

Two weeks left in int’l drive to win new readers

BY MICHEL POITRAS

At the end of week five of the seven-week international effort to win 2,200 new and renewed subscribers to the *Militant*, we have reached a global figure of 1,573, or 72 percent of our goal, putting us slightly ahead of schedule.

Examples of selling *Militant* subscriptions to workers and young people from Seattle and San Francisco to London, and Auckland, New Zealand, over the last week show the openness to a paper published in the interests of working people, as millions are affected by the deepening world crisis of capitalism.

In Seattle, members of the Socialist Workers Party sold 23 subscriptions along with eight books on revolution—**Continued on page 4**

Fall 'Militant' subscription campaign				
Oct. 1–Nov. 20 (week 5)				
Country	quota	sold	%	2,200
UNITED STATES				
Seattle*	175	139	79%	1,573 should be
San Francisco*	170	134	79%	
Washington	60	46	77%	
Los Angeles	150	112	75%	
Des Moines*	165	116	70%	
Twin Cities	140	94	67%	
Boston*	60	40	67%	
Houston*	90	60	67%	
Atlanta*	170	112	66%	
Miami	90	57	63%	
New York*	260	163	63%	
Chicago*	165	99	60%	
Lincoln*	30	18	60%	
New Paltz†	15	8	53%	
Philadelphia*	90	47	52%	
Albuquerque†	3	1	33%	
Muscoda, WI†	3	1	33%	
Cincinnati†	4	1	25%	
Bloomington†	5	1	20%	
Total U.S.	1,845	1,249	68%	
UNITED KINGDOM				
Manchester	60	46	77%	
London	120	101	84%	
Total U.K.	180	147	82%	
CANADA*	85	69	81%	
NEW ZEALAND	80	60	75%	
AUSTRALIA	65	48	74%	
Total	2,255	1,573	72%	
Should be	2,200	1,571	71%	
* Raised goal † First time on scoreboard				

U.S., Israeli rulers step up threats against Iran

BY MICHEL POITRAS

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Ehud Barak are pressing to launch an air assault on Iran to take out Teheran’s nuclear facilities. They have opened a debate in the Israeli cabinet on the question, according to Israeli media.

IMPERIALIST HANDS OFF IRAN!

—See editorial, p. 9

Meanwhile, President Barack Obama has called for “unprecedented pressure” to force the Iranian government to abandon its nuclear program, and the U.N. International Atomic Energy Agency released a report November 8 claiming that Tehran is close to developing nuclear weapons.

The Israeli government has on several previous occasions raised the threat of bombing Iranian facilities without doing so. At the same time, such a strike would not be unprecedented. In 1981 and 2007 Israeli warplanes destroyed nuclear reactors in Iraq and Syria.

For years Washington has led the imperialists’ campaign to quash Iran’s nuclear program because, they say, Tehran is developing nuclear—**Continued on page 5**

European Union begins to fray amid deepening economic crisis

BY JOHN STUDER

The rulers of Europe are responding to their debt crisis—which stems from a slowdown in production and trade over decades—by postponing and exacerbating its inevitable repercussions. The crisis is leading to sharpening conflicts between the capitalist powers of Europe, bringing ever closer the disintegration of the European Union. Meanwhile, the unfolding consequences in Greece and Italy, the two most indebted on the continent, has upset the stability of the governments there.

The Greek government has the highest debt to gross domestic product ratio in Europe, 165 percent. At a eurozone summit October 27, European government representatives hammered out a plan to write down half the Greek debt owed to private banks. The deal was pushed above all by Berlin and Paris, the two most powerful nations that use the euro as a common currency and whose banks

‘We have to draw the line somewhere’

Sugar workers reject contract for 3rd time



Militant/Frank Forrester
Locked-out sugar workers and supporters in Hillsboro, N.D., unload supplies donated by Teamster Local 120, October 2. Food drive has helped sustain fight against American Crystal.

BY FRANK FORRESTER

HILLSBORO, N.D.—By a margin of 90 percent, locked out union sugar workers voted November 1 to reject American Crystal Sugar Company’s latest contract proposal. The Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union reported that 92 percent of its membership turned out for the vote.

“They are trying to starve us out. This contract is worse than the last one,” said Rick Tessin, outside the Hillsboro union hall. Tessin, who like about 420 other workers at the company’s two plants in

North Dakota, is denied unemployment compensation by the state government. Tessin said he recently sold his horse for much needed cash.

“Today our members sent a loud and—**Continued on page 5**

Roof fall at Illinois mine highlights need for union

BY JOHN HAWKINS

EQUALITY, Ill.—Officials of the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration ordered the closure of the Willow Lake coal mine October 28 after a section of the roof in one of the mine’s escape ways caved in, making it unusable in the event of an emergency.

The incident at the Peabody Energy-owned mine comes as a battle for union recognition by miners there—**Continued on page 6**

Also Inside:	
Antiabortion rightists fail to disrupt forum in Australia	2
NY meeting demands ‘free the Cuban Five’	3
US expands hunter-killer operations in Somalia	4
Most jobless workers without unemployment benefits	5

Continued on page 9

Antiabortion rightists fail to disrupt meeting in Australia

BY JOANNE KUNIAISKY
AND LINDA HARRIS

SYDNEY, Australia—Supporters of abortion rights successfully defended a public forum here October 23, organized by Women’s Abortion Action Campaign.

A group of seven men, most wearing black T-shirts with the acronym “BVM” (Blessed Virgin Mary) and one carrying a large wooden crucifix, invaded the meeting of 50 people and attempted to disrupt it. Participants used banners to physically block the rightists from approaching the front of the room.

The meeting was held to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Levine ruling, the common law court decision that opened up access to safe, legal abortion for women in New South Wales. The Oct. 28, 1971, ruling came after doctors charged for performing abortions following a 1970 police raid on Sydney’s Heatherbrae abortion clinic were acquitted.

Speaking for WAAC, Samantha Campbell pointed out that during World War II women entered the workforce in large numbers and gained more economic freedom. By the time of the 1970 police raid attitudes on abortion had changed. “The police thought that the raid would be supported by the public, instead it was met with outrage,” she said.

Dr Stefania Siedlecky, who graduated from medical school in 1943, explained, “Working in a women’s hospital during the war years I witnessed women die from infection and hem-

orrhaging following illegal abortions alongside the hypocrisy of doctors who would do a discreet safe abortion for their private patients.”

Dr Caroline de Costa, a professor of obstetrics and gynecology in Cairns, in North Queensland, was instrumental in the 2005-2006 campaign to make the abortion pill RU486 available in Australia.

She spoke about the case of the young couple from Cairns who were acquitted by a jury in 2010 after being charged with using RU486. This, she said, highlighted the need to repeal the abortion provisions from the criminal codes of Queensland and New South Wales.

The meeting proceeded despite the attempts by rightists who tried to interrupt presentations and discussion with shouts such as “machine-gun



Militant/Bob Aiken

Meeting of supporters of women’s right to choose abortion met in Sydney, Australia, October 23. One of rightists who attempted to disrupt event can be seen at upper left.

her, murderer” and “put them in jail.” “This is the first time in more than 20 years that a WAAC-organized public forum has been targeted by antiabortion forces,” Margaret Kirkby, a leader of

WAAC, told the *Militant* in a phone interview. “Their behavior was designed to intimidate us but they failed. We will continue to campaign for a woman’s right to choose abortion.”

