

THE MILITANT

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US imposed capitalist-landlord gov't on South Korea
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 77/NO. 34 SEPTEMBER 30, 2013

Assad steps up bombing as Obama, Putin discuss deal

BY JOHN STUDER

Efforts by Washington and Moscow to broker a deal for the Assad regime in Syria to open its cache of chemical weapons — estimated to run to some 2,200 tons — to United Nations inspection and destruction in exchange for an end to threats of imperialist intervention are gaining support from governments and bourgeois political figures around the world.

The U.N. released a weapons inspectors' report Sept. 16 confirming that rockets filled with toxic sarin gas were responsible for the deaths of some 1,400 in opposition-controlled suburbs of Damascus Aug. 21. Details of the rockets, launchers and trajectory point to the Bashar al-Assad regime being responsible.

Meanwhile, Assad has stepped up the murderous campaign against those resisting his rule.

Washington, backed by Paris and London, looks to play a role in eventually cobbling together a new government.

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Facing crisis, AFL-CIO tops turn further from struggle

BY SUSAN LAMONT

Marking a further retreat by the current labor officialdom from any perspective of actively organizing workers into unions and bringing union power to bear, delegates to the Sept. 8-11 AFL-CIO convention overwhelmingly approved a resolution to begin incorporating nonlabor political organizations into the federation and shoring up its dues base with “workers centers.”

The labor movement can't be “limited to workplaces where a majority of employees votes ‘Yes,’” said the resolution.

The AFL-CIO will encourage “worker centers” like “OUR Walmart” and “Fight for 15” to affiliate. These union-initiated groups, which also involve students, social service organization staffers and others, have organized protests around the country calling for higher pay and better working conditions for retail, fast-food and other workers, but with-

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‘Workers need fight for jobs, big raise in minimum wage’

Support Syria toilers against Assad, US imperialism



Militant/Sara Lobman

Dan Fein, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of New York City, talks with David Cunningham July 7 while campaigning door to door in Manhattan apartment complex.

BY EMMA JOHNSON

“When I am introduced to people on their doorsteps, I explain that working people face the brunt of a deep crisis in the capitalist system of production and trade,” Dan Fein, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New York mayor told the *Militant*. Fein, 68, is an electronics assembly worker. “The bosses and their government are taking their crisis out on the backs of the working class, our allies on the land and toilers throughout the world.”

“We must come together as a class. The Democrats and Republicans say there is a ‘we’ and a ‘they’ in the world, and it’s ‘we’ Americans vs. everybody else,” Fein said. “I explain that the only ‘we’ is the working class,

and the ‘they’ is the propertied rulers.”

“We need to come together to fight for a massive public works program to give the 24 million whom their crisis

SOCIALIST CANDIDATES CAMPAIGN ACROSS US

has thrown out of work jobs building housing, hospitals, schools, day care centers and other things workers need,” he said.

“I also champion the fight for a big increase in the minimum wage,” Fein said, “like fast-food workers demonstrating around the country for a raise. Gains in these fights would help break down divisions in the working

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Minneapolis exhibit draws new support in fight to free Cuban 5



Franklin Curbelo

Opening of watercolors exhibit by Antonio Guerrero, one of Cuban Five, in Minneapolis Sept. 12. “I Will Die the Way I Lived,” works include 15 pieces for 15 years of incarceration.

BY TONY LANE

MINNEAPOLIS — “Art can sometimes be beautiful but at its best it is powerful,” Roderic Southall, said here Sept. 12 at the opening of “I Will

FREE THE CUBAN FIVE! 15 YEARS IN FIGHT —see coverage p. 8, editorial p. 7

Die the Way I Lived,” an exhibit of 15 watercolors by Antonio Guerrero, one of the Cuban Five. Southall is curator of Obsidian Arts, which is hosting the showing throughout September at the

Pillsbury House community center. The event coincided with the 15th anniversary of the arrest and frame-up of the five revolutionaries.

“I’m convinced they were framed,” said Tamiko Saunders, a home health care worker and one of 70 people at the event, many of whom like herself were new to the case of the Five. “The exhibit is wonderful, there is lots to read. I just wish there were more pieces.”

“Looking at Antonio’s pieces reminded me of the beauty that can come from an ugly space, deep ex-

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28 miners killed by bosses’ profit drive in Afghanistan coal blast

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

At least 28 coal miners in Afghanistan were killed Sept. 14 as a result of perilous conditions imposed by bosses pressing to squeeze maximum profit from their labor. Fifty-seven miners were trapped inside the state-run underground Abkhorak coal mine in the northern Samangan province when tunnels caved in following a gas explosion. Dozens were injured.

The morning before the blast miners complained to management about dangerous working conditions, Mohammad Seddiq Azizi, Samangan’s provincial governor spokesman, told the media. Supervisors reportedly ignored the miners’ concerns.

Afghanistan is one of the least developed countries in the world and coal mines “can be dangerously primitive, with miners working with

old equipment and little ventilation or safety gear,” reported Agence-France Press.

