

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

**Public workers strike  
against British austerity**  
— PAGE 6

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 75/NO. 46 DECEMBER 19, 2011

## Berlin seeks control over indebted EU governments

BY JOHN STUDER

Capitalist governments across Europe are frantically seeking a way to slow the crisis gripping the eurozone and the rest of the continent, the wobbling of area banks burdened by extensive holdings of government debt they cannot sell, as well as the downturn in manufacturing production and trade in Europe and around the world.

In preparation for European Union crisis summit meetings December 8-9, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, accompanied by French President Nicolas Sarkozy, issued an ultimatum demanding “fiscal unity,” which means centralized EU control—de facto German control—over national budgets, forcing austerity on those mired in debt, with automatic sanctions to give the plan teeth.

Germany is the strongest European economy and the main beneficiary of the eurozone setup. The protectionist EU provided Germany with expanded export markets and investment op-

**Continued on page 6**

## Ohio Steelworkers fight lockout by Cooper Tire

Reject bosses’ concession contract



Militant/Laura Anderson

Steelworkers picketing Cooper Tire plant in Findlay, Ohio, Dec. 5 wave to honking supporters as they drive by plant. Hundreds joined “human chain” circling the plant three days earlier.

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

FINDLAY, Ohio, Dec. 2—Hundreds of United Steelworkers Local 207L members, their families and supporters turned out for a “human chain,” lining the sidewalks surrounding the big Cooper Tire and Rubber

complex here today. Almost every car driver that passed by honked their horn in support and passengers rolled down windows in the cold air and waved to the crowd.

Cooper Tire locked out 1,050 workers after they rejected the company’s “last, best” contract proposal Nov. 27 by a margin of 606 to 305.

“All I want is a fair contract,” David Morin, a union steward who has worked at the plant for five years, told the *Militant*. Morin was accompanied by his wife and two young daughters.

The three-year contract proposal would establish a new five-tier job classification and wage scale and new

**Continued on page 3**

## Rulers of US, UK tighten imperialists’ noose on Iran

BY TONY HUNT

LONDON—Washington, London and other imperialist powers have seized on the Nov. 29 sacking of the British Embassy by protesters in Tehran to mount unprecedented pressure to force the Iranian government to abandon its nuclear program.

The imperialists’ more than 30-year deep hostility toward Iran is rooted in the overthrow of the U.S.-and British-backed monarchy by a popular revolution in 1979.

The storming of the embassy, providing the imperialists with a pretext for tightening the screws, occurred one day after the Iranian parliament voted to expel the British ambassador and downgrade diplomatic relations between the two countries, in response to coordinated economic sanctions announced Nov. 21 by London, Washington, Ottawa and the European Union.

That earlier round of sanctions followed the release last month of a U.N. report that provided some details backing claims that Tehran has been pursuing nuclear weapons technology. The Iranian government maintains its nuclear program is for energy production and medical research.

All U.K. financial institutions were banned from doing business with Iran, including with the Iranian central bank. Ottawa banned the export of all goods used in Iran’s petrochemical, oil and gas industries, and

**Continued on page 9**

## Dozens of unions organize rally to support locked-out sugar workers

BY NATALIE MORRISON

SOUTH ST. PAUL, Minn.—Some 120 people turned out for a spirited rally and fund-raiser Nov. 29 in solidarity with 1,300 locked-out sugar workers in the Upper Midwest.

The event was held at the United Food and Commercial Workers Lo-

cal 1189 hall. “The locked-out sugar workers are always welcome,” said Jennifer Christensen, secretary-treasurer of Local 1189, as she opened the meeting. More than 30 area unions, the Minneapolis and St. Paul Regional Labor Federations, and the Minnesota

**Continued on page 9**



Above: Militant/Diana Newberry; Inset: Scott Ripplinger

Becki Jacobsen (above), a union “sugar beet ambassador,” and fellow American Crystal worker Deb Kostrzewski (inset), active in union’s food drive, speak at Dec. 3 meeting with Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton in Moorhead. “Nobody can tell us what we can say or do,” Kostrzewski said. “We are not going to shut up—we are going to keep fighting.”



## Minn. art exhibit by Cuban 5 prisoner wins support for case

BY FRANK FORRESTAL  
AND LEAH MORRISON

MINNEAPOLIS—Some 300 people came to a series of events in November connected with the “Humor from my Pen” art exhibit of political cartoons by Gerardo Hernández, one of the Cuban Five. The five are Cuban revolutionaries incarcerated in the U.S., four of them for more than 13 years now.

The most important feature of the monthlong exhibit, sponsored by the Minnesota Cuba Committee, was the number of new people learning about the political frame-up of the Cuban Five for the first time.

Many also learned about Washington’s decades-long effort to punish the Cuban people for making and successfully defending their socialist revolution, of which the Cuban Five are examples.

Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González were arrested Sept. 12, 1998, in Miami. They were framed up by the U.S.

**Continued on page 7**

### Also Inside:

- New Zealand: locked-out meat workers win support 2
- Clinton’s visit to Myanmar aimed at countering China 4
- Anti-Syria sanctions part of campaign against Iran 4
- U.S. Embassy protest in London: ‘Free Cuban 5’ 7



# New Zealand: Locked-out meat workers win support

BY FELICITY COGGAN

MARTON, New Zealand—Five firefighters from the nearby city of Whanganui joined the early morning picket here Nov. 29 to show support for 100 meat workers locked out since Oct. 19 by Canterbury Meat Packers Rangitikei. The workers, members of the New Zealand Meat Workers Union, are resisting company demands for up to 20 percent pay cuts, shift changes and eliminating allowances for cleaning gear at breaks and for night shift.

The previous day workers rejected a new offer from the company by a 64-3 margin, union organizer Robbie Magge told the *Militant*.

“The only movement from the company’s last offer is that they are offering to give back 2.5 percent of the pay cut in April 2013 rather than 2 percent in October 2013,” said Helen Kelly, president of the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions, in a press release. “The workers have offered to sacrifice 10 percent of their pay despite their average annual income being only around \$45,000 [US\$34,500].”

Plant manager Darryl Mackenzie told the *Wanganui Chronicle* Nov. 3 the cuts were necessary for the plant’s viability because it faces difficulties sourcing stock. The lamb crop this year is the second smallest since 1956. The company did not return calls from the *Militant*.

Bosses are operating the plant with nonunion workers who have signed the contract. Magee estimates they are processing less than 75 percent of its normal tally. Most lamb plants around New Zealand are not yet in full sea-

sonal production because of the stock shortage. A small second shift has just begun.

The company stopped the kill for a day Nov. 17, in anticipation of an expanded picket line. Fifty Meat Workers Union participants attending a national conference joined the 200-strong picket, along with 15 members of the Maritime Union.

On Nov. 24, 40 Firefighter union delegates joined the picket during their national conference.

The Maritime Union has donated \$14,000. The Firefighters have given \$5,000. Workers are organizing “bucket runs” to collect money in local towns, said TeRangi Wroe, 37, a laborer on the slaughter floor.

The strikers have begun to reach out for support internationally. On Nov. 20, Amanda Chase, who works in the plant’s boning room, flew to London to speak at the Unite union’s national meat workers conference.

The New Zealand Council of Trade Unions has announced fund-raising pickets at McDonald’s around the country Dec. 3. The parent company of Canterbury Meat Packers, ANZCO Foods,



Militant/Felicity Coggan

Members of New Zealand Meat Workers Union locked out by Canterbury Meat Packers Rangitikei picket McDonald’s, a main company customer, in Palmerston North, Nov. 29.

supplies meat patties to McDonald’s.

“It’s going to be hard from here,” said Trevor Collins, 53, a butcher at the plant, “with Christmas, people will come under pressure from families.” He noted that the newspapers had a “general reluctance to print anything factual.” When he goes to the supermarket in his union T-shirt, people think he is on strike for a pay rise, he said.

Despite being locked out for six

weeks, workers remain determined. “We’re never going to take back what we’ve lost now,” said Tim Minchin, 51, a boner. “If we go back we’ll lose even more.”

Donations to the locked-out workers can be made by online transfer to account number: 38-9007-0894028-08, account name: Disputes Fund.

*Annalucia Vermunt contributed to this article.*

## California university students protest tuition hikes

BY ZACH LIDDLE AND BETSEY STONE

DAVIS, Calif.—Hundreds of University of California, Davis students convened on the campus quad here Nov. 28, next to the encampment of “Occupy UC Davis,” as part of a student strike and day of protest that coincided with a meeting

of the Board of Regents, the body that runs the UC system. They were joined by professors, campus workers and people from the community who turned out to demonstrate against the pepper spraying of students 10 days earlier by campus police and yet another threatened raise in tuition.

With chants of “No cuts, no fees, education must be free!” the students occupied Dutton Hall for the day. Many did not attend class and some professors cancelled classes or held them outside.