20-year jail sentence for refusing to testify

BY JOHN STUDER

On October 3 the Third District Appeals Court in Illinois upheld a 20-year prison sentence for Terrell Geiger, a 27-year-old African-American, for attempting to invoke his constitutional right not to testify. Geiger was convicted of “direct criminal contempt of court.”

Geiger had been summoned as a witness in a murder case. This is by far the longest sentence ever imposed in the state for refusing to testify in a trial, according to Fletcher Hamill, Geiger’s court-appointed attorney.

“We’ve filed a petition with the Illi-

nois Supreme Court asking them to review the decision,” Hamill told the *Militant*. “I hope they decide to take it.”

“It’s an outrageous case,” DePaul University Professor Len Cavise told the *Chicago Tribune*. “He got a punishment that is four times what he could have gotten for perjury and the same as the minimum punishment for the murder itself.”

Geiger was targeted by the prosecutors and the black-robed arbiters of class “justice” for his refusal to take the stand and “snitch” on others.

When he was called by the state to testify, the prosecutor told the court that they “expected him” to take the Fifth Amendment, and asked the judge to threaten him with sanctions. The prosecutor said that if he refused to testify he should be sentenced to six months in prison for contempt.

Judge Clark Erickson said that he could do that or give him a longer sentence of “a period of years.”

The prosecution then filed a petition with the court asking for a contempt order. Only at this point did the court appoint an attorney for Geiger.

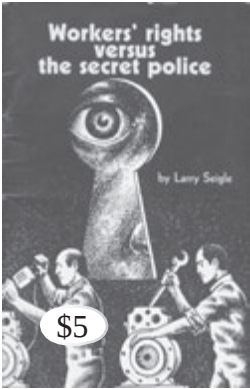
After Judge Erickson pressed Geiger to testify, he said he still wanted to decline. The judge ruled he was in contempt, adding that he “seemed defiant”

and that he “saw pure scorn for the judicial system in the defendant’s face.” He ruled in favor of the prosecutor’s petition and sentenced Geiger to 20 years.

While it said that “reasonable people could conclude that defendant’s sentence is excessive,” the Appeals Court said the trial judge had “broad discretionary powers” and ruled the 20-year prison term would stand.

“Direct criminal contempt is a unique crime that does not have a statutory maximum sentence,” the court said. In fact, if Geiger had just lied under oath, he could not have been sentenced to any more than five years.

The Appeals Court was divided—two judges for the 20-year sentence and one arguing it should be thrown out. “I would find it arbitrary, oppressive and unjust,” Judge William Holdridge wrote.



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—Maria Martinez
striking flour mill worker
San Antonio, Texas



Militant/Jacquie Henderson

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NY meeting demands
'Free the Cuban Five'

BY DEBORAH LIATOS
NEW YORK—Some 175 people attended a meeting here November 5 to back the fight to free the Cuban Five. The five revolutionaries, René González, Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino and Fernando González, were arrested in 1998 and framed up on a number of trumped up charges, including "conspiracy to commit espionage."

Among the speakers were Thenjiwe McHarris, Amnesty International Northeast Field Organizer; Rev. Luis Barrios, co-director of IFCO/Pastors for Peace; Esperanza Luzbert from the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples; Richard Klugh, an attorney for the Cuban Five; civil rights attorney Michael Warren; Gloria La Riva from the National Committee to Free the Cuban Five; Alicia Jrapko from the International Committee to Free the Cuban Five; and Evelina Deulofeu of the Martin Luther King Center in Havana.

Carmen Acosta of Service Employees International Union Local 1199 welcomed participants to the event, held in the union's Martin Luther King Jr. Labor Center.

At the time of their arrests the five had been gathering information for the Cuban government on the activities of counterrevolutionary groups in Florida with a long history of violent attacks against Cuba with Washington's complicity.

Impact of international campaign

The five were convicted in 2001. Amid an international campaign to free them, the sentences of three were reduced in 2009. Guerrero's prison term was reduced from life plus 10 years to 21 years and 10 months, Labaniño's sentence was reduced from life plus 18 years to 30 years, and Fernando González's from 19 years to 17 years and 9 months. But the Court of Appeals refused to vacate the double life sentence plus 15 years imposed on Hernández.

Released from jail October 7, René González is now serving three additional years of "supervised release" in the U.S. He has dual Cuban and U.S. citizenship. The court refused to let him return to his home country Cuba despite the fact that this is common practice for

citizens of other countries.
"René is free from the small jail, after an unjust sentence of 15 years, yet they still force him to remain in this country, against his will," wrote Labañino in a message to the meeting on behalf of the five read by Nancy Cabrero, president of New York's Casa de las Américas.
"We are living through the most egregious attacks on immigrants and anyone that the government does not like," Labañino said. "They spend millions of dollars daily to hunt down human beings in order to separate them from their families, their children, from their lives here and ship them to their countries of origin."
"The extreme punishment against our brother Gerardo continues with all kinds of extreme cruelties," Labañino wrote. "They do not even allow him to see his wife Adriana, they interfere and delay his process of legal appeals and they put him in solitary confinement using any excuse."
When the five are free, Labañino concluded, "we will all be together, defending other just causes and demanding the freedom of other brothers who are in similar circumstances."
McHarris presented Amnesty International's main concerns on the case: that the U.S. government denied the five access to their attorneys and placed them in solitary confinement prior to the trial, that it refused to grant a change in venue in spite of "pervasive hostility to the Cuban government" in Miami, and that it continues to deny visas to Olga Salanueva and Adriana Pérez, the wives of René González and Hernández respectively, preventing them from visiting their husbands in the U.S.
"Amnesty International will contin-

Party-building fund is 'good cause'

BY MARY MARTIN
More than halfway through the drive, the Socialist Workers Party-Building Fund is on track to complete the effort in full and on time.
From the Twin Cities, Natalie Morrison reports that following a successful Party-Building Fund meeting on October 30, "Our pledges are now \$4,971 with \$3,426 collected towards a goal of \$6,000."
Twenty-five people attended the



Speakers at November 5 "Free the Cuban Five" meeting in New York included, from left, Alicia Jrapko, International Committee to Free the Cuban Five; Esperanza Luzbert, Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples; Gloria La Riva, National Committee to Free the Cuban Five; Attorney Richard Klugh, part of Cuban Five defense team; and Attorney Michael Warren.

ue to monitor this case and the human rights violations the U.S. government is responsible for," she said.
Participants discussed the frame-up conviction of Hernández for conspiracy to commit murder. Government prosecutors claim Hernández bears responsibility for the Cuban government's Feb. 24, 1996, shoot down of two planes that had invaded its airspace and refused to turn back despite repeated warnings. The aircraft were flown by Brothers to the Rescue, a counterrevolutionary Cuban-American group that for years had organized provocative flights over Cuban territory and other hostile acts.
If you look at the evidence, said Klugh, "you see how ridiculous it is, you can't find a way to find him guilty."
Klugh noted that during the trial the judge stated she would issue an instruc-

tion to the jury that to find Hernández guilty, government prosecutors would have to prove that he not only participated in planning to shoot down the planes, but that this would occur over international waters. Prosecutors complained that this placed an "insurmountable hurdle" to convicting Hernández and unsuccessfully attempted to overturn the judge's ruling. In reviewing the trial transcripts, Klugh said, Hernández's lawyer at the trial realized the judge never gave this instruction to the jury.
"The government frequently turns to conspiracy charges when they have no facts," added Klugh. "Conspiracy to commit some kind of espionage. These men were here for years and never attempted to commit espionage."
"We have to have more people know about this case," Luzbert, of the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples, told the meeting. "We have to have more connections with the unions. We have to wage this battle in the United States in order to get the Cuban Five out of jail."
"As long as we have an avenue to fight legally we need to take advantage of it," said La Riva, of the National Committee to Free the Cuban Five, referring to habeas corpus motions to vacate their convictions and sentences recently filed by the four revolutionaries still in jail.
Jrapko, from the International Committee to Free the Five, told the meeting that it's important to not portray the five "as languishing in prison. They're not. They're fighters and they are fighting every day for their freedom too. They know you are fighting too and 11 million people in Cuba are behind them."