In a country where nearly one-third of the population, 9 million people,

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Miners killed in Afghanistan

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live on less than \$1 a day, mining jobs are attractive since they pay \$6 to \$7 a day.

The mine collapse occurred because of a short circuit, which led to the fire, Seddiq Azizi told Khaama Press, an Afghan online newspaper.

A number of residents from surrounding villages rushed to the scene to help in rescue efforts, digging through the rubble with their bare hands. Four members of the rescue team were badly injured and at least 14 others sickened by toxic fumes emanating from the site, the provincial governor's spokesman told the Sept. 15 *New York Times*. About 100 workers were taken to the hospital for treatment.

Afghanistan has been ravaged by decades of war — from the bloody conflict between Soviet forces and U.S.-backed Islamist mujahideen combatants, to the Taliban takeover that followed in its wake and the U.S.-led war against the Taliban that still rages today. Massive destruction and social dislocation have greatly set back development of agriculture, in-

dustry and basic infrastructure.

Twelve years since it intervened, Washington still has 60,000 troops in Afghanistan, with 26,000 to be withdrawn by February.

The most recent official unemployment figure that was estimated in 2008 is 35 percent, an improvement from 40 percent in 2005. Of those working, nearly 80 percent are employed in agriculture. The industrial working class remains small, representing less than 6 percent of the workforce, but can be expected to grow.

The Abkhorak mine, where the fatal blast occurred, is an example of a recent industrial projection. In 2009 the Afghan government contracted a private company — Mesaq Sharq Limited — to extract coal over a 10-year period. More than 600,000 tons are produced per year.

An aerial mining survey conducted



Afghan miner unloads coal outside coal mine in Samangan province, April 3, 2012.

by Washington in 2006 concluded Afghanistan has massive underground mineral wealth. The biggest resources, according to the Pentagon,

are iron ore and copper deposits. But foreign investment is deterred by a lack of basic infrastructure to profitably extract it.

Thousands to attend December World Youth Festival in Ecuador

BY PAUL PEDERSON AND JACOB PERASSO

Thousands of young people will gather in Quito, Ecuador, Dec. 7-13 for the 18th World Festival of Youth and Students, a weeklong gathering held roughly every four years that draws young students and workers from around the world together under the banner of the struggle against imperialism.

"The festival is a space where young people can see that they can be actors who can change the condition caused by the world capitalist crisis," Leira Sánchez of the Union of Young Communists of Cuba (UJC) told the *Militant* at a festival planning meeting held in Madrid in June.

The UJC of Cuba is among the organizations that play a leadership role in the World Federation of Democratic Youth, whose member organizations work together to organize and promote the festivals.

This crisis is beginning to propel working people into actions to defend themselves — from strikes and mass demonstrations by garment workers in Bangladesh and Cambodia to workers in the U.S. standing up to the bosses' drive against wages, working conditions, unions and the very dignity of working people.

The scourge of long-term high unemployment afflicting the working class throughout most of the world has come down especially hard on young people, increasingly disillusioned by what they see capitalism has to offer. In the U.S., nearly a quarter of young people are jobless or too discouraged to look for work and millions are increasingly finding only part-time work. From Greece to parts of Africa, official youth jobless figures approach 60 percent and beyond.

"The festival will be of interest to young people from the U.S. who are drawn to working-class struggles, such as rallies by fast-food workers press-

ing for pay raises and unionization, fights against police brutality, protests against government attacks on immigrant workers and defense of women's right to choose abortion," said Rebecca Williamson, a leader of the Young Socialists, which together with the Young Communist League is organizing a delegation from the United States. "We're asking interested youth we meet campaigning with the *Militant* door to door in working-class neighborhoods to consider joining us in Quito.

"The festival will be a unique opportunity to talk with young people attracted to anti-imperialist struggles around the world about the need for a revolutionary working-class political course independent of the capitalist class and their political parties," Williamson said. "And about the socialist revolution in Cuba as the living example we can emulate. There workers and farmers, through a popular insurrection, wrested political power from the ruling class and overthrew capitalism."

The last festival in 2010, which brought together some 15,000 delegates, was held in South Africa. The festival venue this year is significant "because

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Afghan miners on break at coal mine in Samangan province, April 3, 2012.

THE MILITANT

Back prisoners fighting solitary confinement

Prisoners in California recently conducted a hunger strike — the third in two years — against long-term solitary confinement and other inhumane conditions authorities subject them to each day. The 'Militant' covers this and other struggles by workers behind bars. Don't miss an issue!



Militant/Betsy Stone
Rally in Sacramento, Calif., July 30 against long-term solitary confinement of prisoners.

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Socialist candidates campaign

Continued from front page

class and promote solidarity and class consciousness.”

“When I campaigned door to door in Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn recently, I met three workers on a stoop who asked me what I thought about Bill de Blasio’s campaign platform, ‘Tale of Two Cities,’” said Fein. De Blasio is Fein’s Democratic Party opponent.