Last week an estimated 5,000 students crowded into the quad for a rally against the pepper spraying incident.

Amy Zink, who studies human development, said she is protesting because she and other students will not be able to afford any tuition increases. “You have to fight if you want change,” she said.

University of California tuition is now \$12,192 for California residents, more than twice what it was in 2005.

The *Militant* spoke with Tara Norwood and Francesca Moreno, two of the students who were pepper sprayed by campus police while protesting the cuts. “We were all peaceful,” Norwood said. “We were just sitting there and the police were not trapped.”

### ***The Working Class & the Transformation of Learning***

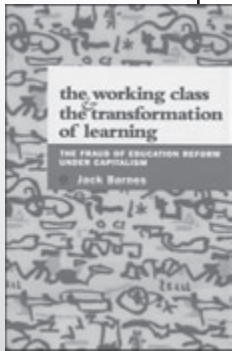
**The fraud of education reform under capitalism**

**by Jack Barnes**

“Until society is reorganized so that education is a human activity from the time we are very young until the time we die, there will be no education worthy of working, creating humanity. That is the historical truth.”

**\$3**

**Pathfinderpress.com**



## The Militant

Vol. 75/No. 46

Closing news date: December 7, 2011

Editor: Steve Clark

Managing editor: Doug Nelson

Business manager: Lea Sherman

Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Jim Carson, Naomi Craine, Harry D’Agostino, Seth Galinsky, John Hawkins, Emma Johnson, Jacob Perasso, John Studer, 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](mailto:themilitant@mac.com)

Website: [www.themilitant.com](http://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.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS: United States:** For

one year send \$35 to above address.

**Latin America, Caribbean:** For one year send \$85, drawn on a U.S. bank, to above address.

**Africa, Asia, and the Middle East:** For one year send \$85 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

**Canada:** For one year send Canadian \$45 to the Militant, 7107 St. Denis #204, Montreal, Quebec H2S 2S5.

**United Kingdom:** Send £26 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London, First Floor, 120 Bethnal Green Road (Entrance in Brick Lane), London, E2 6DG, England.

**Republic of Ireland and Continental Europe:** Send £85 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London at above address.

**France:** Send 76 euros for one year to Diffusion du Militant, P.O. Box 175, 23 rue Lecourbe, 75015 Paris.

**New Zealand:** Send NZ\$50 for one year to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland 1140, New Zealand.

**Australia:** Send A\$50 for one year to P.O. Box 164 Campsie, NSW 2194, Australia.

**Pacific Islands:** Send NZ\$50 for one year to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland 1140, New Zealand.

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

# THE MILITANT

*‘Educated us about other struggles’*

*“The ‘Militant’ helped get the word out about our struggle and educated us about other struggles at the same time.”*

—Stephen Lech  
United Steelworkers Local 7-669 trustee. In 2010-2011, fought lockout by Honeywell, Metropolis, Ill.



Militant/Jacob Perasso

## SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

### NEW READERS

☐ \$5 for 12 issues

### RENEWAL

☐ \$10 for 12 weeks

☐ \$20 for 6 months

☐ \$35 for 1 year

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

UNION/SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION \_\_\_\_\_

CLIP AND MAIL TO THE MILITANT,  
306 W. 37TH ST., 10TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10018.

12 weeks of the *Militant* outside the U.S.: Australia and the Pacific, A\$8 • United Kingdom, £3 • Canada, Can\$6 • Caribbean and Latin America, US\$10 • Continental Europe, £10 • France, 12 euros • New Zealand, NZ\$7 • All other areas, US\$16 (Send payment to addresses listed in business information box)



# Shut out of terminal, ILWU prepares protest of first ship

BY MARY MARTIN

LONGVIEW, Wash.—“The union will organize a large protest the day EGT brings in their ship,” ILWU Local President Dan Coffman, told the *Militant*. “We have pledges of support to be here from many unions and organizations.”

The International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 21 is engaged in a battle against union busting by EGT Development, which has refused to hire ILWU members at its grain terminal in violation of an agreement between the union and the Port of Longview.

EGT has hired members of Operating Engineers Union Local 701 through a subcontractor under inferior conditions and without a contract. Since June the ILWU has maintained 24-hour picket lines in front of the terminal.

The company is moving ahead with plans to bring in its first grain ship in the coming weeks.

Coast Guard officers and representatives of the River Pilots Association leadership crossed the ILWU picket line Nov. 29 to meet with EGT, according to Coffman.

“The River Pilots Association representative actually called the union hall here to state they were going to cross our picket lines because they were under Oregon state regulations to meet with EGT on preparations to bring a ship here,”

said Coffman.

“We are a professional organization of independent contractors,” Paul Amos, president of the Columbia River Pilots Association, told the *Militant*. “We are not a labor organization in the traditional sense. Technically we may have crossed the ILWU picket line, but not to go to work in there. We were asked by the Coast Guard to meet them and EGT for the purpose of discussing safety. . . . The Coast Guard and Homeland Security will be overseeing the operation.”

Local 21 as been reaching out for solidarity from working people and other unions.

Byron Jacobs, 28, secretary-treasurer here visited members of the International Longshore Association Local 1422 in Charleston, S.C., Nov. 25-26.

In September Ken Riley, president of ILA Local 1422, visited Longview to bring solidarity. He joined union actions against cop brutality and arrests of union members following Sept. 7-8 union protests at the terminal.

The ILA represents maritime workers on the East Coast, Gulf Coast, Great Lakes and rivers. The ILWU organizes workers in the same industry on the West Coast, Alaska and Hawaii.

“The ILA knows all about fighting union busting and police attacks from their own experience,” Jacobs told the *Militant*, referring to the ILA members’



Courtesy ILWU Local 21/Dawn DesBrisay

East and West Coast longshore union leaders in front of EGT grain terminal in Longview, Wash., during September visit. From left, Byron Jacobs, ILWU Local 21 secretary-treasurer, Longview; Ken Riley, ILA Local 1422 president, Charleston, S.C.; Dan Coffman, Local 21 president; Mark Bass, ILA Local 1410 president, Mobile, Ala.; Jake Whiteside, Local 21 vice president.

five-month battle in 2000 against union-busting efforts by Nordana Shipping Lines at the Port of Charleston.

## ‘Inspired by Charleston fight’

Hundreds of police attacked members of the ILA when they picketed a Nordana ship in January 2000. Leaders of the union were then framed up on “riot charges.” Through a determined struggle—which included joining with thousands of others to demand removal of the Confederate flag from the state capitol—the shipping company was compelled to hire union workers and charges against the union leaders were dropped.

“When I visited the union hall in

Charleston Nov. 25, I saw all the ILA history displayed in photos on the wall.” Jacobs told the *Militant*. “Ken Riley introduced me to ILA members gathered for their noon hiring hall session and explained how the police had assaulted me and other union members and supporters after we protested union busting.

“I told them we in ILWU Local 21 were inspired by what they went through in Charleston and that we had learned from their experiences. I was immediately bombarded with questions from union members who wanted to know the full details.

“The next day Ken gave me a tour of Charleston and showed me the docks where the ILA battles took place,” continued Jacobs. “He also showed me the old movie theater that had been segregated with a ‘whites only’ section as part of the racist set up at the time he was growing up.

“My great-grandfather, a Lumbee Indian in my hometown of Pembroke, N.C., was one of hundreds of Lumbee who in 1958 ran the Ku Klux Klan out of town. The Klan had come there to have a show of force against intermarriage among Indians and people of other races. I’ve seen a photo that shows him displaying the flag he captured from the Klan prior to burning it at a powwow.”

“This visit was a very eye opening experience,” Jacobs said. “It shows us the support we have everywhere.”

A solidarity meeting has been called to support ILWU Local 21 on Dec. 10. The meeting will be held at the Seattle Labor Temple, 2800 First Ave at 5 p.m. It is sponsored by the Martin Luther King County Labor Council; Pride At Work, AFL-CIO; and other groups.

# Steelworkers fight lockout by Cooper Tire

Continued from front page

productivity standards that must be met to retain any particular job. Those hired more than two years ago would retain their wages until they changed or are forced into another job, at which time they would make the new rate regardless of seniority or past wages.

The contract would also replace pension benefits with a 401(k) plan for those hired in the last two years; reduce vacation time, particularly for new hires; and pay all new hires in production \$13 for up to two years, regardless of their job. To sell the concessions, the company is including a bonus program for reaching its profit targets beginning in 2013 and a signing “bonus” of \$2,500.

“They shut down the plant for Thanksgiving and when we came on Monday there were 20 or so guards in the parking lot,” Don McLane, a tire builder at Cooper for 20 years, explained on the picket line. “They said the holiday has been extended. By 4 p.m. the company said we were locked out.”