meeting featuring a presentation by Joe Swanson, a longtime leader of the party. He talked about labor resistance today, from sugar workers in the Midwest to longshore workers on the West Coast standing up to the growing number of lockouts and other aggressive boss assaults. Four new contributions were made.
Swanson said, "Seeing these lock-outs is seeing how the bosses organize their forces to go to war against us; trying to break unions and attack democratic rights here and around the world. We see and hear in discussions how workers are being transformed in the process of fighting back."
Marty Knable, a worker at Delta Airlines, who came with two coworkers fighting for a union, said, "The Militant newsweekly gives workers confidence in seeing other workers wage struggles. We passed the hat and raised \$200 for the locked-out sugar workers, and it wasn't difficult, even in these hard times."
Robert Dickson, a recent college student, contributed \$5 to the fund "because it's a good cause." Morrison explained that in the Twin Cities they had about five contributions from meeting people selling door to door and at the Occupy Wall Street actions in Minneapolis. "These people, who for one reason or another didn't get a subscription to the Militant, asked if they could donate money to our work because they like what we are doing," Morrison said.

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New booklet on the Cuban Five



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Party-Building Fund week 4 of 7

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Seattle	\$9,000	\$7,098	79%
Lincoln	\$200	\$155	78%
Los Angeles	\$8,500	\$6,110	72%
Boston*	\$4,100	\$2,435	59%
Des Moines*	\$3,200	\$1,859	58%
San Francisco	\$14,000	\$7,970	57%
Miami	\$3,200	\$1,801	56%
Houston	\$4,000	\$2,224	56%
Twin Cities	\$6,000	\$3,186	53%
New York	\$20,000	\$10,305	52%
Chicago	\$10,000	\$4,149	41%
Washington	\$7,500	\$2,640	35%
Philadelphia	\$3,700	\$750	20%
Other		\$850	
Total	\$101,400	\$58,920	59%
Should Be	\$100,000	\$57,143	57%

* Raised goal

US expands hunter-killer operations in Somalia

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Washington has been expanding hunter-killer operations in Somalia against al-Shabab, an Islamist group designated in 2008 as a “terrorist organization” by the U.S. government. Al-Shabab, which controls much of southern and central Somalia, is at war with the U.S.-backed Transitional Federal Government, which controls the capital Mogadishu.

Under the direction of the U.S. military’s Africa Command—through which Washington is expanding its foothold on the continent—U.S. Reaper drones are now flying into Somalia from an air base in Arba Minch in southern Ethiopia, reported the *Washington Post*.

The Ethiopia base is one of three ringing the Horn of Africa from where U.S. aerial drones are deployed. The other two include a recently reopened base in the Seychelles Islands—southeast of Somalia—and the large U.S. base in Djibouti to the north where some 3,000 U.S. troops are stationed. Drones launched from the Djibouti base also fly missions over Yemen.

Under debate within the Pentagon and State Department, according to the *New York Times*, is whether in addition to using drones to kill individuals targeted for assassination, to also conduct so-called signature strikes. Similar to police profiling in the U.S., “signature” drone assaults target unknown individuals and groups of people based on location and patterns of observed behavior.

In Pakistan, where the majority of drone attacks are signature strikes, the flying remote-controlled robots have killed 1,500 “suspected militants” since President Barack Obama took office in 2009, according to U.S. government officials, reported the *Wall Street Journal*.

Washington has developed a four-

prong strategy for increased involvement in Somalia, reports the *Atlantic* monthly. This includes supporting some 10,000 African Union troops, primarily from Uganda and Burundi, in operations around Mogadishu; enlisting Somali “warlords” and other armed groups—many former opponents of the transitional government—to fight al-Shabab; recruiting indigenous CIA “assets” to build up the imperialists’ network of spies; and drone strikes to assassinate al-Shabab leaders.

According to the *London Times*, “U.S. trainers have been assigned to help Ugandan troops to provide security for the embattled Somali Government in Mogadishu and American special forces are reported to have been operating from a US military base on Manda Island, 30 miles south of the Somali-Kenyan border.”

Kenyan troops invade Somalia

In mid-October some 4,000 Kenyan troops invaded southern Somalia. One of their goals is to gain control of the Somali port town of Kismayo, an al-Shabab stronghold. While U.S. officials denied playing a role in the operation, Kenyan military spokesman Maj. Emmanuel Chirchir said that Washington has provided “technical assistance,” reported the *Post*.



Sgt. 1st Class Brock Jones, 128th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, Utah Army National Guard
U.S. military-led training exercise with Ugandan troops April 20. Soldiers from Uganda are major part of 10,000 African Union troops intervening in Somalia around capital Mogadishu.

Washington’s expanded military presence in the Horn of Africa includes the use of special forces off the Somali coast. An article in the November 7 *Army Times*, titled “Hunting down terrorists,” describes clandestine Navy SEALs missions over the past decade to set up a network of hidden cameras in Somali ports, heavily populated areas and other locations in the country. Initiated in 2002, the SEALs carried out about a dozen such missions, the paper said.

Meanwhile, an FBI frame-up operation in Minnesota has led to the con-

viction of two Somali women for allegedly raising money for al-Shabab. The women—Amina Farah Ali and Hawo Mohamed Hassan—both U.S. citizens, face up to 30 years in prison.

The women say they were raising funds for humanitarian aid to Somalia. The country, 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.

Two weeks left in drive to win new readers

Continued from front page

ary working-class politics offered at special discount during the drive. (See ad below.) Six copies of *Teamster Rebellion* were sold along with *Teamster Power*, both part of a four-volume series by Farrell Dobbs.

Ten subscriptions and five books were sold in Longview, Wash., going door to door or at the International Longshore and Warehouse Union

picket lines. ILWU Local 21 is engaged in a months-long battle there against a union-busting effort at EGT Development’s grain terminal at the Port of Longview.

Mary Martin reported that since July 31, a total of 99 *Militant* subscriptions and 57 books have been bought by ILWU members and supporters, including 51 titles from the *Teamster* series.

From San Francisco, Joel Britton wrote, “Ten coworkers at industrial kitchens where supporters of the *Militant* work have signed up for subscriptions in recent weeks, one for a one-year renewal.”

“Five subscriptions were sold November 5 by a team that went to San Jose,” he added, “going door to door in a working-class neighborhood and participating in an immigrant rights protest organized by Voluntarios de la Comunidad and joined by Occupy San Jose activists.”

According to Britton, another “five subscriptions were sold at performances in Richmond and San Francisco of La Colmenita, the National Children’s Theater of Cuba, whose U.S. tour ended here on October 28.”

On November 2, he continued, “37 participants in an Occupy Oakland mass day of action signed up for *Militant* subscriptions, including a one-year renewal. Most of these were sold at the Socialist Workers 2011 Campaign tent near City Hall, where many thousands gathered to protest ‘an economic system built on inequality and corporate power,’ as a poster calling the action put it, as well as the October 25 brutal attack by cops on participants in Occupy Oakland.”