“He says it’s Manhattan against the outer boroughs,” Fein said, “as if that’s the ‘we’ and ‘they’ workers should be concerned about. But New York is divided along class lines, and de Blasio is defending capitalism like all the other candidates.

“I’m the only worker in the race,” said Fein. “The working class needs to break with the two bosses’ parties, the Democrats and Republicans, and form its own party to organize and mobilize both in the streets and at the polls.”

The stop-and-frisk program, and the fact that millions of workers and their relatives, friends and co-workers have been caught up in police harassment, plea bargains and prison, leads to many discussions, Fein said.

“And that makes workers interested when I explain the fight to free the Cuban Five, Cuban revolutionaries imprisoned in the U.S. for fighting to defend their revolution,” Fein said. “The Five are part of the fight in this country against this whole anti-working-class ‘criminal justice’ system.”

The working class is international, Fein said, whether it’s workers without papers coming to work here, garment workers in Cambodia fighting for unions and safer working conditions, or workers and farmers in Syria fighting for political space and to get the boot of the Assad dictatorship

there off their back.

Fein said most workers he has met campaigning overwhelmingly oppose U.S. military attacks on Syria, arguing that “we” shouldn’t repeat the mistakes of Iraq and Afghanistan and that the resources should be spent here at home.

“I don’t start with the war in Syria, I start with the working class fighting to defend itself everywhere in the world. We are an international class,” Fein said. “I explain the world capitalist crisis and how workers need to fight for union rights, workers’ rights, political space.”

In Syria workers started their fight two-and-a-half years ago, inspired by the big mobilizations in Tunisia and Egypt that overthrew dictatorial regimes in those countries, Fein said. The government of Bashar al-Assad responded with butchery, killing 100,000 people. Workers in Syria — Sunnis, Shiites, Palestinians, Kurds, Christians and others — are fighting for the same things as workers in the U.S. — political rights, jobs, freedom from government attack. The SWP campaign supports them 100 percent.

“I explain that the U.S. government, which is attacking workers here at home, is not going to do something in Syria to help working people there,” Fein said. “The SWP opposes any military attack by Washington.

“This is a new idea to most people, that there is a working class in Syria that we have common interests with,” Fein said. “They are used to hearing about the rebels and Assad. This is what we need, to see all questions in class terms.”

Along with Fein, the New York SWP ticket includes Deborah Liatos, 54, for public advocate and John Studer, 66, for comptroller. Róger Calero, 44, Seth



Militant/Janice Lynn

Atlanta SWP candidates John Benson for mayor and Rachele Fruit, left, for city council president meet *Militant* subscriber Reinalda Aguirre campaigning door to door Sept. 14. Fruit shows two of the books on special, *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free* and *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*.

Galinsky, 56, and Sara Lobman, 51, are the SWP candidates for Bronx, Queens and Manhattan borough presidents respectively. The citywide candidates are on the ballot.

In Des Moines, Iowa, Socialist Workers Party candidates are also on the ballot for the Nov. 5 elections for city council: Ellen Brickley, 62, a machine operator, in Ward 1; Margaret Trowe, 65, an auto parts worker, for the at-large seat; and David Rosenfeld, 50, a bindery worker, in Ward 3.

Trowe joined others to protest Aug. 28 in support of women’s right to choose abortion at an Iowa Medical Board hearing on shutting down Planned Parenthood’s telemedicine program, which had expanded access to medical abortion in rural parts of the state. Trowe testified at the hearing as well.

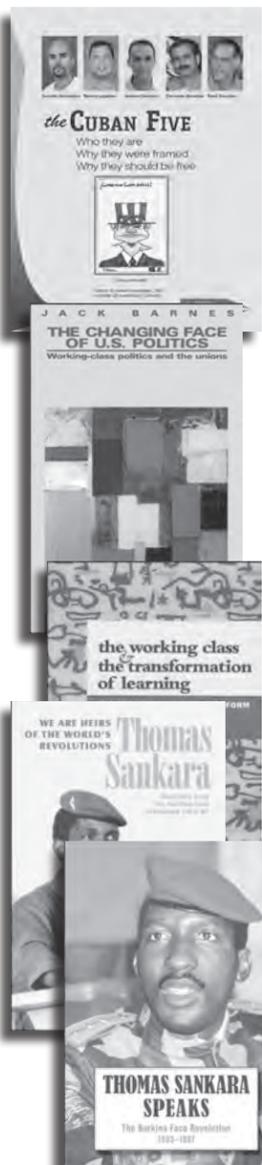
“The campaign statement we’ve been

distributing explains that what workers face in this country and what workers face around the world are interconnected,” Rosenfeld told the *Militant*. “Revolutionary-minded workers don’t fight for a class-struggle program in peacetime and then throw it aside when there is the threat of military action for some special program against war.”

“We deepen our efforts in the working class, explaining that the U.S. capitalist rulers are a deadly enemy of working people at home and abroad,” he said. “The capitalists’ crisis today drives them to step up attacks here and to fight harder to maintain and extend their control of markets and resources overseas.”