“They are trying to take too much at one time,” said Terry Sheridan, member of USW Local 207L and a snow splitter operator at the plant for 36 years.

Cooper Tire, headquartered here, is the fourth largest tire producer in the U.S., with plants in 10 countries.

## Arkansas plant authorizes strike

At the Cooper Tire plant in Texarkana, Ark., members of USW Local 752L voted Oct. 14 to authorize a strike. Their contract expires Jan. 17, 2012.

Many Local 207L members know about the lockout by American Crystal Sugar of 1,300 workers in North Dakota, Minnesota and Iowa because that fight and their own struggle were featured on the Dec. 1 broadcast of MSNBC TV’s “The Ed Show,” anchored by Ed Schultz.

“We want to be rewarded for bringing this company back to profitability,” USW Local 207L President Rod Nelson said on “The Ed Show” via satellite from the union hall. “Three years ago, our company was in dire straits. They lost \$219 million. . . . We offered the company \$30 million in concessions.”

On Dec. 6 Cooper Tire escalated its attack on the union by bringing in 12 vanloads of temporary replacement workers in two shifts, roughly 100-150 total scabs, according to Robert

Greer, coordinator for the union local’s Rapid Response and an electrician at the plant for 22 years.

The company plans to be back to full production within 30 days, Chris Ostrander, president of Cooper’s North American operations, told the *Toledo Blade*. Cooper Tire has not returned calls from the *Militant*.

“We are getting a lot of support from the community,” said Julie Barrett, a member of Local 207L and Women of Steel. “On the first day of the lockout firefighters drove fire trucks by the plant and blasted their sirens and brought chili to the union hall.” She said the local was very active in the campaign that recently defeated antilabor legislation in Ohio attacking public workers.

Many workers said it was a problem that new hires generally make lower wages. “There are people out here who are ready to retire in weeks who are standing with me and I haven’t been here six months,” said Joe Carr, 25. He joined the “human chain” with his father Mark Carr, who started working at the plant less than a year ago. Mark makes \$13 as a tow truck driver in the warehouse, and Joe up to \$17 with production bonuses.

“Last time we gave up concessions. It is unacceptable to ask for this again,” said Kevin Jenkins, who has worked in the plant for 12 years.

Messages and contributions can be sent to USW Local 207L, 1130 Summit St., Findlay, Ohio, 45840. Phone: (419) 422-4224. Donations to help provide Christmas presents to union members’ children should be earmarked “Christmas Fund.”

Josefina Otero contributed to this article.

—**MILITANT  
LABOR  
FORUMS**—

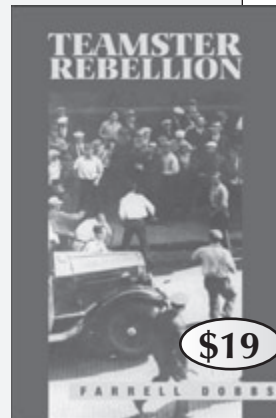
**CALIFORNIA**  
**San Francisco**  
**European Union Frays Under Lash of Capitalist Crisis.** Speaker: Betsey Stone, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 16, 7:30 p.m. 5482 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

**NEW YORK**  
**Manhattan**  
**Hands Off Iran!** Fri., Dec. 16, 7:30 p.m. 307 W. 36th St., 10th floor (use north elevators). Tel.: (212) 629-6649.

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**  
**The Struggles in the Middle East and North Africa: The Challenge of Forging Working-Class Leadership.** Speaker: Paul Pederson, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 16, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 143 Kennedy St. NW, Suite 15. Tel.: (202) 536-5080.

## Teamster Rebellion by Farrell Dobbs

The 1934 strikes that built the industrial union movement in Minneapolis and helped pave the way for the CIO, as told by a central leader of that battle. First in a four-volume series, which also includes *Teamster Power*, *Teamster Politics* and *Teamster Bureaucracy*.



**Pathfinderpress.com**



# Clinton's visit to Myanmar aimed at countering China

BY EMMA JOHNSON

Hillary Clinton's visit to Myanmar last week was the first in more than 50 years by a U.S. secretary of state. The U.S. rulers are responding to what they see as a new opening for them in their campaign to counter Chinese influence in the region and further isolate North Korea.

Clinton's visit was announced by President Barack Obama Nov. 18 in Bali, Indonesia. He said recent political developments in Myanmar showed "flickers of progress."

Washington has had sanctions on Myanmar, also known as Burma, since 1988. They include aid, travel, financial services, trade and investment. The U.S. government has no ambassador in the country.

Obama pointed to the release of political prisoners, relaxation of political repression, and moves toward putting a civilian face on the military junta as reasons for reestablishing contacts between the two countries.

Myanmar is one of the poorest countries in Asia. Two-thirds live in rural areas. It is rich in natural resources, including petroleum, natural gas, timber, tin, zinc and copper. The biggest trade partners are China, Thailand and India.

The country has been under military rule since 1962. The government organized parliamentary elections last year. Opposition forces described them as rigged, but were divided over whether to participate. One-quarter of the seats were appointed by the military.

In March this year Thein Sein, 65, a retired military officer, was sworn in as president in a "civilian" administration. He replaced Senior General Than Shwe, who has headed the government for the past 20 years. But Shwe retains the right to override civilian rule by decree.

The government recently lifted the house arrest of Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the bourgeois opposition party National League for Democracy and Myanmar's most well-known political figure. She received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991. Suu Kyi, who has been under house arrest for 15 of the last 21 years, has lived in the U.S. and the U.K. for long periods. In 1990 the NLD won elections with 82 percent of the vote, but the government

disregarded the result.

Obama called Suu Kyi before announcing Clinton's visit and Clinton met with her twice.

Suu Kyi welcomed Clinton's visit and the renewed U.S. interest in Myanmar. She has said NLD will stand in the next elections. The party boycotted the previous one.

Clinton also met with President Thein Sein. She informed the press she told Sein better relations with the United States are conditional on the government severing "illicit ties" with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which U.S. officials say includes the import of North Korean ballistic missile technology.

Clinton said Sein had given her "strong assurances" that the government of Myanmar will change its relationship with North Korea. Clinton said Washington will loosen some of the financial restrictions and support U.N. programs for health care and small businesses in Myanmar. But sanctions will remain and no ambassadors exchanged at this time, because "we want to see economic and political reform take hold."

## China a longtime Myanmar ally

China has long been Myanmar's most important ally. Both an oil and a gas pipeline are under construction connecting southwestern China with ports on Myanmar's west coast, which would shorten the travel route between Western China and the Indian Ocean by more than 1,800 miles.

Myanmar has recently moved to diversify its trade and political relations, turning to other countries in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. It suspended a hydroelectric power project with China in September.

The Indian government has opposed the U.S. and EU sanctions



against Myanmar and warned that they would throw the country into the arms of Beijing. New Delhi is concerned about Beijing's economic and political influence in countries along the Indian border, including Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal.

A Nov. 18 editorial in *Global Times*, a Chinese government paper, wrote that "any country which chooses to be a pawn in the US chess game will lose the opportunity to benefit from China's economy."

Washington is making progress in setting up a Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement that excludes China, while working to establish new alliances and expanding its military activity in the Pacific. In one recent development, the U.S. and Singapore are in the final stages of negotiating an agreement to base some of the U.S.

Navy's new Littoral Combat Ships in Singapore, on the edge of the South China Sea.

In an article in the magazine *Foreign Policy* titled "America's Pacific Century," Hillary Clinton writes, "As the war in Iraq winds down and America begins to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan, the United States stands at a pivot point. . . In the next 10 years, we need to be smart and systematic about where we invest time and energy, so that we can put ourselves, in the best position to sustain our leadership, secure our interests and advance our values. One of the most important tasks of American statecraft over the next decade will therefore be to lock in a substantially increased investment—diplomatic, economic, strategic, and otherwise—in the Asia-Pacific region."

# Anti-Syria sanctions part of campaign against Iran

BY SETH GALINSKY

Washington, the European Union, the Turkish government and the Arab League are stepping up sanctions and pressure aimed at forcing Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to resign. For more than eight months the Syrian regime has brutally cracked down on a persistent rebellion demanding democratic and political rights and measures to ease the impact of the capitalist economic crisis.

The Turkish government announced a freeze Nov. 30 on Syrian assets and banned transactions with the Syrian central bank.

The Arab League, which had earlier suspended Damascus from membership, imposed economic sanctions Nov. 27. The measures include restrictions on money transfers from Syria, a travel ban on some officials, and a halt to commercial flights, although much commercial trade is exempt.

The Arab League claims it is taking action because of concern over repression in Syria. The government of Qatar, which hosts the U.S. military's Central Command, was a prime mover of the Arab League's decision. Like many members, Qatar is a monarchy. More than 85 percent of its 1.7 million people are immigrant workers who are denied

any political rights.