“The highlight of the *Militant* subscription drive this week in New Zea-

land,” reported George Fyson from Auckland, “was a visit to the picket line of members of the Meat Workers Union in Marton, about 2.5 hours north of Wellington. Some 100 workers at the Canterbury Meat Packers plant there have been locked out after they refused to accept a 20-30 percent pay cut. Workers on the picket line responded well to the article on the locked-out sugar workers’ battle in the U.S. and five bought subscriptions.”

“Members of the Communist League in London,” wrote Paul Davis, “have now sold 101 subscriptions toward their goal of 120. Prior to and after a meeting to present *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes at the London School of Economics, seven subscriptions to the *Militant* were sold along with six of the book.

“Nine subscriptions were also sold at a London demonstration in solidarity with antigovernment protests in Syria the previous weekend,” added Davis, “and a further six during a door-to-door sale in the working-class neighborhood of Greenford in west London.”

Quotes from workers, farmers and youth attracted to the working-class perspective offered by the *Militant* are key to this weekly column. Bring your pen, notebook and camera with you whenever you reach out with the paper!

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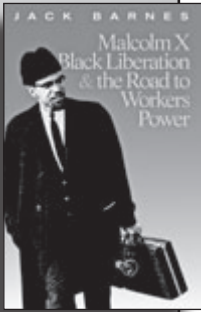
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Threats against Iran

Continued from front page

weapons, something the U.S. rulers want to limit to themselves and their allies. The Iranian government has maintained its nuclear program is for energy production and medical purposes only.

The first leak on Netanyahu's and Barak's course was released October 28 by well-known journalist Nahum Barnea in one of Israel's main newspapers, *Yediot Ahronot*. The story was never denied. Some Israeli officials have accused Meir Dagan, former head of Israeli intelligence, for the leak, reported the *New York Times*. The bulk of Tel Aviv's top military and intelligence leadership are among those in Israel's ruling class and state apparatus who oppose a strike against Iran.

Dress rehearsal for attack

As the debate was raging in Israel, Tel Aviv conducted a one-week air force exercise at a NATO base in Italy, widely seen as a dress rehearsal for such an attack. On November 2 the Israeli Defense Forces test-fired a new Jericho missile capable of reaching Iran with a nuclear warhead.

The Israeli government recently positioned submarines in waters not far from Iran. And it has been running civil-defense drills to prepare for an attack involving thousands of rockets and missiles raining down on the country.

Following a November 3 visit to London by Barak, the daily *Guardian* reported British military officials were

drawing up plans for how they would deploy Royal Navy submarines equipped with Tomahawk cruise missiles to the Arab-Persian Gulf in the event Washington decides to launch missile strikes against Iranian bases.

Israeli President Shimon Peres November 6 told the press, "The possibility of a military attack against Iran is now closer to being applied than the application of a diplomatic option."

In response to Netanyahu's saber rattling, Ayatollah Mahmoud Alavi, a senior Iranian cleric, warned, "If they [the Israeli government] make such a mistake, they will receive a crushing response from the Islamic Republic" of Iran. Tehran is equipped with powerful medium-range missiles capable of reaching Israel.

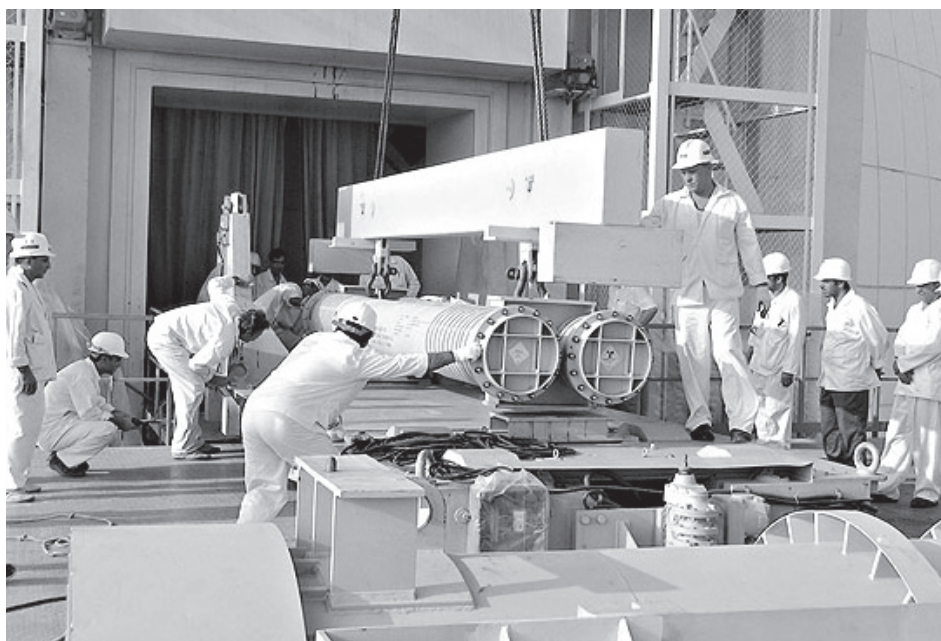
Netanyahu spoke to Israel's parliament October 31 about changes in the region that necessitate increased use of "offensive capabilities." He referred to popular protests and the overthrow of regimes in the Middle East and North Africa and plans for withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq by the end of the year as immense changes that can increase instability.

The pullout of U.S. troops from Iraq is widely seen as a major opening for Tehran to increase its influence in that country and region. The Israeli rulers have also been shaken by social protests, involving both Jews and Arabs, that swept the country during the summer, influenced by movements in the region.

On November 3 Obama called for maintaining "unprecedented international pressure" on Iran—as spelled out by Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Ben Rhodes, "through financial pressure, through economic sanctions, through diplomatic isolation."

This was backed by Britain's Foreign Secretary William Hague, who said, "No option is off the table," and by French Foreign Minister Alain Juppé.

Iran has already been subjected to four rounds of U.N. sanctions and punitive measures by the U.S. and European powers that have crippled its economy. Joint U.S. and Israeli efforts to sabotage Teheran's nuclear research go back a decade, most recently with a destructive



Workers loading fuel rods into Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant in August 2010.

computer worm called Stuxnet. Over the course of years a string of assassinations and disappearances have targeted Iranian nuclear scientists.

On October 11 U.S. authorities accused the Quds Force, the foreign operations unit of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, of plotting to kill the Saudi Arabian ambassador in Washington.

Washington possesses the largest arsenal of nuclear weapons and remains

the only power to have ever used them, incinerating the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of World War II. Tel Aviv is widely believed to have the only nuclear arsenal in the Middle East.

During a trip to Israel in October, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta met with Netanyahu and Barak in order to clarify Tel Aviv's intentions regarding Iran. He reportedly left without a clear answer.

Most jobless workers without any unemployment benefits

BY ANITA OLSSON

Since the beginning of last year the proportion of the officially unemployed in the U.S. who receive government compensation has gone down from 75 percent to 48 percent. Alongside nearly three years of persistently high joblessness, which officially stands at 9 percent today, long-term unemployment has risen to record highs. Of the 14 million considered jobless by government standards, nearly one-third have been out of work for a year or more.

In the 20 hardest hit states Congress extended jobless benefits for up to 99 weeks. Other states range from 60 to 93 weeks. Congress is expected to decide whether to maintain the extensions before the end of the year. If discontinued, another 2.2 million people

will be cut off by February.