In addition to Des Moines and New York, the SWP is running candidates this year in Atlanta, Houston, Miami, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Seattle and Minneapolis.

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San Francisco
Crisis in Syria/Crisis of Imperialism: Challenges Facing the Working Class.
Speaker: Mary Martin, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Sept. 28. Dinner, 6 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 5482 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

MINNESOTA

Minneapolis
As Toll of Economic Crisis Continues, Workers Fight for Raise in Minimum Wage, Unionization. Fri., Sept. 27, 7:30 p.m. 416 E. Hennepin Ave., Suite 214. Tel.: (612) 729-1205.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney
Building Solidarity with the Cuban Revolution in Malaysia and Indonesia.
Speakers: Baskaran Appu, Communist League, New Zealand, and Linda Harris, Communist League, Australia. Both speakers took part in recent political events in the two countries. Sat., Sept. 28, 6 p.m. Donation: \$4 waged, \$2 unwaged. 3/281-287 Beamish St., Campsie. Tel.: (02) 9718-9698.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland
Building Solidarity with the Cuban Revolution in Malaysia and Indonesia.
Speakers: Baskaran Appu, Communist League candidate for council, Manakau Ward; Patrick Brown, Communist League. Both speakers took part in recent political events in the two countries. Fri., Sept. 27, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5 waged, \$2 unwaged. 4/125 Grafton Road. Tel.: (09) 369-1223.

Assad steps up bombing

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ment in Syria without Assad, drawn from some forces currently part of the Assad regime and certain opposition figures. Their goal is to establish a semblance of political stability with a government more in line with imperialist interests and capable of keeping a lid on the struggles of workers and farmers.

Assad has informed the U.N. that the Syrian government is applying to sign on to the treaty banning chemical weapons.

President Barack Obama hailed the deal with Russia Sept. 15 in an ABC news interview with George Stephanopoulos, saying it could lead to a political settlement of the civil war. Secretary of State John Kerry announced that representatives of Russia, the U.S. and the U.N. would meet Sept. 28 in New York to discuss possible steps toward a “negotiated solution.”

Obama credited the threat of U.S. military strikes in Syria with producing the deal with Moscow and added he was leaving a consort of battleships in the area should it go sour. Leading up to Moscow’s offer, Kerry suggested in a supposed off the cuff remark that the only thing that would avert a U.S. strike would be if the Syrian government were to agree to declare and dismantle its chemical weapons through a process overseen by the U.N. Obama provided time for a deal to come together by seeking congressional approval and multilateral support.

Regime launches attacks on workers

Assad took advantage of the shift to resume attacks against opposition forces and civilians. Rockets and missiles have started raining down again on Damascus suburbs and other urban areas. On Sept. 11 regime warplanes bombed one of the main hospitals in the north of the country in Al-Bab, near Aleppo, killing 11 people, including two doctors. Over the course of the war, Assad has targeted schools, hospitals and food supplies for repeated attack, shattering many cities. Over 6 million Syrians have been driven from their homes, more than 2 million out of the country.

The Syrian government is also receiving aid from Iran and thousands of fighters from Hezbollah, the Tehran-backed Lebanese militia. Iranian Revolutionary Guards are reportedly running a training center for foreign combatants to fight alongside the Syrian army.

The civil war continues to spill outside the country’s borders. On Sept. 16 a government helicopter flew into Turkish airspace and was shot down, landing back inside Syrian territory. The next day a car bomb exploded at a major border crossing checkpoint between the two countries, killing seven.

Inspired by the massive protests in Tunisia, Egypt and other places in the Middle East and North Africa, working people and others in Syria began demonstrating in 2011 for political rights and increasingly for the end of the Assad regime. The growing actions were met with furious repression, space for public demonstrations closed, and some forces began armed resistance.

These forces are divided between groups led by Syrian bourgeois opposition factions, many with ties to ruling circles in Saudi Arabia or Qatar, and deeply reactionary Islamist-jihadist forces, some linked to al-Qaeda.

The al-Nusra Front and the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, the two main al-Qaedaist groups, pose a serious threat to toilers in Syria. They have attempted to take control of territory where they can set up operations and reap funds by demanding payment at border checkpoints and through sales of crude oil and other “spoils of war.” Increasingly, the Lebanese *Al Akhbar* reports, these groups are coming into conflict with each other.

Debate over Obama foreign policy

Obama has won some bipartisan backing for his decision to make a deal with Russian President Vladimir Putin. “It’s hard for anybody to poo-poo the idea that we may be on the way to a diplomatic solution,” said Sen. Bob Corker of Tennessee, ranking Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Sen. Ron Johnson of Wisconsin, another Republican, said the U.S.

Washington backed use of gas attacks in Iran-Iraq war

BY JOHN STUDER

As U.S. officials cry crocodile tears for the more than 1,400 Syrians slaughtered Aug. 21 in a sarin gas attack, a review of Washington’s complicity in the last major use of chemicals weapons helps shed light on the motivations behind the U.S. rulers’ push to remove such weapons from the hands of the regime in Syria.