Press TV, funded by the Iranian government—the main backer of Damascus—criticized earlier anti-Syria moves saying that the "Arab League has always stayed away from condemning or even criticizing rights abuses by its member states. For instance, the body has totally ignored ongoing brutal crackdowns, killings, arresting and torturing of anti-government protesters and activists in Bahrain, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Morocco [and] Jordan."

Voice of America noted that a Dec. 1 White House statement welcoming new EU sanctions "reflects the Obama administration approach of more frequently coupling Iranian actions with the situation in Syria."

Moscow, like Tehran, is one of just a few governments maintaining close relations with al-Assad. State-run Russia Today reported Dec. 2 that the Russian nuclear aircraft carrier Admiral Kuznetsov will be visiting the Syrian port of Tartus, the only 24-hour port open to the Russian navy in the Mediterranean. Russia has large investments in Syria.

In an effort to crush the rebellion, Assad's police and military forces have killed at least 4,000 people since the uprising began in mid-March, according

to the United Nations. Opposition forces say that some soldiers have defected from the Syrian army and have carried out armed actions against the regime.

But so far there are no signs of any significant fissures in the army, Assad's main tool for keeping his regime in power. Along with his base in the minority Alawite Shiite community, which dominates the top military leadership, al-Assad has also cultivated support among capitalists from the Christian minority, as well as among merchants and other capitalists in the majority Sunni population. Since the start of the uprising, Assad has raised wages for government employees by 30 percent.

Fearing that the overthrow of the regime could bring Islamists to power, both the Israeli and U.S. governments initially were reluctant to call for al-Assad's departure. But as the uprising continued both governments saw it as an opportunity to strike a blow against Tehran.

Writing in the *New York Times* Nov. 18, former Israeli Ambassador Itamar Rabinovich said that Tel Aviv has abandoned its "the devil we know" policy, arguing that the Syrian revolt is "equally significant as a war by proxy between Iran and its rivals."

## NEW INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE OF MARXIST POLITICS AND THEORY

\$16

\$16

\$14

See page 8 for a distributor near you or order on the Internet

[www.pathfinderpress.com](http://www.pathfinderpress.com)



## ON THE PICKET LINE

### NY: Thousands of unionists march for jobs, against cutbacks

NEW YORK—Amidst chants of “They say cutback, we say fightback,” several thousand working people marched down Broadway here Dec. 1 in a protest called by the New York City Central Labor Council titled “For jobs and economic fairness.”

Leading the action were members of Service Employees International Union Local 32BJ. Earlier that day thousands of office cleaners and commercial building workers, members of the union, voted to authorize a strike when their current contract expires on Dec. 31. The Realty Advisory Board is demanding the workers accept a two-tier wage system for new hires and other cuts.

“We have to defend our rights,” Veronica McGinley, 39, an office cleaner in Manhattan and member of Local 32BJ, told the *Militant* on the march. “They want to take back our union, our benefits. We must not let them take anything from us and will continue fighting and support other unions as well.”

“The bosses want to cut back on everything, including medical and pensions,” said Sandra Green, 55, who’s been cleaning buildings in Manhattan for the past 15 years. “We don’t want to do that. We want a good contract.”

At the action, Cordelia Montes, 21, a student at Baruch College in Manhattan condemned the recent decision by City University of New York trustees to raise tuition. “We all come out of school with debt that we must pay for most of our lives,” she told the *Militant*, adding that she had participated in campus protests days earlier.

—Brian Williams

### California licorice workers strike over pension, health plans

UNION CITY, Calif.—Workers opposed to company plans to reduce their health and pension agreements at American Licorice Company went on strike at midnight Dec. 5.

“Everything’s quiet. There’s no production,” José Leon told the *Militant* as he picketed the plant with dozens of other workers. Leon has worked at the candy factory for 21 years.

Members of Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union Local 125 voted to authorize the strike two weeks ago when contract talks came to an impasse. After the vote, the company organized daily meetings to push its “final offer.”

On the eve of the strike, supervisors urged unionists to sign a paper withdrawing from the union. “With you or without you, we are going to run the plant,” they threatened, according to Local 125 Vice President Rene Castillo.

The workforce has been cut back over the last several years while production has increased. “When I was hired 13 years ago, there were over 600 people in the bargaining unit,” maintenance mechanic Victor Nguyen said. Now the union has 178 members.

“If they get rid of the union, the people will lose everything.”

New machinery with a robotic picker has sped up the production line and eliminated jobs, according to production worker Evangelina Reyinoso. “We know they are making money because they are forcing us to work overtime,” said Jesús Flores, a cook with 20 years at the plant.

—Eric Simpson

### Machinists reject company pact, strike Polar Tank in Minnesota

OPOLE, Minn.—After rejecting the company’s proposed five-year contract by 86 percent, 350 members of International Association of Machinists Local 165 voted by a similar margin to strike against Polar Tank Trailer Dec. 1. Polar Tank is the largest manufacturer of tanks in the United States.

After the strike vote, workers began organizing picket lines in this small town of less than 100 people.

“This is the worst contract I’ve seen in my 23 years working here,” Donald Yurczyk, who works in final assembly, told the *Militant* while picketing in front of the plant. “There are no pluses for us in this contract, all minuses.”

Yurczyk gave a couple of examples of what he meant. The proposed contract included language allowing outsourcing of jobs and replacement of workers without regard to seniority.



Picket line Dec. 6 outside American Licorice Company plant in Union City, Calif. “If they get rid of the union,” said striker Victor Nguyen, “the people will lose everything.”



Militant/Frank Forrestal

Striking Machinists picket Polar Tank Trailer plant in Opolo, Minn., Dec. 3.

Another concession, said Yurczyk, is the twofold increase in health insurance costs.

A company statement said the proposed contract was “the premier compensation package in the industry.”

In an effort to build unity for the strike, the union is organizing a mass picket on Dec. 5.

—Frank Forrestal

### Boston: Verizon workers speak out in fight for new contract

BOSTON—“We need to mobilize again,” said Bob Shine, a member of the International Brotherhood of Elec-

trical Workers who has worked as a technician for 14 years at Verizon. He was speaking in the discussion period at a “Speak Out for Verizon Workers” program here November 29.

Some 40 people attended the event at St. Paul’s Episcopal Cathedral. Organized by Jobs for Justice, the meeting was called to build support for the IBEW and Communications Workers of America who had ended their two-week strike against Verizon last August.

Forty-five thousand Verizon workers on the East Coast from New England to Virginia went on strike August 7 to defend wages, pensions, medical care and union rights won in past battles. The unions agreed to go back to work when Verizon offered to renew negotiations on key contract issues.

But since that time “there is no bargaining going on,” said Bryan Lindgrin, an IBEW member, at the meeting.

Ken Carrusso, a member of IBEW and picket captain during the recent strike, began his remarks by saying he wanted “to thank the people who came out to the picket line” during the strike. “We can’t accept what they want to give us or we won’t be here anymore.”

“We go back to work and we get nothing,” pointed out Sumner Delaney, a 21-year veteran at Verizon and treasurer of CWA Local 1400.

—Ted Leonard

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



December 19, 1986

NEW ORLEANS—Jefferson Parish Sheriff Harry Lee’s announcement that his deputies were going to stop and question “suspicious looking” Blacks traveling through white neighborhoods provoked an angry response from civil liberties and civil rights groups.

Lee was forced to apologize, but still insisted that “suspects” will be stopped when deputies have probable cause. When asked by reporters to define “probable cause” Lee said, “You’ll have to ask a lawyer about that.” (Lee is a lawyer.) He also stated that he has conducted similar “selective” crackdowns in the past.

This admission was no surprise to Blacks and to many whites in the New Orleans area. There is a history here of police attacks on Blacks.



December 18, 1961

Freedom of speech was strengthened when 214 faculty members of the City College of New York published an advertisement in the *New York Times* condemning the Administrative Council of the City University of New York for banning Communist Party speakers from municipal colleges.

The forthright stand of the teachers gives added strength to the student campaign at the five city colleges to “ban the ban.” Thousands of students have picketed and boycotted classes in protest against this curb on academic freedom.

Officials have justified the ban on the basis of Washington’s drive to outlaw the Communist Party. The government is demanding that the organization expose its members to persecution by registering them with the Justice Department as “agents of a foreign power.”



December 19, 1936

Chiang Kai-shek, Kuomintang dictator, was made prisoner on December 12 at Sian, capital of Shensi province, by revolting soldiers who demanded an immediate declaration of war against Japanese imperialism.

All the experience of the past fifteen years in China has proved that a real anti-imperialist struggle will be organized by the revolutionary workers and peasants and sections of the petty bourgeoisie, without and against all these generals whose records, without exception, are records of capitulation to imperialism and terror against the masses.

The task of revolutionists today in China is to arouse the broadest possible mass movement in the army, in the factories, and in the field, for the struggle against the imperialist invader.

