrest them all, the young fighters decided to overwhelm them. After arresting 2,400 people, the city government was hit with a march of 3,000 more. With their jails overflowing, Connor unleashed police dogs and high-pressure hoses. The youth kept coming, mass actions continued for months.

Shuttlesworth himself was bitten by dogs and had his chest damaged by the water hoses, putting him in the hospital.

The fight in Birmingham broke

through the national and international news, winning sympathy and respect and inspiring working people, while exposing the Kennedy administration's refusal to curb the repressive violence meted out against workers and youth.

'Demonstrations will continue'

In the midst of the fight U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy called King and pressed him to call off the demonstrations. King agreed.

"Shuttlesworth was in the hospital," Rev. Claude Oliver told a Birmingham rally October 22. "Bobby Kennedy was on the phone waiting to hear the decision. Shuttlesworth heard of the decision and bolted from the hospital.

"Shuttlesworth had a few choice words for King and told him, 'You can call off the demonstrations but they will continue.'"

King had to tell Kennedy that the deal was off.

The Battle of Birmingham inspired mass actions in cities across the country, including the historic confrontations in Selma and Montgomery the next year. Together, these fights shattered Jim Crow and the racist brutality organized to defend it, forcing the federal government to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Shuttlesworth was born in 1922 to Alberta Robinson, a 22-year-old single mother in Mugler, Ala. He got his last name when she married William Shuttlesworth, a coal miner.

The family tried to scratch out a living during the depression. Shuttlesworth was sentenced to two years probation in 1940 for working in a moonshine operation.

In 1943 he got a job as a truck driver at the Brookley Air Force Base. In one of his first political confrontations, Shuttlesworth protested a move by the bosses to cut the pay of one of his Black coworkers.

Shuttlesworth became pastor at the Bethel Baptist Church in Birmingham in 1953. He could not afford to attend an officially recognized religious college, getting his degree from an unaccredited Black preachers' school.

He joined the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, which was challenging segregation across the South. He organized hundreds of workers to refuse to ride in the "colored" section on city buses



AP Photo/Bill Hudson

Demonstrators in Battle of Birmingham, May 7, 1963. Inspired by example, tens of thousands of workers joined mass actions and direct confrontations in cities nationwide.

and was brutally beaten when he tried to enroll his children in a segregated white school.

State officials target NAACP

The NAACP was targeted by officials all over the South. In 1956 Alabama Attorney General John Patterson sued the organization, using a state business disclosure law. The suit demanded the NAACP turn over its membership list to the state. Similar measures were adopted in Arkansas, Louisiana, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia.

Because of the threat of deadly retaliation by the Klan and the cops, the NAACP refused. The organization was then saddled with massive fines and injunctions, forcing it to shut down.

Shuttlesworth responded by organizing the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights. A June 5, 1956, mass meeting of nearly 1,000 elected Shuttlesworth president. The emphasis of the new organization was organizing direct action.

On Christmas evening 1956, Shuttlesworth's home was bombed.

After the bombing Shuttlesworth told supporters, "Take your shotguns home. There will be no nonviolence tonight," James Revis, Jr., told the October 22 meeting at the Bethel Baptist Church.

"I still have the double barreled shotgun my father used during his shift guarding the parsonage and church," George Perdue told the meeting.

Cadres born out of these clashes became the backbone of the proletarian movement that fought the Battle of Birmingham.

Shuttlesworth accepted a position as pastor at a church in Cincinnati in 1961, on the condition that he remain active in the fight in Birmingham.

He continued to fight against racism and police brutality, as well as speaking out in defense of victims of cop frame-ups, against imperialist war, and on other social issues.

In April 2001 protests broke out in Cincinnati following the cop killing of Timothy Thomas. Cuban youth leaders Yanelis Martínez and Javier Dueñas, on tour of the U.S. at the time, changed their tour schedule to go there. Shuttlesworth invited them to his church

to discuss the Cuban Revolution. They also learned about the fight against police brutality unfolding in the city, as well as the lessons of the fight for Black rights in the 1950s and '60s.

In 2007 Shuttlesworth suffered a stroke, returning to Birmingham for rehabilitation the following year. He was no longer able to speak, but continued to fight against racist oppression and in the interests of the working class to the end of his life.

In 2010 Shuttlesworth was one of 11 veterans of Black rights' struggles who signed a "friend of the court" brief organized by the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, challenging a ruling by the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals that a plant supervisor at Tyson Foods was not guilty of racist discrimination when he called an African-American worker "boy."

Also taking place in Birmingham October 22 was a rally in defense of immigrants' rights. The protest targeted a recently adopted anti-immigrant law in Alabama where signs were prominent calling for an end to "Juan Crow."