Some 1 million Iranians were hit by chemical weapons used by the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein in its U.S.-backed war aimed at rolling back the Iranian revolutionary victory of workers and farmers, who in 1979 overthrew the hated U.S.-backed monarchy of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.

Over the course of the eight-year war an estimated 10,000 to 20,000 people were killed by chemical weapons and 100,000 sickened, many with



Reuters/Houssam Abo Dabak

Damage from Syrian military shelling in Idlib Sept. 8. Since Washington and Moscow reached preliminary agreement, Assad has stepped up bombings and other attacks across Syria.

now has the opportunity to “parlay” the deal into broader efforts to find a political end to the civil war.

Other politicians and bourgeois commentators argue that U.S. power and credibility is being weakened by the Obama administration’s course to cut the size of the U.S. military, pull U.S. troops from wars abroad and avoid military engagements through negotiations on terms that appear to diminish U.S. power.

“U.S. policy is not to oust the

Assad regime or even to encourage the Syrian people to do so,” Douglas Feith, U.S. undersecretary of defense under George W. Bush, wrote in the Sept. 17 *Wall Street Journal*. “Assad must stay, not go, for he is needed to negotiate and implement an arrangement to destroy Syria’s chemical weapons.

“The victims of chemical weapons shake in agony,” Feith added. “Assad, Vladimir Putin and Iran’s Ali Khamenei shake with laughter.”

chronic and lifelong debilitating illnesses.

A report in August by *Foreign Policy* magazine, based on recently declassified CIA records and interviews with former U.S. intelligence officers, documents that Washington was well aware of Hussein’s use of chemical weapons. “The Reagan administration decided that it was better to let the attacks continue if they might turn the tide of the war,” the article says.

“The invaders should know that for every harmful insect there is an insecticide capable of annihilating it,” a declassified 1983 U.S. State Department report said, quoting an Iraqi military official, “and Iraq possesses this annihilation insecticide.”

Documents show that starting in 1988, the U.S. began supplying the Iraqi regime with detailed targeting information used to bombard Iranian troops with sarin gas. According to the CIA, two-thirds of all the chemical weapons used by the Iraqi military were dropped in the last 18 months of the war, after the U.S. began supplying the targeting data.

In addition to targeting troops, the U.S.-backed Iraqi regime hit Iranian villages, as well as the Kurdish village of Halabja, with sarin, VX and mustard gas. The attack on Halabja alone led to some 5,000 deaths and 10,000 injured.

All told, thousands were killed in these final attacks. “Washington was

very pleased with the result,” according to *Foreign Policy*.

Thousands of victims of the gas attacks are alive in Iran today. Because of the effects of the stifling sanctions imposed on Iran by Washington and its imperialist allies — measures designed to impose the greatest hardship on working people — there are severe shortages of medicine, including drugs crucial to treat those suffering from the long-term effects of chemical gas poisoning.

Iran’s new foreign minister, Mohammad Javad Zardif, recently condemned the use of chemical weapons on the Internet, reported Reuters. His posting received more than 2,000 responses from Iranians inside and outside the country, many of whom used the opportunity to criticize Tehran’s support for the Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad.

There are several organizations in Iran that campaign against chemical weapons and seek aid for surviving victims, including the Society for Chemical Weapons Victims Support and the Society for the Defense of the Rights of Chemical Weapons Casualties in Sardasht.

In recent years, the former group has sent delegations to annual ceremonies in Hiroshima, Japan, commemorating Washington’s 1945 atomic bombing there and has hosted Japanese delegations to Iran’s National Day for Campaigning against Chemical Weapons. Only the working class and its allies truly have an interest in ridding the world of weapons of mass destruction, whose only purpose is the slaughter of innocents.

Meanwhile, the U.S. military has at its disposal one of the largest arsenals of chemical and nuclear weapons in the world. And Washington stands out as the only government that has ever employed the latter when it annihilated hundreds of thousands of civilians in bombings of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.



Young and old at front to defend Iran against Iraqi invasion.

ON THE PICKET LINE

Docked in Australia, Egyptian sailors strike, win back pay



Egyptian sailors together with officials from Maritime Union of Australia.

SYDNEY — Eleven Egyptian seamen on the coal carrier Wadi Alkarm carried out a successful weeklong strike after the ship berthed in Port Kembla, south of Sydney, Sept. 5. They refused to crew the Egyptian government-owned ship, until they received back pay from June when their wages were cut in half.

After being approached by the sailors, the local International Transport Federation and Maritime Union of Australia backed them in the dispute.

Garry Keane, an MUA official in Port Kembla, told the *Militant* that he met with the men on board every day during the weeklong action and negotiated on their behalf with the Australian and Egyptian authorities.

He was told by one of the sailors that they had also been “working for nine months with a total of only six hours of shore leave.” They had been denied access to food or drink from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. each night while at sea. They had to pay exorbitant prices, such as \$9 for a can of Coke.