SUBSCRIBE TO  
**THE MILITANT**  
See ad on page 2



# 2 million public workers join 1-day strike in U.K.

BY PAUL DAVIES

LONDON—An estimated 2 million public sector workers, including teachers, hospital workers, refuse collectors and civil servants, took off work Nov. 30 to protest the government's plan to raise their retirement age and make them pay more to qualify for pension benefits. Around the country many took to the streets in protest.

"I'm here to support younger people who can't get a job," said Tony Evans, a teacher from Berkshire who joined tens of thousands marching through central London. "Unemployment is rising at a frightening speed and the chancellor said today that he will increase public sector redundancies [layoffs] from 400,000 to 710,000." Official unemployment stands at 8.3 percent. Youth unemployment has hit a record 21.9 percent.

"We've had a three-year wage freeze, now the government wants to extend that and increase the amount we pay for our pensions by 3 percent. Where is our bailout?" asked Mark Cuthbertson, an assistant head teacher from Mile End.

"We're not all in this together, like the chancellor [George Osborne, the government's finance minister] claims," said retired teacher Mira Livné.

Prior to the action Osborne, a Conservative, forecast the sharpest decline in disposable household income since 1945. He projected a further six years of austerity to reduce the government's budget deficit, including further job cuts.

Labour leader Edward Miliband committed a Labour government to continue the same course of deficit reduction, while arguing that the Conservatives are going "too far, too fast." He opposed a previous strike by hundreds of thousands of public sector workers in the summer, but declined to either back or condemn this most recent action.

More than half of British trade is within Europe, a continent wracked by a deep economic crisis. Bank of

England Governor Mervyn King described the situation as "extraordinarily serious and threatening" and announced contingency plans in response to a breakup of the eurozone.

Becky Draper, a chemistry student, was one of 50 students from King's College London who joined the march. She said one reason she participated was the rising cost of renting accommodations in London. Claire Glover, a 26-year-old retail supervisor, took the day off work to take part, explaining that since graduating she has been unable to find work as a teacher.

Some 36,000 health workers joined the walkout. Jenny Draper, an ambulance dispatcher, said that in addition to the wage freeze and rising pension costs, ambulance workers face increasing job combinations. An ambulance worker at a demonstration in Manchester carried a placard that read, "Do you want me carrying you down 6 flights of stairs when I'm 67?" referring to the government's decision to increase the age at which public sector workers can retire.

To undercut support for the strike, the government appealed to "taxpayers," who supposedly "pay" for public workers' pensions. Opponents of the strike try to stoke resentment by emphasizing that public workers' pensions are considerably better than



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Tens of thousands march in London Nov. 30 as part of one-day strike against government decision to raise retirement age and cut pensions of public sector workers.

those of most working people.

"Some public sector workers don't work hard enough to justify the benefits that they get," said Muric Frangipani, a London clothing store worker who did not take part in the action.

Mike Jackson, a garden center worker, said he joined the London action "because the government tries to divide public sector and private sector workers and they need solidarity."

Teame Berne, who works at the McVities factory in London, said it's important to "support public sector workers. The government attacks affect us all. Now they are changing employment law to make it easier for employers to fire workers."

Caroline Bellamy in Manchester and Debbie DeLange in London contributed to this article.

## Berlin seeks control over indebted governments

Continued from the front page

portunities. Merkel is proposing "reforms" to maintain its domination.

The more heavily indebted governments, including Italy and Spain, as well as France, are clamoring instead for the European Central Bank to print more euros in order to buy up their increasingly shaky government bonds.

Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner is shuttling across Europe, pressing the interests of U.S. imperialism.

The real source of the crisis lies in a decades-long slowdown in production, employment and trade, a process endemic to the workings of the capitalist system, including the historic tendency for the rate of profit to fall.

In Europe, the crisis is exacerbated by the contradictory economic relations within the eurozone—a setup in which 17 countries with sharply different levels of productivity and development share one currency.

The monthly Markit survey of world manufacturing trends reports that production contracted in France, the Netherlands, Italy, Ireland, Spain, Greece, Poland, the United Kingdom, Austria and, for the first time in years, Germany. Production fell in China, Brazil, Japan, Korea and Australia as well.

Banks in Europe and throughout the world are issuing advice to investors outlining what to do if the euro comes apart. "The Irish punt and Italian lira would sink 25% against a new German mark," the *Wall Street Journal* predicted December 3, "while the Spanish peseta would lose 50% and Greece's drachma, 80%."

The euro has only been in existence for nine years. The fear is spreading that it won't make it to 10.

On Nov. 30 the Federal Reserve Bank cut the rate for loans of U.S. dollars to essentially insolvent European banks.

This increase in the amount of U.S. currency in circulation amounts to printing more dollars, with its inevitable effect—fueling inflation in the U.S. and elsewhere. The *Wall Street Journal* pointed out the Fed's action is no solution: "Central bank injections: pain killer, not cure."

Many commentators pointed out that Germany will go to the wall whether the "fiscal union" is adopted or not. "Either Germany finds itself more on the hook for Ireland, Portugal and Greece's problems or, if a deal doesn't happen, that's damaging for Germany's export economy," Jerry Webman, chief economist with Oppenheimer Funds, told the *New York Times*.

Forty percent of all German exports are to other eurozone nations. Germany estimates that in the last two years alone, membership in the eurozone has boosted German export profits between \$70 billion and \$80 billion.

Merkel, Sarkozy and other bourgeois spokespeople call for brutal attacks on the continent's working class as the answer to their crisis.

They often point to blows delivered to working people in Ireland as a model. Round after round of cuts—with more planned for 2012—have targeted health care, social programs and benefits for children. Salaries of public sector workers have been cut by 20 percent. Official unemployment has hit 14.5 percent. It would be much higher, but 40,000 Irish workers have left the country.

The campaign by the German rulers to humble governments across the continent in defense of their profits is pro-

voking anti-German nationalism across the region.

Leaders of French political parties from the left to the right have denounced German "diktats" in the name of French nationalism. Jean-Luc Mélençon, the presidential candidate backed by the Communist Party, accused Sarkozy of "capitulating" to Merkel.

It is yet to be determined whether Merkel's "reforms" will succeed in forcing obeisance from weaker European regimes, as they forced the fall of elected governments in Italy and Greece. And if they are successful, it will only kick the can down the road.

The European Union was hailed, especially by liberals and bourgeois socialists, as the harbinger of "peace and prosperity." Today eurozone "prosperity" is crumbling and a future of escalating national conflicts is as clear as day.

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

by Jack Barnes



Building the kind of party working people need to prepare for coming class battles through which they will revolutionize themselves, their unions, and all society. 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. —\$24

Pathfinderpress.com

Order from  
pathfinderpress.com





# U.S. Embassy protest in London: ‘Free Cuban 5!’

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON—Chanting “Justice now! Free the Five!” 200 people protested outside the U.S. Embassy here Dec. 1. The demonstration demanded the release from prison of Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, and Fernando González and for the right of René González to return to Cuba.

Known as the Cuban Five, they were arrested and jailed in an FBI frame-up operation more 13 years ago. All five were convicted in 2001 on trumped-up conspiracy charges and given sentences ranging from 15 years for René González to double life plus 15 years for Hernández. Three were convicted of conspiracy to commit espionage, including Hernández, who was also charged with conspiracy to commit murder. The revolutionaries were in

southern Florida defending their homeland by monitoring U.S.-backed counterrevolutionary groups with a 50-year record of murderous attacks and acts of sabotage against Cuba.

The London action was called by the Cuba Solidarity Campaign. Joining the protest all the way from Cuba were mothers of three of the five: Mirta Rodríguez, mother of Antonio Guerrero; Irma Schwerert, mother of René González; and Magali Llort, mother of Fernando González.

Actions like these are so important, Llort told the crowd, because “it’s the only way to open the prison gates.” She paid tribute to the workers who the day before had taken strike action across the U.K. “Cuba is present alongside anyone engaged in struggle for justice in whatever part of the world.”

Schwerert characterized the “super-



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Action outside U.S. Embassy in London to support Cuban Five, revolutionaries imprisoned on frame-up charges in the U.S. Front from left, Magali Llort, mother of Fernando González; Irma Schwerert, mother of René González; and Mirta Rodríguez, mother of Antonio Guerrero.

vised release” of René González—who was released on probation but prohibited from returning to Cuba for three years—as being “free but still a prisoner.”

Other speakers included Tony Woodley, former general secretary of the Unite union, who recently returned from the U.S. where he visited Hernández in prison and spoke to a rally in Los Angeles hosted by the Service Employees International Union-United Service Workers West. Woodley called for an end to the refusal by the U.S. government to allow Olga Salanueva and Adriana Pérez to enter the United States to visit their husbands, René González and Hernández.