A moment of silence was organized to celebrate the fighting legacy of Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth at the rally. "Shuttlesworth fearlessly stood up to racist politicians," a bilingual leaflet explained, "and inspired millions to come out of the shadows and demand their dignity and rights."



Shuttlesworth speaking at protest in Cincinnati in April 2001 against cop killing of Black youth Timothy Thomas there.



Associated Press

Fred Shuttlesworth (pointing) talks with Freedom Riders recently released from jail in Alabama in "whites only" waiting room in Birmingham bus station, May 17, 1961.

Workers fight lockouts

Continued from front page
party's annual fund drive.

"Through these initial struggles workers begin to unify, establish ties of solidarity, distinguish between friend and foe, become disciplined and learn lessons on how to advance," Fiske said. "They are part of and affected by the broader struggles of our class around the world. And their dynamic forward is part of the working-class march to power."

Bosses aim to demoralize workers

Fiske noted that many recent labor battles are against company lockouts. These include 228 workers who were locked out for 14 months by Honeywell in Metropolis, Ill., and 240 for 10 months by Roquette America in Keokuk, Iowa. In both hard-fought struggles, workers pushed back the bosses' assault and strengthened their unions in the process.

Today, 70 building workers remain locked out at Flatbush Gardens apartments in New York City since November 2010; 40 by Emerald Performance outside Henry, Ill., since March; 260 by Armstrong Industries in Lancaster, Pa., since July; and 1,300 by American Crystal Sugar at seven locations in Minnesota, North Dakota and Iowa since August 1. "We can also include the fight by members of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 21 in Longview, Washington," Fiske said. "It's not technically a lockout, only because the ILWU workers who have an agreement with the Port

of Longview were never allowed to start work."

Fiske noted the bosses' onerous demands that led to these lockouts: big cuts in wages, pensions, medical benefits and vacation pay, along with union-busting attacks on seniority and plans to contract out work. Pushed against the wall, these workers have shown great capacity to resist, Fiske said. "These were severe demands that workers knew they had to refuse." If they had agreed, the union—in other words, the workers—would have become demoralized and ineffective as a fighting force.

"That is precisely the purpose of a lockout," Fiske emphasized, "to catch the workers unawares; to demoralize and crush them." The bosses and their government are trying to break the ILWU, one of the stronger unions on the West Coast, he said.

The bosses prepare for lockouts. Scabs are lined up and trained. Extra security forces are hired. The company amasses a war chest in anticipation of these costs and lost production.

At American Crystal Sugar, the company provocatively demanded deep concessions at the last-minute during negotiations. This was immediately followed by a media offensive portraying the workers as greedy and spoiled when the company "offer" was rejected. As in other lockouts, the bosses organized support of the government, their cops and their courts ahead of time. The North Dakota state government has denied unemployment compensation to the workers at the two American Crystal plants in that state.

The sugar workers in the Red River Valley of the Upper Midwest have organized round-the-clock picketing and regular demonstrations, winning solidarity and contributions from workers throughout the region and beyond. Locked-out workers and their supporters have written quite a few effective letters that have been published in local newspapers.

The challenge in a lockout is to affect production, to turn it into an effective strike, and force the company to bring workers back. Along these lines, the sugar workers, members of



Dave Sanders/SEIU 32BJ

April 2011 rally in support of locked-out workers at Flatbush Gardens apartments in Brooklyn, N.Y. Locked-out workers around the country have shown great capacity to resist.

the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union are dealing with a number of tactical questions. Among them: how to win support in the community and from other unions, how to effectively confront scabs, how to approach the fight for unemployment compensation in North Dakota, how to win some of the smaller sugar beet farmers to support them in the face of pressure from the large growers.

Workers engaged in intense labor battles are also soon confronted with broader political questions. These include the role of the police, who invariably come up with ways to defend the company. In Drayton, N. D., where the plant is a substantial distance from the town of some 800 people, the cops dredged up a sound ordinance to prevent workers from using a bullhorn or chanting on the picket lines, Fiske said.

Center of class struggle in U.S.

Fiske was in the Red River Valley the previous week. In talking with two sugar workers, they asked him, "Who are you? What is the *Militant*?"

"Marxists have no special trade-union tactics or strategy," Fiske said. "These things can only be worked out by those directly involved day-to-day. But with intensifying class struggle

comes a greater need for communist politics. What we bring are the indispensable lessons and history of past struggles of our class as we participate in these current struggles."

These labor struggles are at the center of politics in the United States today, Fiske said. What working people can accomplish at any one time is limited by the level of class struggle nationally and internationally. But we can push back the bosses' effort to crush our unions and morale. The most important gauge of whether a fight is successful is if workers come out stronger, more battle tested and organized for the next fight.