The Australian immigration department worked against the sailors by revoking their maritime visas, the normal shore leave entitlement under international law.

An MUA press release said, “Immigration officials told them if they left the ship they would end up in Villawood Detention Centre.” Keane said that after the issue was publicized by the MUA, immigration officials restored their rights to come ashore “at the discretion of the captain.”

After the company made threatening phone calls to family members in Egypt, saying the seamen’s action was jeopardizing their jobs, four of the sailors agreed to be repatriated by air to Egypt Sept. 7.

Despite an agreement to pay all the men their wages in full, Egyptian authorities played brinkmanship, trying to avoid paying them as the men prepared to catch a plane to Cairo.

Only when the seven remaining sailors, backed by the MUA, threatened to extend the dispute did they receive their wages and a promise that the other four would also be paid.

MUA members crewing the Pacific Triangle, which was also berthed at Port Kembla, collected \$500 for their fellow seafarers from Egypt when they learned of the fight, Keane said.

— Ron Poulsen

Colombia farmers, truckers end 3-week anti-gov’t protests

Three weeks of protests by farmers and truckers in Colombia have won concessions from the government, although many demands remain unresolved.

Hundreds of thousands of working farmers and small capitalist farmers who launched the “national farm strike” Aug. 19 lifted most of their highway blockades throughout the country after the government agreed to some of their

demands. The farmers are pressing for government price supports, lower prices for agricultural supplies, cancellation of debts owed to banks, and modification of free trade agreements with the U.S. and other governments.

A Sept. 10 statement by Farm Dignity, which includes organizations of coffee, potato, cacao, rice, dairy, onion, citrus, grain and vegetable farmers, said that the government had agreed to extend existing subsidies for another year, restrict the import of some agricultural products, forgive debts of some farmers who owe less than 20 million pesos (\$10,300) and subsidize 30 percent of fertilizer costs.

According to farm leaders, soon after the road blockades were lifted the government began renegeing.

“Now they’re talking about a 4 percent cut in the price of fertilizers,” Rubén Dario Cifuentes, a small coffee farmer and leader of Farm Dignity in Cauca province, said in a Sept. 13 phone interview. “That’s ludicrous.”

“We’ve achieved something, but we’re still not satisfied,” he said.

“The government is trying to divide the movement by negotiating with farmers department by department,” Urbano García, a small cacao farmer in Magdalena and an organizer for Fensuagro, a farmer and farmworkers union, told the *Militant*.

“We want the debts of the small farm-



Farmers in Colombia march along highway 50 miles from Bogota Aug. 22 demanding government price supports, lower prices for agricultural supplies and cancellation of debts.

ers cancelled, not renegotiated,” García said. “The government said they will cut tariffs on imported fertilizers and other farm supplies, but we want them subsidized because their cost is still too high. We don’t want temporary subsidies for the crops we sell. We want price supports above the cost of production.”

Hundreds of thousands of drivers who own their own trucks ended their work stoppage Sept. 5. They were demanding the government lower the price of gas from \$4.50 to \$1 a gallon and that their pay include a minimum amount per mile to cover truck maintenance.

The government agreed to freeze the price of gas until December and set up a commission to come up with a new formula for determining prices.

“We also won a minimum of 133 pesos (7 cents) per ton per mile for truck main-

tenance,” said Truckers Association of Colombia President Pedro Aguilar.

“The most important thing we won is respect for the drivers,” Aguilar said. “We are hoping the government will carry out the agreement.”

Fierce repression by paramilitaries, soldiers and cops over the last three decades had decimated some farmworker unions and farmers’ associations.

Fensuagro Vice President Huber Ballesteros, a leader of the protest movement, was arrested Aug. 25 on frame-up charges of “rebellion and terrorism.” The union is demanding Ballesteros be freed and the charges dropped.

The recent strikes show that “the fear is beginning to go away,” said García. “People are beginning to demand their rights.”

— Seth Galinsky

New Mexico rally defends women’s right to choose abortion

BY SUSAN LAMONT

Some 250 supporters of women’s right to choose abortion rallied at Civic Plaza in Albuquerque, N.M., Aug. 20 to oppose a referendum to ban abortions after 20 weeks within the city. Partici-

pants also protested recent efforts by the rightist anti-abortion outfit “Operation Rescue” to target a local clinic where late-term abortions are performed.

“We are planning on defeating this referendum,” Mike McCoy of the New



Rally in Albuquerque, N.M., Aug. 20 against referendum to ban abortions after 20 weeks.

Mexico American Civil Liberties Union chapter said in a Sept. 13 phone interview. Organizations defending abortion rights have launched a campaign called “Respect Albuquerque Women” to urge a “no” vote on the ballot measure, McCoy said. The campaign includes the National Organization for Women (Santa Fe), New Mexico Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, ACLU of New Mexico and the state League of Women Voters.