The average duration of unemployment was 39.4 weeks in October. The previous month it was 41 weeks, the highest since these figures started being kept in 1948.

In addition to long-term unemployed workers being cut off the rolls, millions of others without work are not officially considered unemployed, not counted in the jobless figures, and also not entitled to benefits. Some 2.6 million, for example, are labeled "marginally attached" to the labor force because, according to government bureaucrats, they have not searched for a job in the last four weeks. There are also 8.9 million people working part-time because they can't find full-time work, according to the U.S. Labor Department.

Sugar workers

Continued from front page

clear message to American Crystal Executives," said BCTGM Local 167G President John Risky in a November 1 press release.

On July 30, by a margin of 96 percent, some 1,300 workers from three plants in northern Minnesota, two in North Dakota, and two 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 with a total lockout.

American Crystal bosses had prepared the lockout for many months, hiring scab-herding outfit Strom Engineering to line up hundreds of replacement workers, who started working as soon as the lockout began.

In the latest round of federal-mediated talks, the company made two amendments to their previous contract proposal.

First, they said workers would not be laid off "because of the company's decision to contract out work." Second, they delayed the elimination of the current health care plan by one year.

In addition, the company added a clause to the latest offer saying "eligible employees will return to work within 10 days of the date the contract is ratified."

"That provision made a lot of us pretty mad," said Tracy Hampson, who has worked at American Crystal for more than 30 years. "It means there's no guarantee that the company will call any one of us back. What is an 'eligible' worker? We don't know." During the October 24-25 negotiations, according to Mel Morris, a union negotiator from East Grand Forks, the company refused to clarify the meaning of "eligible," say-

Continued on page 7

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



November 21, 1986

Four hundred and fifty members of United Auto Workers Local 2216 have been on strike at LTV Aerospace and Defense in Camden, Arkansas, since June.

The strike is over unfair labor practices. Even though the workers voted to be represented by the UAW in October 1985, the company refused to recognize the union.

LTV continued to run the plant with its discriminatory "merit system" instead of seniority.

The company assigned the workers jobs on an arbitrary basis. The wages workers received were also decided arbitrarily and the attendance policy was selectively enforced.

LTV pays the Camden workers about half of what they pay UAW members for similar work at the Dallas-based LTV Aerospace and Defense plant.



November 20, 1961

LA PAZ—Grave disturbances in this two-and-a-half mile high city in the Andes spoke eloquently of the incapacity of the Dr. Victor Paz Estenssoro government to find an effective solution to the social and political crisis wracking Bolivia. The disturbances also indicated how little faith exists among the populace in possible help through "Alliance for Progress" handouts.

On Oct. 18, the government survived another attempted rightist coup d'etat. Similar attempts have been repeatedly crushed through the aid of the militia and armed workers and peasants.

Students supported the Chauffeurs Union in protesting a government decree boosting the price of gasoline from four cents a liter to seven cents. In retaliation for the student role in the demonstration, the government issued a decree closing schools for the year.



December 19, 1936

DETROIT—Will there be a nationwide automobile industry strike soon?

There is a striking parallel between Detroit today and Akron, the rubber center of the world, of one year ago, when the United Rubber Workers of America began an industrial unionization campaign simultaneously with evidences of wide-spread dissatisfaction.

Bitter and resentful of speed-up and wage reductions, Akron rubber workers' protests took a then novel form—that of sit-down strikes.

Inside of three weeks, over 30,000 rubber workers had been directly involved in sit-downs. Each of the big plants, Firestone, Goodyear, and Goodyear was shut down! The wave of sit-downs culminated in the successful five-week's Goodyear strike won primarily by the indomitable courage and militancy of the rank and file.

2 Kentucky miners killed amid bosses' profit drive

BY ANITA OLSSON

Two miners, Samuel Lindsey, 23, and Darrel Winstead, 47, were the 27th and 28th miners killed this year in the U.S. amid the bosses' drive for profit at the expense of workers' safety. In coal mining alone the number of on-the-job fatalities so far this year is 17.

On October 28 the two men were crushed by a collapsed highwall that gave way when they were blasting, a surface mining method involving explosives, at Armstrong Coal's Equality Mine in western Kentucky.

The mine was cited for nine safety violations in 2010 and six so far this year by the Mine Safety and Health Administration.

The men were contractors employed by the Mine Equipment and Mill Supply Company in Kentucky. As recently as July this year MSHA cited

the company for safety violations that were considered likely to result in a serious injury or death. During the past two years the company has been cited 50 times for work at different coal mines and quarries.

Earlier in October another two miners were killed: Richard Coots at the Owico Energy Mine #1 in Letcher County in Kentucky and Charles McIntine at Consolidation Coal Company's Shoemaker mine in Marshall County, W. Va.

The death of Lindsey and Winstead came just a few days after the United Mine Workers of America released its report on the Upper Big Branch Mine explosion in April last year in Montcoal, W. Va. Twenty-nine miners were killed, the worst U.S. mine disaster in 40 years. The report puts the total responsibility on the owners Massey Energy.



AP Photo/Jeff Gentner

Rescue workers conduct drilling operations in failed attempt to save 29 trapped miners at Massey Energy's Upper Big Branch Mine in Montcoal, W. Va., after explosion in April 2010. The company must be held accountable, says recent report by United Mine Workers.

"Massey Energy must be held accountable for the death of the 29 miners," stated the report. "Theirs is not a guilt of omission but rather, based on the facts publicly available, the Union

believes that Massey Energy and its management were on notice of and recklessly tolerated mining conditions that were so egregious that the resulting disaster constituted a massive slaughter in the nature of an industrial homicide."

Upper Big Branch was a nonunion mine, but workers asked the UMW to represent them in the MSHA investigation into the disaster. The UMW requested public hearings, but this was denied by MSHA, which instead conducted private interviews. Both union representatives and miners' families were excluded.

According to MSHA, as of the end of October, 720 miners have been killed on the job in the U.S. since 2000—an average of 65 per year.

Mine roof collapse shows need for union

Continued from front page

seeking to improve safety conditions enters its sixth month.

"The inspector was in the mine to re-examine a part of the belt entry where the roof had fallen the week before," Greg Fort, a miner at Willow Lake, explained to the *Militant*. For that collapse MSHA officials cited the company for not having a proper roof control plan. While there, the official found another roof fall, this time blocking an escape way.

"When he saw the second fall he went outside to talk with his office and MSHA decided to close the entire mine," Fort said.

"Since 2007 the mine has experienced 79 roof falls," Coal Mine Safety and Health Administrator Kevin Stricklin told local news media TV station WSIL.

"If you go back to 2005," said Fort, "there have been more than 140 roof falls in the mine."

Last year a foreman was killed when he was run over by a ram car. That same year Peabody was fined \$174,000 at Willow Lake for unsafe conditions, including inadequate roof support, and excessive coal dust, which can lead to explosions.

In May a National Labor Relations Board administrative law judge ordered Peabody Energy to turn over files requested by MSHA in 2010 on accidents, injuries and work-related illnesses at Willow Lake and Air Quality Number 1 in Knox County, Indiana. Peabody has thus far refused to comply.

On May 19-20, workers at the mine voted by a 219-206 margin to be represented by the United Mine Workers of

America. Miners' main concerns relate to safety and the lack of any current pension plan and are demanding the right to organize a union safety committee.

Peabody has refused to recognize the union and appealed the vote, accusing UMW officers of engaging in "intimidation and threats, coercion and fraudulent conduct" to win the election, and misrepresentation.