Fiske quoted from the *Communist Manifesto*. "Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever-expanding union of the workers."

"We prepare for the intensification of the class struggle and anticipate more attempts to crush us," Fiske said. "We seek to understand and discuss with other workers the dynamics of the broader class struggle worldwide. We act within the limits of the possibilities of the struggles today. And we respond to opportunities to strengthen the Socialist Workers Party in the coming period."

November

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Workers’ stake in defending rights

The release by Washington state government officials of the names of 138,000 people who signed petitions to place a referendum on the ballot in 2009 is a blow to the constitutional protections of working people.

The expanding “disclosure” laws represent an assault on the rights of working people to participate in politics free from harassment of the government, cops, and other enemies. The charge is being led by liberal Democrats under the rubric of “transparency.”

This fight has a long history. The capitalist rulers in Alabama, and other southern states, used the same “transparency” arguments in the 1950s to publicize the names of supporters of the NAACP, opening them to cop and Klan attacks, in order to destroy the organization, as the tribute to Fred Shuttlesworth on page 7 explains.

This is part of broader attacks on our rights: Moves by state governments to enforce drug testing of working people seeking government assistance in the face of high and persistent unemployment. And the frame-up and conviction of two U.S. citizens of Somali descent on “conspiracy” and “terrorism” charges.

This issue also includes examples of police repression used to keep working people “in their place.” In Philadelphia, city cops arrested and brutally beat Lex Bumpess and hid his whereabouts from his family and friends. For defending their union, longshore workers in Longview, Wash., have been assaulted and arrested by the cops.

At the same time, from the Red River Valley in the Upper Midwest, to Pennsylvania, Illinois, New York, Washington state, and elsewhere, working people face relentless efforts to impose deep concessions and crush the unions and morale of workers through onerous lockouts. In each case these efforts to crush us have been met by resistance as we are left with no other choice but to fight.

These attacks on our rights and livelihoods by either the bosses, their government, or the two working closely in tandem, flow from the same source: the deepening crisis of the capitalist system and the propertied rulers’ drive to foist the burden of their crisis on the backs of working people.

These different facets of the struggle between capital and labor all need to be exposed for what they are and fought against as one and the same.

Greek ‘debt crisis’ targets workers

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International Monetary Fund, which lent \$150 billion to Athens last year and in July offered a similar size bailout package in exchange for steep austerity measures, are not part of the write down.

The largest share of Greek debt is held by banks in Greece. Outside the country, banks in France and Germany, the two strongest powers among those who share the euro as a common currency, stand to lose the most—more than \$27 billion between the two of them, according to figures from the Bank of International Settlements.

Sharpening conflicts among capitalists powers of Europe—particularly those at different levels of industrial development and social conditions—is exploding the myth of a “united Europe” and viability of a common European currency.

Days after the latest “bailout package” was announced, Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou called for a referendum on it to take place early next year. A “no” vote would immediately pose whether Athens will leave the eurozone. Expressing shock at the call, German and French officials summoned Papandreou to “crisis talks” November 1, reported Reuters.

Whether Athens defaults in the nearer term or accepts further “rescue” loans from the more powerful ruling classes of Europe to ensure continued payment of its debt—on condition of enforcing further austerity measures—the consequences for working people in Greece will be devastating. The same applies to the heavily indebted nations of Ireland, Portugal, Spain and Italy. Pumping in more euros in an attempt to stem the spiraling debt crisis in the eurozone will increase inflationary pressures, another way in which workers can expect to be hit throughout the continent.

Working people in Greece have already been clobbered with some of the stiffest austerity measures in Europe, including two previous ones, with more attacks to come. Unemployment is officially at 16.7 percent with many public sector jobs targeted for elimination. The government projects national income to decline by more than 5 percent this year and just raised the sales tax from 19 to 23 percent. All these measures, designed to foist as much of the burden as possible on the backs of working people, in turn accelerate the economic contraction and prepare the way for deeper economic and social crises.

According to the *Wall Street Journal*, if the “haircut” goes well, Greece’s debt level will decline from 164 to 120 percent of its Gross Domestic Product by 2020.

This deal “does nothing to address the deep, structural problems Europe faces,” an October 28 *Investor’s Business Daily* editorial bluntly stated. “In fact,

they’ve just kicked the can down the road.”

The roots of the crisis are not “financial.” For decades the propertied rulers have faced sharpening competition for markets, low-cost labor and raw materials—as well as declining profitability of investment in industrial production. This had led them to seek other avenues of higher return. Instead of increasing employment in manufacture and other productive activity, they “invest” in ever-expanding and increasingly complicated forms of speculative debt. Among the massive credit extended by banks were loans to governments. With the expectation of unending interest payments, this increases the banks’ assets on paper, despite the fact that the loans cannot possibly be paid back.