“With the intensity of the anti-abortion protests, we are working to make sure that women retain control of their own bodies in New Mexico,” said Micaela Cadena, of Young Women United, one of the campaign’s supporting groups. “We trust women to make these

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25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



September 30, 1988

FBI Director William Sessions has admitted that a spy program begun in 1981 against the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) later led to separate investigations targeting nine other organizations and 169 individuals.

From 1981 to at least 1985, the FBI used informers and undercover agents to identify those who participated in CISPES-initiated activities, opening files on these people and organizations they belonged to. Trade unionists who attended activities opposing U.S. policy in Central America were singled out.

The spy program was initiated, under classified “Foreign Intelligence/Terrorism” guidelines, on the pretext of investigating alleged CISPES connections with terrorism.



September 30, 1963

New York, Sept. 22 — Police twice broke up peaceful civil rights demonstrations with horses and clubs on Sept. 20, the day President John F. Kennedy addressed the United Nations here. It was the first use of horses against civil rights demonstrators in New York City.

The demonstrations began in the UN’s Hammarskjold Plaza, with some 600 pickets from various groups forming one line to protest to Kennedy about the Birmingham bombings.

Slogans ranged from “Uphold Human Rights” and “Arrest Gov. Wallace” to “Kennedy is Responsible,” “Federal Troops to Alabama,” and “Armed Self Defense Is the Only Guarantee That the Negro Will be Protected.”



October 1, 1938

Every militant worker, every anti-fascist throughout the world stands solidly behind the Czech workers and peasants in their burning, noble desire to resist and smash Hitler.

But there is only one way to fight Hitler and Hitlerism: by breaking altogether away from your own bourgeoisie oppressors and their state, by uniting firmly and independently your own class ranks, by launching your own firm and independent struggle under your own leaders and toward your own aims.

The workers and peasants of Czechoslovakia can defend themselves against Hitler and Hitlerism only through a class war, a revolutionary war, in unalterable opposition to their own bourgeois government and to every bourgeois nation.

35-year sentence for Pfc. Manning meant as warning to media, leakers

‘Whistle-blower’ strategy no road forward for working people

BY LOUIS MARTIN

On Aug. 21, U.S. military judge Army Col. Denise Lind sentenced Pfc. Bradley Manning to serve 35 years in prison for leaking secret military and diplomatic documents. This is the longest sentence ever handed down for leaking government files. It is meant as a sharp warning to any future would-be “whistle-blowers.”

The government’s treatment of Manning — from his arrest to his conviction — bears this out. Manning, who changed his first name to Chelsea after his trial, was held in solitary confinement for much of his nearly three-year pretrial detention, under conditions that U.N. Special Rapporteur on Torture Juan Méndez characterized as “cruel, inhuman and degrading.”

The files released to whistle-blowing website WikiLeaks covered incidents in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, treatment of inmates at the U.S. military prison in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, and secret State Department memos.

He was acquitted on charges of “aiding the enemy,” which carries a life sentence.

Nonetheless, government witnesses urged the longest sentence possible, arguing that Manning had provided aid and comfort to those who want to inflict terrorist acts against the U.S.

Cmdr. Youssef Aboul-Enein, an adviser to the Pentagon’s Joint Intelligence Task Force for Combating Terrorism, told the court Aug. 8 that documents leaked by Manning showing that the U.S. had killed civilians in Iraq or Afghanistan could help create “a good environment for recruitment, for fundraising and for support for Al Qaeda’s wider audience and objectives,” the *New York Times* reported.

This argument, the *Times* and other media pointed out, could be used to gag journalists from reporting facts Washington considers embarrassing about their wars, assassinations and other actions around the world.

The Barack Obama administration has charged seven people, including Manning, with violation of the Espionage Act of 1917 — a thought-control act passed during World War I — for leaking secret government docu-

ments. This is more than twice as many as any other U.S. president.

As part of the same effort to limit leaks, the Obama administration in June indicted Edward Snowden, a computer specialist and employee of a defense contractor for the National Security Administration, who handed over secret documents to the *Guardian* in the U.K. and the *Washington Post*.

These documents revealed aspects of classified NSA programs directing U.S. phone service providers to turn over call records and that the NSA is also secretly seizing all foreign communications from major Internet providers.

Snowden, now in Russia where he was granted one-year asylum that could be extended, said his actions were like those of Manning, only more selective and with more concern for U.S. government interests.

A cosmetic overhaul

The media churned up days and days of front-page coverage on Snowden’s travels and about the NSA’s intrusion into phone and Internet records.

Contrary to the impression given by some bourgeois media that there was mounting pressure for a halt to the NSA spy program, it retained broad bipartisan backing in Congress.

At an Aug. 9 White House news conference, Obama announced a few cosmetic measures he said were aimed at making government snooping programs more “transparent” and to make “the American people more comfortable” with them. Obama said he would add secret “adversary” lawyers who would presumably argue “in appropriate cases” about secret spy warrant requests to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act courts that for decades have rubber-stamped them.

Obama also announced he would create “an outside advisory board of civil liberties and privacy experts” to counsel him.