Brendan Barber, general secretary of the Trades Union Congress, and Jeremy Corbyn, a Labour Member of Parliament, were among other speakers from the labor movement in the U.K.

Eglé Sánchez, general secretary of the Graphical and Print Workers Union in Venezuela, also spoke. Actors Andy de la Tour, Susan Wooldridge and Roger Lloyd Pack read from the prison letters of the five.

## Exhibit wins new support for Cuban Five

Continued from front page

government on a series of conspiracy charges, including conspiracy to commit espionage.

Their “crime”? The five had accepted assignments to keep the government of Cuba informed about the activities of U.S.-backed counterrevolutionary groups based in southern Florida, groups that have a long record of carrying out violent attacks against Cuba and against supporters of the Cuban Revolution from U.S. soil.

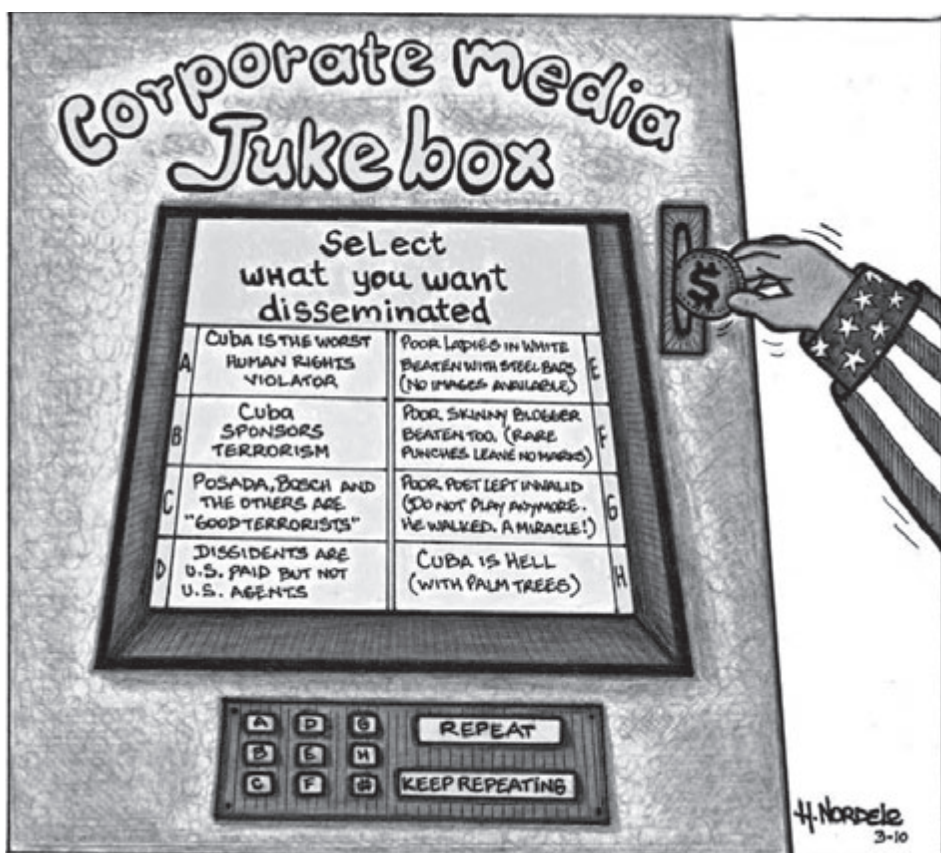
Hernández was also charged with conspiracy to commit murder and was sentenced to two life terms plus 15 years. The U.S. government held him responsible for the Feb. 24, 1996, shooting down by the Cuban Air Force of two hostile aircraft that had entered Cuban airspace in disregard of repeated warnings. The flights were staged from Florida by Brothers to the Rescue, a Miami-based counterrevolutionary organization that had repeatedly violated Cuba’s air space despite Havana’s formal protest to Washington and advance notification of the consequences.

Hernández is an accomplished cartoonist. His humorous drawings have been published since 1982 in Cuba.

The Minneapolis exhibit was shown at two venues: Regla de Oro gallery from Nov. 1-13; and at a large studio in the Casket Arts Building from Nov. 19 to Dec. 1.

A group of 50 high school students from the Perpich Center for Arts Education visited the exhibit at Regla de Oro on Nov. 1. And more than 65 people came to a well-attended opening of the exhibit on Nov. 6.

“We stand in solidarity with these workers,” said Bernie Hesse, political director of United Food and Com-



Cartoon by Gerardo Hernández, one of five Cuban revolutionaries jailed in U.S. since 1998. Hernández was framed up and convicted for “conspiring” to commit murder and espionage.

mercial Workers Local 1189 at the opening. Ricardo Levins Morales, a well-known artist in Minneapolis, also spoke. “I just learned about the Cuban Five case,” said Robert Dickson, after attending the exhibit opening and an informative talk and discussion on the case a few days later at the art gallery. “The show and the accompanying talk really helped me to learn about the Cuban Revolution and the injustice of the U.S. legal system. What struck me the most is how these five men, despite everything, have persevered in mind and spirit, and the support that they have gotten on an international scale,” Dickson said.

More than a dozen copies of *The Cuban Five, Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free* were picked up at the gallery. The attractive booklet, recently published by Pathfinder, carries articles reprinted from the *Militant*. (See ad on this page.)

On Nov. 19, the show opened at the Casket Arts Building in the spacious art studio of David Schnack and Mark Wojahn, along with photographs tak-

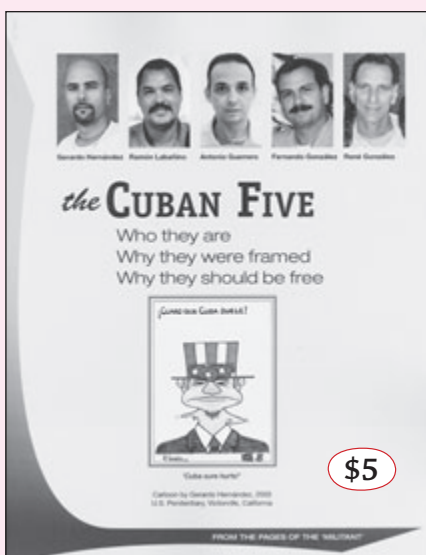
en by Schnack during a recent trip to Cuba. Around 75 attended the event, most with little or no previous knowledge of the case. As a result of that success, the artists agreed to open the studio to the public Nov. 26-27. About 75 people came.

The final public event was a Dec. 1 showing of the film, *Will the Real Terrorist Please Stand Up?* by Saul Landau as part of a monthly film series put on by Wojahn in the Casket Arts Building. It was attended by 25 people. Members of the Minnesota Cuba Committee led a discussion on the Cuban Five case following the film presentation.

This was the second exhibit in Minneapolis of artwork by one of the Cuban Five. In November 2010 the Minnesota Cuba Committee sponsored a monthlong showing of works by Guerrero titled “From my Altitude,” held at Homewood Studios in the heart of the Black community here.

The next stop for “Humor from my Pen” is the Calles y Sueños gallery in the Pilsen section of Chicago, Ill. The exhibit is set to open in early March.

### New booklet on the Cuban Five



### For further reading on the case:

**United States vs The Cuban Five: A Judicial Cover-up**  
by Dr. Rodolfo Dávalos Fernández



From start to finish, the proceedings were tainted, corrupt and vindictive. Every right of the accused to ‘due process of law’ was flouted.  
**\$22**

See page 8 for distributors or go to [pathfinderpress.com](http://pathfinderpress.com)

Books on workers struggles; labor and revolutionary movement; Cuban Revolution; fight for women’s rights; Marx, Engels, Lenin; and much more.

[pathfinderpress.com](http://pathfinderpress.com)

Complete catalog on the Internet



# ‘As women, we wanted to earn the right to fight’

*Below is an excerpt from Marianas in Combat: Teté Puebla and the Mariana Grajales Women’s Platoon in Cuba’s Revolutionary War, 1956-58 by Teté Puebla, one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for December. Puebla joined the revolutionary struggle to overthrow the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1956, when she was 15 years old. She became an officer in the first all-women’s platoon of the Rebel Army led by Fidel Castro in the Sierra Maestra mountains.*

*A brigadier general, she was the highest-ranking woman in Cuba’s Revolutionary Armed Forces when the interviews contained in the book occurred in 2000 and 2002. Copyright © 2003 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

PUEBLA: In May 1958 Batista’s army launched an offensive by 10,000 soldiers against our 300 rebels in the Sierra.<sup>1</sup> . . .

We had taken several hundred prisoners, and there were too few of us to care for that many people. So Fidel wrote a letter to the International Red Cross proposing that these prisoners be handed over to them. He addressed the letter to the Red Cross here in Cuba and not the Batista government.

