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Guadeloupe-Haiti Activist Tour : A Big Success

- Dossier spécial LKP - Soutiens -



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Colia Clark et Alan Benjamin, coordinateurs de la tournée militante du Guadeloupe-Haiti Tour USA dressent le bilan général et de chacune des étapes de la tournée des dirigeants du LKP et du secrétaire général de la CATH. En anglais.

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Written by By COLIA CLARK and ALAN BENJAMIN
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On July 5-15, 2009, Eli Domota and Raymond Gama from the LKP Strike Collective and UGTG union federation in Guadeloupe, and Figolé St. Cyr from the Autonomous Confederation of Haitian Workers (CATH) in Haiti participated in a seven-city U.S. tour. The tour was a big success.

Earlier this year, the trade unions of the Caribbean island of Guadeloupe led a powerful fight-back against the deepening worldwide economic crisis. United in the LKP, a coalition of 47 organizations, the workers and people of Guadeloupe waged a powerful 44-day nationwide general strike that won a \$250/month wage increase for low-wage workers, more jobs for youth, a reduction in the prices of basic necessities, and a moratorium on home foreclosures.

In Haiti, the unions are playing a major role in the struggle to restore democracy after the U.S. government removed democratically elected President Bertrand Aristide and U.N. troops continue to occupy the country, killing activists who protest the occupation and demand their national, social, democratic, and economic rights.

The tour traveled to New York, Boston, Greensboro (NC), Philadelphia, Newark (NJ), Pittsburgh (for the National Assembly Against the War and Occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan), and Cleveland.

In every city, local tour organizing committees were formed. Dozens of Black, antiwar, unions, and activist organizations built the tour.

In most cities, the tour consisted of one major public event (with attendance ranging from 50 to 250 people) ; radio and/or TV interviews ; a reception for the tour organizers and supporters ; and meetings with leading community, political and union leaders and activists.

Everywhere there was great interest in learning directly from these worker leaders about both the 44-day nationwide general strike in Guadeloupe that won many essential demands and the dire situation facing the Haitian people as a result of the US/UN occupation of Haiti (as well as their continued resistance to this occupation).

In New York, a public rally of 150 people in Harlem organized to save WBAI Radio listened to Brother Domota. Other events included a public forum at the Brecht Forum and a presentation at the Rev. Lucius Walker's congregation in Brooklyn.

In Boston, a public forum at the UNITE HERE hall organized by a coalition spearheaded by Chelsea United Against the War heard presentations from the delegation and also discussed the current situation in Honduras.

In Greensboro, North Carolina, the mayor of the city, Yvonne Johnson, officially welcomed the delegation to the city

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and publicly pledged her support for and participation in "either directly or through a representative" the International Commission of Inquiry that will travel to Haiti in mid-September 2009 to gather information about the impact on the population of the US/UN occupation of Haiti.

Also present in Greensboro were members of BWFJ from Raleigh-Durham and Rocky Mount ; Crystal Lee Sutton (the real "Norma Rae") ; and Donna Dewitt, president of the South Carolina Federation of Labor (AFL-CIO), who drove up from Columbia, S.C., to participate in the event.

In Newark, the People's Organization for Progress (POP) hosted a lively forum that followed a meeting with the top leadership of the Women in Support of the Million Man March (WISOMMM).

In Philadelphia, trade unionists, political groups, the Third World Coalition of the American Friends Service Committee, and the International Committee of Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal hosted a forum at Philadelphia City College. Earlier in the afternoon, the Caribbean trade unionists met with Henry Nichols and other top leaders of AFSCME Local 1199C.

In Pittsburgh, Brothers Domota, Gama and Fignolé spoke in workshops and at the plenary session of the National Antiwar Conference hosted by the National Assembly to End the U.S. Wars and Occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. This conference drew 255 antiwar activists. A resolution in opposition to the US/UN occupation of Haiti was adopted unanimously.

This resolution has been submitted by the South Carolina Labor Federation (AFL-CIO) to the national AFL-CIO convention in September.

In Cleveland, in addition to radio and TV interviews with the Black media, a forum was organized by a broad coalition, with more than 100 people in attendance.

All in all, the tour accomplished many important goals :

1) Tour organizers promoted widely the decisions and conclusions of the 3rd Caribbean Conference in Haiti (December 2008) and obtained pledges from six organizations and one elected official to participate in the International Commission of Inquiry in September.

2) Tour organizers obtained pledges from leading organizations, particularly Black organizations, to assist the effort in defense of the trade unionists and activists in Guadeloupe who are now facing legal and criminal charges for their valiant actions during the 44-day general strike. The National Black Lawyers Association, in particular, pledged its full support.

3) Tour organizers promoted the fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal and all the political prisoners in the United States. Brothers Domota and Fignolé pledged to promote widely across the Caribbean the campaign demanding that U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder open an investigation into the violation of the rights of Mumia and other death-row inmates.

We gave the comrades in Haiti and Guadeloupe important solidarity emanating from the "belly of the beast." The comrades told us that they were very pleased with the results of the tour. They were most particularly pleased to meet and establish ties with militant Black organizations and activists in the United States. They were also glad that some unions came forward to support their work (Letter Carriers in NC, So. Carolina Labor Fed., Unite-Here in

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Boston, Kathy Black of AFSCME, teachers union in Philadelphia and USLAW in Philadelphia).

There was also some discussion about organizing a follow-up tour to the Southern States this fall to Atlanta, Jackson (Miss.) and New Orleans. This will be explored further in the coming weeks.

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Colia Clark and Alan Benjamin were the national coordinators of the Guadeloupe-Haiti Tour USA.

Source : [The Socialist Organizer](#)