Lawyers for the UMW and NLRB have charged that Peabody committed violations of the National Labor Relations Act, including threatening to close the mine; the firing of a well-known union activist; and refusal to recognize and bargain with the union. The NLRB has petitioned to order Peabody to recognize the union. A hearing on the

NLRB petition and the bosses' appeal of the election ended September 30. A decision is still pending.

There are no union mines among the dozen in the area and only one in the entire state of Illinois.

After submitting a new roof control plan for MSHA approval, Willow Lake was allowed to begin operations again on the midnight shift November 4 with MSHA inspectors in the mine.

"A lot of people lost almost a week's pay because of the mine closure," Fort said. "The company was responsible for those roof falls. The workers should get paid. We're entitled to compensation in situations like this under Section 111 of the Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977."

Coal miners challenge bosses' racial discrimination in hiring

BY JOHN HAWKINS

On September 26 the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission filed a racial discrimination complaint on behalf of Shawn King and other Black workers who applied for jobs at River View Coal in Waverly, Ky.

Filed in the U.S. District Court for Western Kentucky, the complaint contends that since at least Aug. 1, 2008, River View Coal "has engaged in unlawful employment practices at its Waverly, Kentucky facility" by refusing "to hire Shawn King and a class of Black applicants because of their race."

The company, a subsidiary of Alliance Resource Partners, rejected an out-of-court settlement of the dispute. The fourth largest eastern U.S. coal producer, ARP has mines in Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, West Virginia and Maryland. The Kentucky mine opened in 2008 and reached full production the following year.

The company held two job fairs in August and September of 2008, EEOC attorney Aimee McFerren, told the *Militant*. King attended and applied for jobs at both. He applied again in

January 2010 and was never granted an interview.

King took courses in mining for two years and has four years experience as an underground miner, McFerren pointed out. He performed various tasks underground, including operating a scoop, shuttle car and roof bolter. Among the others are miners with as many as 15 years underground experience.

The company was taking applications from both experienced and inexperienced miners at the jobs fairs and continued to hire both over the next several years, said McFerren.

"The law requires that individuals be judged on the basis of their qualifications. The fact that these individuals were qualified for the positions—both the inexperienced miner positions and experienced miner positions—means they should have been given a fair chance to compete," she added.

The suit demands back pay, compensation and punitive damages be paid to King and other Black applicants, and a permanent injunction to prevent the company from engaging in future hiring discrimination.

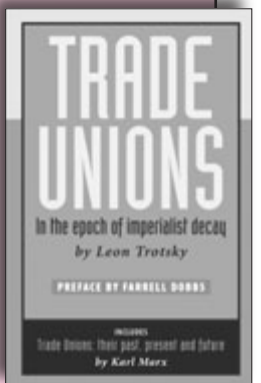
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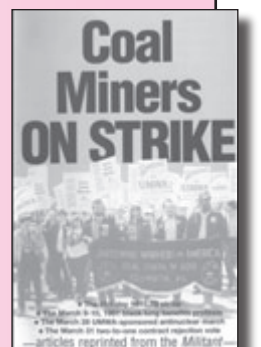


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by Andy Rose, Nancy Cole

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Indonesia gov't attempts to quell struggles in W. Papua

BY BOB AIKEN

SYDNEY, Australia—On October 19 more than 3,000 Indonesian troops and police broke up the final day of the Papuan People's Congress in Indonesia's easternmost province. They fired warning shots and beat and arrested hundreds of delegates. The following day six congress participants were found dead behind a nearby military post.

Some 5,000 participants from more than 200 tribes across Papua and West Papua attended the congress near the Papuan provincial capital Jayapura. The assault came after they raised the banned *Morning Star* flag and issued a declaration in support of independence. Indonesian authorities have charged five Papuan leaders with treason.

The Papuan struggle for independence has a long history. The territory was forcibly incorporated into Indonesia by the Suharto dictatorship in 1969. The area is currently admin-

istered as two provinces—Papua and West Papua. Following the end of the Suharto regime, greater autonomy was formally granted to Papua in 2001 and to West Papua in 2008. Most Papuans consider the two provinces to be one country called West Papua.

Last year large conferences and rallies were held rejecting the so-called autonomous status quo and calling for self-determination. They protested the dispossession and marginalization of the Papuan people on their own land and violence by Indonesian cops and military.

The congress took place as thousands of workers at the Freeport gold and copper mine in the central highlands of Indonesian Papua continued their strike for higher pay. Police killed two strikers in Timika October 7 when they fired on a strike rally confronting scabs being bused to the mine by the company.



Reuters/Muhamamd Yamin

Striking miners and supporters in Indonesia's Papua province October 17, 10 days after cops killed two miners, and two days before government attack on Papuan congress killed six.

The massive Freeport open pit mine has long been a focus of discontent because little of the vast wealth it generates stays in Papua, while operations are carried out in a way that leaves

large-scale environmental damage in its wake.

The strike by almost all of the 9,000 “nonstaff” workers employed at the mine began September 15. There are also 3,000 staff workers and another 10,000 employed by contractors there.

The *Jakarta Globe* reported October 18, a week after the police shootings in Timika, that thousands of strikers were blockading the roads to the mine. Along with damage to the pipeline that carries ore concentrate to the mine's port, the strike has affected production enough for Freeport to suspend its contracts.

Members of seven tribes carrying traditional spears and bows have joined the workers in blocking the roads in support of the strike and with their own demands over land rights and distribution of the mine's profits.

The mining giant is now offering a 30 percent pay hike. Strikers are demanding substantially more though: minimum pay, for instance, to rise from \$1.50 to \$7.50 per hour.

Since 1995 Freeport has paid more than \$74 million to some 3,000 Indonesian police troops deployed at the mine to protect the company's interests, bosses admit.

While most of the strikers are native Papuans, workers also come from other parts of Indonesia. This is the first time the entire union workforce at the mine has gone on strike, union spokesperson Juli Parorongan told ABC Radio the day cops opened fire on the strikers.

Sugar workers reject bosses contract for 3rd time

Continued from page 5

ing it would do so after the contract was approved.

American Crystal spokesman Brian Ingulsrud told the *Militant* he was surprised by the workers' rejection of what he called a “very fair offer.”

“The union is not being reasonable,” Ingulsrud said. “We are trying to adapt to a changing world, become more efficient.”

Asked about the meaning of “eligible” Ingulsrud told the *Militant* that it was a “total misunderstanding.” The new clause he said, is about “differentiating between those who normally work during the harvest time and those who don't.” Ingulsrud claimed the union never asked for clarification.

According to Brad Knapper, who is locked out from the Moorhead, Minn., plant and a member of the union's negotiating team, the company refused to discuss the union's counterproposal, which included 20 modifications to the company's concessions demands.

The company is pressing to weaken job security and increase health care costs for workers. Their contract proposal includes a clause saying the higher health insurance costs could be raised even further “from time to

time.”

American Crystal is demanding the elimination of retiree medical benefits and one less week of vacation for new hires, according to Gayln Olson, president of BCTGM Local 372. Among other concessions, Olsen said, the company's contract proposal would end seniority as the criteria for recalling laid-off workers and force the union to pay arbiter fees and expenses if it loses a grievance.

‘Have to draw the line somewhere’

“In previous contracts the union made lots of concessions to maintain our health care,” said Ciro de la Garza, from the Hillsboro plant. “You have to draw the line somewhere.”

American Crystal enjoys tacit backing from local politicians.