To accomplish the handover, a truce with Batista’s army was needed. The



Courtesy Teté Puebla

Teté Puebla, left, with other revolutionary combatants of Cuba’s Rebel Army, after the January 1959 overthrow of the dictatorship and about six months after the events described below.

dictatorship didn’t want to accept a truce, because by doing so they’d be acknowledging having been defeated. But the International Red Cross agreed.

It was decided that I would be the messenger to establish the truce. I was seventeen years old at the time. I was chosen because if a man were sent, he would have been killed. If a woman went, they might not shoot her. . . .

So we washed and ironed my one olive green uniform, and at 5:30 or 6:00 a.m., I left from Altos de Mompié.

I went on a mule, carrying a white flag, unarmed and accompanied by a peasant from the area. I let down my long hair, and was wearing a July 26 Movement armband.<sup>2</sup> I was going down from the heights of the Sierra Maestra, toward an area dominated by Batista’s soldiers. We were located along the upper ridge of the Sierra Maestra, and Batista’s army controlled the lower portions. . . .

1. In late May 1958 the Batista army launched a major offensive that was defeated by mid-summer. The Rebel Army then went on the offensive, which culminated with the revolution’s triumph on Jan. 1, 1959.
2. The July 26 Revolutionary Movement, founded in June 1955 by Fidel Castro and other revolutionary combatants, was the main organization leading the fight against the dictatorship.

As I approached, I waved a white handkerchief, so the troops wouldn’t shoot.

At the first army post, they told me to halt and asked me what I wanted. I told them I was bringing a message from our general command post for their commanding officer. With threatening looks on their faces, they told me to give it to them. I said no. They took me to their commanding officer, Captain Durán Batista.

I then had to wait for Major Merob Sosa, who was in Bayamo, to return to Las Vegas de Jibacoa. Merob Sosa was one of the bloodiest officers the dictatorship had. He was the one I had to give Che’s message to.<sup>3</sup> In that letter, Che asked them for a truce to allow the prisoners to be handed over. I still have that letter.

After reading the letter, Durán Batista said to me: “You have to take that armband off.” Moreover, he added, “We’ve told the troops that the ones being handed over are rebels.”

I responded: “The soldiers have to know that it’s not rebels who are being handed over. Every last one of us will die fighting in the Sierra rather than surrender. And I can’t take this armband off. You couldn’t understand

3. Ernesto Che Guevara (1928-67), Argentine-born leader of the Cuban Revolution.

## IF YOU LIKE THIS PAPER, LOOK US UP

Where to find distributors of the *Militant*, *New International*, and a full display of Pathfinder books.

### UNITED STATES

**CALIFORNIA:** Los Angeles: 4025 S. Western Ave. Zip: 90062. Tel: (323) 295-2600. E-mail: laswp@sbcglobal.net  
**San Francisco:** 5482 Mission St. Zip: 94112-1015. Tel: (415) 584-2135. E-mail: swpsf@sbcglobal.net

**FLORIDA:** Miami: 719 NE 79th St. Zip: 33138. Tel: (305) 757-8869. E-mail: swpmiami@att.net

**GEORGIA:** Atlanta: 476 1/2 Edgewood Ave. Zip: 30312. Tel: (404) 525-5200. E-mail: swpatlanta@bellsouth.net

**ILLINOIS:** Chicago: 806 W. Washington Blvd. Suite 202. Zip: 60607. Tel: (312) 455-0111. E-mail: Chicagoswp@att.net

**IOWA:** Des Moines: 3707 Douglas Ave. Zip: 50310. Tel: (515) 255-1707. E-mail: swpdesmoines@qwestoffice.net

**MASSACHUSETTS:** Boston: 13 Bennington St., 2nd Floor, East Bos-

ton. Zip: 02128. Tel: (617) 569-9169. E-mail: swpboston@verizon.net

**MINNESOTA:** Minneapolis: 1311 1/2 E. Lake St. Zip: 55407. Tel: (612) 729-1205. E-mail: tcswp@qwestoffice.net

**NEW YORK:** Manhattan: 306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor. Zip: 10018. Tel: (212) 629-6649. E-mail: newyorkswp@mac.com

**PENNSYLVANIA:** Philadelphia: 3701 Pulaski Ave. Zip: 19140. Tel: (215) 225-1270. E-mail: philaswp@verizon.net

**TEXAS:** Houston: 4800 W. 34th St., Suite C-50L. Zip: 77092. Tel: (713) 688-4919. E-mail: swp.houston@att.net

**WASHINGTON, D.C.:** 143 Kennedy St. NW, Suite 15. Zip: 20011. Tel: (202) 536-5080. E-mail: swp.washingtondc@verizon.net

**WASHINGTON:** Seattle: 5418 Rainier Ave. South. Zip: 98118-2439. Tel: (206) 323-1755. E-mail: seattleswp@qwestoffice.net

### AUSTRALIA

**Sydney:** 1st Flr, 3/281-287 Beamish St., Campsie, NSW 2194. Mailing

its meaning—it’s the symbol of our struggle.”

He talked about taking me to Bayamo. He was insulting and asked me how a pretty girl like me could be with that bedraggled and filthy bunch. He told me that the war was just about over and that they were winning it. I answered that this wasn’t true, and I reminded him that the ones we were handing over were government troops, not rebels. They agreed to the truce! It was around 6:00 p.m. when I got back. . . .

That same night they told me I had to go back. I took the response drafted by Che to Captain Durán Batista. I got to the army’s camp at ten o’clock at night. I was told to halt. I explained the same thing as the last time, that I was bearing a message from our general command post for their commanding officer. They let me through and brought me to the hut where Captain Durán Batista was. I gave him the message.

At all costs Durán Batista wanted to prevent me from talking to the soldiers. He gave me his cot, and he laid down in a hammock next to it, so he could keep an eye on me. Being among Batista’s soldiers I could not go to sleep. I waited until the captain fell asleep, and then I sneaked away and began talking to the soldiers in the trenches.

I told them that the ones to be handed over were captured soldiers. I stated again and again during those hours that all the rebels would fight to the death in the Sierra. They later said that this was the safest night they’d had in the mountains, knowing that the rebels wouldn’t attack while I was there. . . .

Finally, the International Red Cross arrived and I was able to return with their response. Then Che and [Rebel Army Commander] Faustino Pérez came down, together with the prisoners. . . . [W]e handed over 253 prisoners, 57 of them wounded.

After my assignment as a messenger to establish the truce, I was sent to Santiago de Cuba three times to open up new lines of communication. We lacked food and medicines, and the broadcasting equipment for Radio Rebelde wasn’t working. I made these trips before the creation of the Marianas. But what we wanted more than anything was to earn the right to fight.

December

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

PATHFINDER READERS CLUB SPECIALS

25% DISCOUNT

**Marianas in Combat**  
Teté Puebla and the Mariana Grajales Women’s Platoon in Cuba’s Revolutionary War, 1956-58  
by Teté Puebla  
\$14. **Special price: \$10.50**

**The Autobiographies of the Haymarket Martyrs**  
by Philip S. Foner  
\$19. **Special price: \$14.25**

**The History of American Trotskyism, 1928-38**  
Report of a Participant  
by James P. Cannon  
\$22. **Special price: \$16.50**

**The Long View of History**  
by George Novack  
Why the revolutionary struggle of working people to end oppression and exploitation is fundamental to any social progress.  
\$7. **Special price: \$5.25**

**La lucha por un partido proletario**  
(The Struggle for a Proletarian Party)  
by James P. Cannon  
\$12. **Special price: \$9**

**The German Revolution and the Debate on Soviet Power**  
Preparing the Founding Congress of the Communist International, 1918-19  
\$36. **Special price: \$27**

**Join Pathfinder Readers Club for \$10 and receive discounts all year long**

ORDER ONLINE AT  
WWW.PATHFINDERPRESS.COM  
OFFER GOOD UNTIL DECEMBER 31

address: P.O. Box 164, Campsie, NSW 2194. Tel: (02) 9718 9698. E-mail: cl\_australia@optusnet.com.au

### CANADA

**QUEBEC:** Montreal: 7107 St. Denis #204 H2S 2S5. Tel: (514) 272-5840. E-mail: clc\_can@bellnet.ca

### FRANCE

**Paris:** P.O. 175, 23 rue Lecourbe. Postal code: 75015. Tel: (01) 40-10-28-37. E-mail: milpath.paris@laposte.net

### NEW ZEALAND

**Auckland:** 4/125 Grafton Rd., Grafton. Postal address: P.O. Box 3025, Auckland 1140. Tel: (09) 369-1223. E-mail: clauck@xtra.co.nz

### UNITED KINGDOM

**ENGLAND:** London: First Floor, 120 Bethnal Green Road (Entrance in Brick Lane). Postal code: E2 6DG. Tel: (020) 7613-2466. E-mail: clondon@fastmail.fm  
**Manchester:** Room 301, 3rd floor, Hilton House, 26-28 Hilton St. Postal code: M1 2EH. Tel: (016) 1478-2496. E-mail: clmanchr@gmail.com



# Back workers’ lockout battles, strikes

Lockouts have become a popular bludgeon against the working class, showing the bosses’ determination to deepen the exploitation of labor and crush our ability to resist their unrelenting assaults. Lockouts share common features. The bosses prepare well ahead, building up a war chest to pay scabs and cover costs of lost production. They secure support from their government, their cops and their courts. Then they strike hard and fast without warning.