As Karl Marx wrote in *Capital*, “All nations characterized by the capitalist mode of production are periodically seized by fits of giddiness in which they try to accomplish the money-making without the mediation of the production process.”

The U.S. banking system is also vulnerable, including through its holdings of credit default swaps, a financial derivative that Wall Street claims is a form of insurance against government defaults.

The so-called debt crisis in Greece is but the tip of the iceberg.

Spiraling debt in Italy

Italy, with the world’s eighth largest economy, is attracting increasing attention “as the decisive country for how the eurozone debt crisis plays out,” noted the *Financial Times*. Rome needs to refinance nearly \$425 billion of its \$2.6 trillion debt next year. French banks are particularly vulnerable with loans to Italy totaling more than \$500 billion, dwarfing the Greek government debt held by French banks.

Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi’s austerity moves include raising the retirement age from 65 to 67 for men, selling off state assets, and making it easier to fire workers, according to *Agence France-Presse*.

In Portugal the government is seeking to implement a 30-minute-a-day increase in working hours without pay in private companies. Combined with eliminating bonuses equivalent to two months of wages, this could reduce some workers annual income by 24 percent, reported the *Wall Street Journal*.

Spain has the highest unemployment rates in Europe—officially 22.6 percent in September; among 16-24 year olds the rate is 45.8 percent.

In France, President Sarkozy is taking aim at the 35-hour workweek established in 2001. In an October 27 speech he asserted it has “ruined the competitiveness of the country,” reported the *Financial Times*.

Sugar workers

Continued from front page

smaller factories in southern Minnesota and Iowa, rejected contract concessions demanded by American Crystal, the largest sugar beet producer in the U.S. The company responded by initiating a lock-out the bosses had been preparing for some time.

The plants are being run by hundreds of replacement workers. Ten vans of scabs crossed the picket line during a recent shift change in Hillsboro, N.D.

“The company wants us to back down and make an example out of us. We don’t want that to happen,” said Dave Pearson, a worker from the plant here who was picketing on the bridge.

“We all need to stand behind the union workers and offer any and all assistance we can before this becomes the accepted practice in our towns,” wrote Mike Frank in an October 30 letter to the *Grand Forks Herald*.

The union worked for several weeks to restart negotiations with the company. Federal-mediated talks resumed on October 24, but broke down the following day. This is the first time the two sides have met in months.

The company made two amendments to their previous contract proposal. One, they promised workers would not be laid off “because of the company’s decision to contract out work.” Two, they delayed the elimination of the workers’ current health care plan by one year.

Workers’ health care coverage has been suspended under the lockout. Average annual health care expenses for workers under the new offer would increase from \$650 to \$2,400 per person, and could be raised further “from time to time.” The extension of current benefits, the company says, will be off the table if workers don’t approve it by November 1.

The union has organized votes at seven plants for November 1.

“The union came with 20 proposals to the negotiating table, but the company wasn’t interested in discussing any of them,” said Dave Pokrzewski, a locked-out worker and shop steward, outside his home in Drayton, N.D.

“Language that threatens job security is still in the contract,” said Scott Ripplinger, a worker from the plant here.

“The company made no serious moves. Then they turn around and try to make the union look bad in the press,” said Jeff Holbeck, a locked-out worker, while picketing outside the East Grand Forks plant.

“All of us want to go back to work, but they’d like to see us crawl back,” said Steve Eliason, while picketing outside the Hillsboro plant.

Another concern among workers is a section of the contract added to the latest offer that says “eligible employees will return to work within 10 days of the date the contract is ratified.”

“What does eligible mean?” asked Dennis Wilebski, on the picket line in Drayton. “We have real questions about that too.” According to Mel Morris, one of the union negotiators from East Grand Forks, the company refused to clarify this provision, saying they would address it after the contract was approved.

The company is trying to “starve us out by denying us unemployment,” said Wilebski. “One good thing that’s lifting our spirits is the ongoing food drive organized by the union. This week workers in North Dakota received two bags of groceries, four rolls of toilet paper and a bunch of potatoes.”

“We have been receiving donations from our own members, other workers and unions, and from area food banks,” said Ripplinger, one of the organizers of the food drive.

Meanwhile, a few days after talks collapsed, another fire broke out at the plant in Moorhead, causing “a considerable amount of damage,” according to *Valley News Live* in Fargo, N.D. It took the fire department two hours to put it out. “They’ll write it off as a common occurrence,” said Ross Perrin, who is locked out from that plant. “Any situation like this can turn into a devastating event. Lucky nobody got hurt.”

This was the second fire at the Moorhead plant since the company started using scab labor. Three other fires broke out at three other American Crystal plants in early September.