The North Dakota Senate Delayed Bills Committee blocked a union-backed bill allowing locked-out workers from the two American Crystal plants in North Dakota to receive unemployment benefits to come before the special session of the legislature.

Federal and local politicians were largely silent for months following the bosses lockout of 1,300 workers.

After the contract rejection, U.S. senators Democrat Kent Conrad and Republican John Hoeven of North

Dakota, and U.S. senators Al Franken and Amy Klobuchar and Congressman Collin Peterson, all Democrats from Minnesota, called for “both sides” to get back to the negotiating table.

Conrad, a senior member of the Senate's Agriculture Committee, expressed worry that if the dispute drags on too long, it could affect putting together a new federal farm bill after the current one expires in 2012, according to the November 3 *Plains Daily Report*.

For the first time, Conrad showed some concern with the company's obstinate position. The “company needs to think long and hard about the consequences, about the implications of their strategy,” he told the *Grand Forks Herald*.

“I'm not sure if that's a threat or not,” Ingulsrud responded, according to the *Herald*. “We've always had a very good working relationship with Senator Conrad. . . . He understands we need to position the company for future success.”

The union continues to organize support and get out their side of the story. At a recent regional meeting of the BCTGM in Indianapolis more than \$6,000 was raised. The union hall in Grand Forks has also received dozens of donations totaling close to \$35,000 over the past week from BCTGM locals from across the U.S. and Canada.

Boilermakers Local 647 in Ramsey, Minn., sent a check for \$5,000; checks for \$1,000 each came from the American Federation of Teachers Staff Union in Washington, D.C., and Local 1163 of the United Steelworkers in Colquet, Minn.

A union-organized food drive has been crucial for sustaining locked-out workers denied unemployment benefits in North Dakota.

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.



Militant/ Natalie Morrison

Workers at union hall, Hillsboro, N.D., after rejecting American Crystal's latest contract.

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Roosevelt's 'New Deal' was assault on workers' rights

Below is an excerpt from Labor's Giant Step by Art Preis, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for November. It deals with the false claim that the Democratic Party administration of President Franklin Roosevelt gave American labor "the right to organize." This claim is based on enactment in June 1933 of the National Industrial Recovery Act. The piece below is taken from the chapter "War on labor under the NRA." Copyright © 1964 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY ART PREIS

Roosevelt himself, in a radio appeal for the NRA, on July 24, 1933, had stated: "The workers of this country have rights under this law which cannot be taken from them, and nobody will be permitted to whittle them away but, on the other hand, no aggression is necessary now to attain these rights . . . The principle that applies to the employer applies to the workers as well and I ask you workers to cooperate in the same spirit."

By "aggression," of course, Roosevelt meant strikes. But the workers were not for cooperation with the employers and government in maintaining wages of \$12 to \$15 a week, "merit clauses" and recognition of company unions. The workers resorted to the



"Silk Shock Troops," young people touring the silk strike area in the 1930s, booing scabs crossing the picket line in Paterson, N.J. Some 50,000 silk workers in Paterson and elsewhere struck against National Industrial Recovery Act-imposed minimum wages of \$12 to \$13 a week.

only weapon which had ever enforced their rights and improved their conditions—strike action. In the six months following enactment of NRA, the workers were forced to commit a host of "aggressions" in an attempt to get the most elementary rights; first of all, union recognition. The number of strikes totaled 1,695 in 1933 compared to 841 in 1932 and the number of strikers almost quadrupled in the same period, from 324,000 to 1,168,000.

Some 35,000 members of Hillman's Amalgamated Clothing Workers were forced to strike in New York City against the code minimums proposed. The 60,000 dressmakers of David Dubinsky's International Ladies Garment Workers Union followed suit. A dozen or more strikes flared in auto. Fifty thousand silk workers in Paterson and elsewhere went out against NRA-proposed minimums of \$12 to \$13 a week. More than 70,000 miners stayed out of the pits in August and September.

If the workers had "rights under this law which cannot be taken from them," as Roosevelt claimed, the coal miners couldn't find what these rights were. The murderous opposition of the employers to unions is typified in the following account of one event in

the strike of coal miners in steel company captive mines of Western Pennsylvania. The August 5, 1933 *Militant* reported:

"The miners' wives from the outset joined directly in the battle taking the blows with their husbands and giving blows as the powerful picket line extended over a far-flung territory. One miner is reported killed in typical Pennsylvania steel trust fashion: shot down in cold blood by company plug-uglies while carrying the American flag at the head of a picket line. Several other miners are expected to die from wounds received and many are suffering from lighter injuries."

The treacherous role of both Roosevelt and his labor lieutenants was also shown in this mine strike. Roosevelt ordered an investigation of "communism" in the strike. He also ordered the mine union leaders to end the strike. Philip Murray, then a United Mine Workers (UMW) vice-president, told the *New York Times* of his interview with the President.

"The President then said to me, 'Philip, I want you to get these men back to work.' I replied, 'If there is anything in God's world that I can do for you, I will be glad to try.'" Concerning Roosevelt's command Mur-

ray further told the *Times*: "Any union or union officials who refuse to obey their command will not live long."

Murray accepted an agreement promising "union conditions" but not union recognition in the U.S. Steel mines. It took seven years and another big strike to get a union contract in the captive mines.

What followed the signing of the NRA was not the recognition of labor's rights but the most ferocious assault on American labor in its history. Labor was forced into what was a virtual civil war fought on three thousand miles of picket lines for five years. Hundreds of workers were killed, thousands wounded, tens of thousands arrested or otherwise victimized from 1933 to 1938.

Summarizing six months of "New Deal" atrocities against labor, from July 1, 1933 to January 1, 1934, the American Civil Liberties Union charged that "too many employers confuse Roosevelt's New Deal with Coolidge's New Capitalism.

"The methods of that era are used flagrantly to smash labor's efforts to organize despite the NRA. At no time has there been such widespread violations of workers' rights by injunctions, troops, private police, deputy sheriffs, labor spies and vigilantes.

"More than 15 strikers have been killed, 200 injured and hundreds arrested since July 1. More than 40 injunctions of sweeping character have been issued . . . Troops have been called out in half a dozen strike districts. Criminal syndicalist charges are being used against active strike leaders. The National Labor Board and its regional boards (setup under NRA) have lacked the will or the power to overcome the defiance of employers. Labor's rights to meet, organize and strike have been widely violated by employers who fear neither General Johnson nor Attorney General Cummings. Only where labor has been well organized and has struck with determination have its rights been respected." (*New York Times*, February 11, 1934.)

In 1934 there were to be 52 strikers murdered and the toll was to mount until the climactic Memorial Day massacre in the 1937 Little Steel strike.

November

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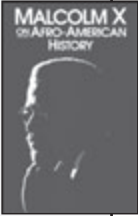
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Imperialist hands off Iran!

Working people around the world should oppose the threats from the Israeli government to launch an air assault on Iran’s nuclear facilities, as well as those by the imperialist powers of Washington, London and Paris to intensify their campaign of sanctions and the hardship it creates in order to compel Tehran to abandon its nuclear program.

The Iranian government says its program of uranium enrichment is for nuclear power generation. Expanding electrification is a necessary step for any country to advance industry and agriculture as well as medicine and culture. Imperialism’s drive to block this—whether in Iran, North Korea or anywhere else in the world—serves to maintain the economic underdevelopment and dependence of semicolonial countries.