This issue reports on four lockout struggles. The fight against lockouts along with strike battles that keep cropping up represent the most important response to the propertied rulers’ multi-front offensive against the working class today.

The *Militant* urges working people and others to support these fights. Order copies of the paper to spread the word among coworkers and friends, in your union, on campus. Send solidarity messages. Work with others to organize plant-gate collections. Get your union and other organizations to make contributions. Visit the picket lines.

Battle lines are being drawn and workers have re-

sponded with determination that neither they nor the bosses could foresee. They are reaching out for solidarity and building links with other labor and social battles. The strength of these struggles is determined above all by how wide and deep working-class solidarity spreads.

The battles today are defensive. Workers caught unprepared are fighting to push the bosses back and prevent them from crushing our spirit and our unions. By fighting, we also become stronger and gain invaluable experience. It’s along a road of class struggle that we can rebuild a strong, fighting labor movement that champions the interests of all the exploited and oppressed, interests that are irreconcilable with those of the bosses, their parties and their government.

The sharpening class struggle we see all around us is the inevitable result of the deepening crisis of capitalism worldwide. Both are just beginning to unfold.

A long and hard road of struggle lies ahead through which workers will transform ourselves and on that basis begin the fight to transform all of society.

# Solidarity rally for Midwest sugar workers

**Continued from front page**

Farmers Union endorsed the rally.

“Take a shift at the picket line. Stand with them as union brothers and sisters,” Jim Meyer, political organizer of Education Minnesota and the chair of the event, told rally participants. “This is what we do in our union. We go down to the picket line in Chaska every Wednesday.” Five of the 19 locked-out workers at the Chaska plant attended the event.

American Crystal has five plants in northern Minnesota and North Dakota, and at two smaller plants in Chaska, Minn., and Mason City, Iowa. Workers are represented by the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union. They were locked out Aug. 1 after rejecting the company’s concession contract by 96 percent. On Nov. 1 they rejected a slightly different contract by 90 percent.

The company, which has been running its seven facilities with nearly 1,000 contract scabs, has begun hiring replacement workers from the local community, as part of its determined drive against the union.

Ken Lamberson, a worker at the East Grand Forks plant for 16 years, thanked members of Teamsters Local 120 who had delivered a semitrailer of supplies to the locked-out workers. The Teamsters, along with several other unions, provided some 50,000 pounds of food before the Thanksgiving holiday.

Several members of the National Association of Letter Carriers, Branch 9, in Golden Valley, attended the rally. They reported that Becki Jacobsen, a locked-out sugar worker in Moorhead and a “sugar beet ambassador,” spoke Nov. 22 at their general membership meeting. Jacobsen is one of the leaders of a traveling outreach program organized by the union to speak to other workers and unionists about their struggle.

“The sugar beet ambassador program is a good

tool to make unions aware of what is going on and what can happen to them,” Jacobsen told the *Militant*.

Custodians and bus drivers, members of SEIU Local 284, spoke about a union-busting move by the Robbinsdale school board to contract out their jobs.

“We are proud to stand with the sugar workers and plan to stay with you until you win,” said Jean Woznak, a bus driver for 16 years and union steward for SEIU Local 284.

Workers, unionists, their families and supporters shared a dinner, discussing the fight and other workers’ struggles. A total of \$24,789 was raised from donations, according to Meyer.

On Dec. 3 some 400 locked-out workers came to a union-organized meeting with Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton at the Moorhead State University Student Union.

Dayton spoke briefly. “In the next few days, we need to go to the bargaining table and stay until a contract is agreed on,” he said. “We have to compromise and agree with things we don’t agree with.” Dayton compared it to the “resolution” following the state government’s shutdown that laid off thousands of workers.

Speakers included local politicians, union officials, several locked-out workers and their family members, and a couple of professors. Sugar workers talked about their hardship and their struggle and asked Dayton to press American Crystal to end its lockout.

To invite one of the BCTGM “sugar ambassadors” to speak at your union contact Jessie Du Bois of the Minnesota AFL-CIO at (651) 665-9196 or email her at jdubois@aflcio.org.

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.

# Sanctions on Iran

**Continued from front page**

blocked virtually all transactions with Iran. Washington’s steps were aimed at non-U.S. firms and banks that deal with Iran, especially its energy sector.

On Nov. 28, the same day as the Iranian parliament’s vote on its diplomatic relations with the U.K., Ayatollah Ali Khamenei denounced Britain in a public speech as an “emblem of Western imperial arrogance,” according to the *New York Times*.

Shouting “Death to England,” hundreds of students described as members of the Basij by the Iranian state media stormed two British diplomatic compounds in Tehran, causing substantial damage. The Basij is a militia force led by the Guards of the Islamic Revolution, the dominant military force in the government.

London immediately withdrew all its diplomatic staff and ordered the expulsion of Iranian Embassy personnel from Britain, downgrading relations to just short of a complete break. At least four other European governments have closed their Tehran embassies.

Reflecting divisions among Iran’s rulers, the Iranian Foreign Ministry expressed regrets over the “unacceptable behavior by a few demonstrators.”

## Oil embargo being considered

EU foreign ministers meeting in Brussels Dec. 1 added 180 names to a list of Iranian officials and companies whose assets have been frozen and are banned from traveling to member states. They also announced they were considering an oil embargo to be decided in January. The EU imports roughly 18 percent of Iranian exports of crude oil.

The same day, the U.S. Senate voted unanimously to freeze the U.S.-based assets of any financial institution, including other countries’ central banks, that does business with Iran’s central bank. According to Agence France-Presse, this step will hit payments to Iran for its oil exports. Not yet law, the Senate measure is opposed by the Barack Obama administration, which is concerned about the effect it would have on oil prices.

On a related front, Iranian media reported Dec. 4 that the Iranian military shot down a U.S. drone in eastern Iran. According to Fox News, U.S. military sources denied the spy plane had been shot, but acknowledged it was in Tehran’s possession.

Meanwhile, in a public speech Dec. 4, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu alluded to launching an air assault on Tehran’s nuclear facilities, a move that has reportedly been discussed in the Israeli cabinet. He made an analogy to the founding of Israel in 1948. The government’s first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, “understood full well the decision carried a heavy price, but he believed not making that decision had a heavier price,” he said.

Two days earlier, U.S. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta spoke at a pro-Israel meeting in Washington. He cautioned that a strike would only delay Iran’s nuclear program, while setting off “an escalation” that could “consume the Middle East in confrontation and conflict that we would regret.” A military response, he said, is always an option but “must be the last resort.”

## Corrections

In the Dec. 5 issue the article titled “Economic, Political Crisis Looms Over Capitalist Europe” incorrectly said the Greek government is paying close to 7 percent interest on new bonds. Ten-year Italian government bonds have a yield of around 7 percent. Yields on Greek 10-year bonds were 29 percent at the time the article was written and have since risen to nearly 32 percent.

The name of the butcher quoted in the article “Locked-Out Workers Picket Meat Plant in New Zealand” in the Nov. 28 issue is Trevor Collins, not Trevor Collis.

In the article “UK Family Fights Eviction by Gov’t After ‘Terror’ Frame-Up” printed in the Dec. 12 issue, two undercover police officers claimed that defendants were being “groomed to fight abroad against coalition and British troops in Afghanistan.” The cops actually said they were being groomed by the defendants.

# LETTERS

## Why no jobs program?

It seems from history that the capitalist class and its government strongly resist any kind of real jobs program. I recognize this fact, but I don’t understand it.

On the surface, it seems that the capitalist class should want a jobs and infrastructure program. Their corporations would hire workers to create housing, transportation, hospitals, schools, infrastructure, and would make big profits from government payments—just like they do with “defense” spending.

Why don’t the capitalists welcome and promote this?

*David Segal*  
*New York, N.Y.*

*Editor’s note:* The capitalist class is particularly short-sighted. They are driven to act only in their most immediate interests, i.e. maximum profit now. It is the experience of the working-class movement that all reforms are the by-products of mass class struggles. In the U.S. for example, Roosevelt’s public works and oth-

er such concessions were enacted by U.S. rulers shaken by the massive labor and social movements of the 1930s. These concessions in turn helped stabilize the capitalists’ economy and political rule.

**The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.**