Washington, London and especially Paris are utterly reliant on nuclear power generation, and can be expected to be ever more so in the future. They, along with Tel Aviv, all possess nuclear weapons. And Washington is the only power to ever use them, when they incinerated hundreds of thousands in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

Who are they to dictate who can develop nuclear technology?

A military strike on Iran is counter to the interests of working people in Iran, Israel, throughout the entire region and beyond. The renewed discussion within the Israeli ruling class on airstrikes flow from their deep concern about recent developments in the Middle East and North Africa that threaten “stability” as they see it. Among these are mass mobilizations in the region, from Tunisia to Egypt, where oppressive regimes were overthrown, to large demonstrations in Israel itself, which have involved both Jews and Arabs, to ongoing protests in Syria. These developments are opening political space for toilers in city and country to begin to organize and defend their own class interests.

A strike on Iran would inevitably lead to retaliation and war, with devastating consequences for working people. It would also serve to close the space workers and farmers have been fighting to use in both countries and the broader region. Two years ago, amid a drive by imperialists for harsher sanctions against Iran, it was popular protests to defend and expand democratic rights there that helped stay the imperialists’ hands. It’s further developments along these lines, especially in Iran and Israel, that could more than anything else push back the dangerous march toward war today.

European Union begins to unravel

Continued from front page

by the country’s workers protested plans for a new, third round of austerity. Greek parliament nevertheless approved the measures October 20, which included higher sales taxes, job cuts and slashes in social services.

Days after the 50 percent write-down deal was announced, Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou called for a national referendum to put the agreement to a vote.

The announcement was met with shock and outrage from the propertied rulers and their governments across the continent. German and French officials summoned Papandreou to “crisis talks” November 1. “Europe’s leaders, making it plain that they’ve reached the end of their patience with Greece,” the November 3 *Wall Street Journal* reported, “demanded that the beleaguered nation declare whether it wants to stay in the euro currency union—or risk going it alone in a dramatic secession.”

Impending loans to Greece were suspended and pressure brought to bear. “The treaty doesn’t foresee an exit from the eurozone without exiting the EU,” said European Commission spokeswoman Karolina Kottova. Seventeen of the 27 members of the EU comprise the eurozone.

Under heavy pressure from all sides, Papandreou dismissed the top military brass and replaced them with officers chosen by his defense minister. This put nerves further on edge in a country that was ruled in the 1960s and ’70s by a military dictatorship.

Papandreou soon backed off, announcing he would no longer seek a referendum, but would enter negotiations to replace his administration with a “national unity” regime, to be run by a “neutral” technocrat. Negotiations over the new government have stalled in bitter infighting. “The argument was not over who could claim the cabinet positions, but who could avoid taking them, particularly the finance ministry,” wrote the *New York Times*.

While this move temporarily eased concern about an impending bankruptcy of the Greek government, it has had no effect on the spreading crisis across the continent.

Debt crisis in Italy

Attention is now focused on Italy, whose total debt stands at 120 percent of GDP, the second highest in Europe. Yields on 10-year government bonds rose to “the highest levels since the adoption of the single euro currency 10 years ago,” reported the *Times*, reflecting falling investor confidence in the Italian economy.

Italy is the third largest economy in the eurozone, behind only Germany and France, and the eighth largest economy worldwide.

“Italy has nearly 2 trillion euros [\$2.6 trillion] in outstanding debt,” reported *Stratfor*. “An Italian credit cutoff would trigger a financial meltdown across Europe that would both be immediate and catastrophic.”

On November 8 Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi announced that he would resign, after a parliamentary vote showed he no longer commanded a ruling majority. However, he made the offer conditional on parliament adopting a new, deep austerity package.

This roiling crisis highlights the internal contradictions tearing apart the European Union. Ostensibly set up to give the continent’s differing capitalist countries a mutually beneficial combination of free trade internally and protectionism against the United States and Japan, the arrangement was to the greatest advantage of the strongest states, especially Germany.

Initially the eurozone pact provided cheap credit to the weaker capitalist regimes, which enabled them to expand. However, it did so by driving up their debt, which is now increasingly unpayable. As part of the eurozone, they don’t have the option of devaluing their currency, as capitalist governments often do under these circumstances to reduce their debt burden with its own ruinous consequences for working people. Instead they are forced to implement immediate and harsh austerity, cuts in spending, and heavy taxes, which in turn serve to accelerate the contraction of production and trade.

Some Greek politicians are rebelling against the stranglehold of the EU and Germany, urging the country to declare bankruptcy and reinstate the Greek national currency, the drachma.

The developments are rooted in the worldwide drop in capitalist production. For decades the propertied rulers have faced declining profitability, based on the downward curve of capital development and sharpening competition for markets, low-cost labor and raw materials.

As a result investment in expanding plants and production receded as capitalists increasingly put their money in complicated forms of speculative debt, especially leveraged trade in derivatives.

In Germany the crisis is starting to grind down its export-driven economy. The government announced November 7 that new manufacturing orders fell 4.3 percent in September, the biggest drop in more than two years, with orders from within the euro zone falling sharply.

These are the beginning stages in the unraveling of the European Union. Deepening contradictions drive the individual capitalist states to turn increasingly toward national sovereignty—their own currency, their borders and their army—to shore up their class rule.

Airline, customs, port workers strike in Kuwait

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In the oil rich kingdom of Kuwait, a country the size of New Jersey that’s a center for U.S. military forces in the region, workers have organized a series of strikes and protest actions over the past several months demanding higher pay and better working conditions.

Some 4,000 airline workers employed by the state-owned Kuwait Airways Corporation struck for one day October 24, winning a 30 percent wage boost in basic pay.

Two weeks earlier 3,000 customs workers struck for two days in mid-October, disrupting sea, land and air transportation. Several tankers loaded with oil for export were unable to get clearance for shipment. The action also stranded 1,000 trucks carrying food imports at border points, reported al-Alarabiya.

The work stoppage was called off October 12 after the government promised to “urgently” look into the union’s demands, including pay raises of up to 150 percent.

The action was inspired by strikes in Kuwait’s oil industry in September in which workers won pay raises of up to 66 percent from the state. This encouraged other strikes.

Hundreds of workers began two-hour work stoppages at three ports September 25. “We will continue doing this every day until our demands for better pay and working conditions are met,” Ali Al Sukoni, head of the ports union, told *Khaleej Times*.

Several dozen bank workers rallied in front of the Kuwait Central Bank October 12. Firefighters have staged a sit-in protest against a mandatory fingerprinting system.

Workers employed by privately owned oil companies rallied in front of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation in Kuwait City September 21 demanding equal treatment with those employed by government agencies.

Salem Al-Ajmi, chairman of the Union of Private Oil Sector Workers, told *Arab Times Kuwait* that about 5,000 workers employed by private oil companies are being paid late and have no health insurance, unlike their counterparts in the public sector.

Washington maintains seven army bases in Kuwait and one joint base with the Kuwaiti Air Force. With the majority of the 33,000 U.S. troops in Iraq scheduled to be withdrawn by the end of the year, the Obama administration is considering plans to keep large numbers of them in Kuwait “as a backup or rotational training force for Iraq,” reported *NavyTimes*. The plan also includes being ready to rush U.S. forces back into Iraq and storing in Kuwait its “‘pre-positioned’ war materiel,” an unnamed Pentagon official told Associated Press.

Out of Kuwait’s population of 2.9 million, only 1.2 million are citizens. About 1.7 million immigrants make up the majority of the workforce. Immigrant workers make less than half the wages paid to Kuwaiti citizens and are only allowed to join unions—as non-voting members—after five years of residency in the country.



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