On Sept. 13, in a lawsuit brought by the American Civil Liberties Union, FISA court Judge Dennis Saylor ruled the government has to review a set of secret rulings about the NSA’s intercepts of phone records. Some of those rulings may become public. Saylor explained that the purpose of the ruling was to “assure citizens of the integrity of this court’s proceedings.”

No way forward for working people

Washington’s surveillance programs and encroachments on democratic and political rights are today aimed mostly at Islamist-jihadist terrorists. But workers can be sure the propertied rulers will use them against us as the crisis of capitalism deepens and gives rise to more workers’ struggles.

Leakers like Manning, Snowden and WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, along with their supporters, argue that revealing government “excesses” and atrocities can shame those in power and lead to more “transparent” and humane governance.

All that is needed, Assange wrote in December 2006, to deal with bad government policies is “mass leaking” that “leaves them exquisitely vulnerable to those who seek to replace them with more open forms of governance.”



It was not release of ‘Pentagon Papers’ in 1971, but mass social battle that led to decisive shifts in public attitudes to oppose an imperialist war being waged on a people fighting for liberation. Top, United Auto Workers contingent in May 5, 1971, protest in New York against the war. Below, *New York Times* front page, July 1, 1971, after defeating Nixon administration efforts to stop publication of Pentagon Papers, secret gov’t study of U.S. imperialist aims in Vietnam.

But as millions of workers are aware, the U.S. government — and all capitalist governments — always has and always will spy on citizens and cause “collateral damage” as they defend their profits and influence around the world.

When leaks like those of Manning and Snowden occur today, absent major proletarian battles or mass social struggles, their efforts to scandalize the U.S. capitalist rulers amount to no more than plaintive appeals that fall on deaf ears for the propertied rulers, who are convinced they know how to defend their rule and will continue to do so as they have for several centuries.

Contrast this with the effect of the *New York Times* 1971 publication of the Pentagon Papers, a top-secret study of U.S. imperialist aims in Vietnam, leaked to the paper by Daniel Ellsberg, who helped write the documents for the Defense Department and was advising President Richard Nixon on Vietnam.

At the time, hundreds of thousands were in the streets, in the U.S. and internationally, demanding that Washington get out of Vietnam. By publishing the Pentagon Papers, the *Times* and Ellsberg hoped to influence the rulers. He had previously given copies of the report to Henry Kissinger, then-President

Richard Nixon’s secretary of state, and to various members of Congress, hoping to change their minds.

But its public release took place in the context of the largest mass movement against a shooting imperialist war since the Russian Revolution of 1917. It was not the release of the Pentagon Papers, but this mass social battle that led to decisive shifts in public attitude to oppose the U.S. war being waged on a people fighting for liberation.

The *Times*’ decision to publish the Pentagon Papers gave the anti-war movement an additional tool to reach deeper into the working class, including among the armed forces, to mobilize the class forces needed to force an end to the war.

This struggle, on the shoulders of the victory of Black rights battles that smashed Jim Crow segregation, helped expose and push back government spying and Cointelpro programs that targeted political activists and working-class organizations. It strengthened political rights.

The propertied rulers could not be “swayed” — they had to be learned.

No change of course is coming out of the current debate on government spying. And Washington has used the leaks to legitimize and reinforce its programs, victimization and infringement of constitutionally protected rights.

New Mexico abortion rights fight

Continued from page 5

decisions for themselves.”

Doctors who work at Southwestern Women’s Options have also become targets for the rightists. The clinic is one of only four in the country that perform third-trimester abortions.

Some 30 anti-abortionists picketed in front of one doctor’s home Aug. 10 with signs and megaphones. The California-based “Survivors of the Abortion Holocaust” group trains “people to end abortion by training them to expose abortionists,” Kristina Garza, told the *Albuquerque Journal*.

The group also visited the small New Mexico Holocaust and Intolerance Museum “to argue for inclusion of a panel about abortion in the United States,” the

Journal reported Aug. 13. The museum was founded in 2001 by Holocaust survivor Werner Gellert.

Two physicians who worked at Dr. George Tiller’s Wichita, Kan., clinic, also a late-term abortion facility, came to Southwestern Women’s Options after Tiller’s 2009 murder by an anti-abortion rightist that resulted in the closure of Tiller’s clinic.

“Since Dr. Tiller’s murder, we have had an increase in anti-abortion picketing at Planned Parenthood’s clinic in Albuquerque,” said Julianna Koob of Planned Parenthood. “And the Southwestern clinic is picketed two or three times a week.” Planned Parenthood is part of the Respect Albuquerque Women campaign, Koob added.



FBI On Trial

Documents from the 15-year legal battle by the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance against decades of spying, harassment and disruption by the FBI and the victory won in 1988. —\$20

Out Now!

A Participant’s Account of the Movement in the United States Against the Vietnam War
by Fred Halstead

Account of fight for a political course to organize working people, GIs and youth and help lead growing world opposition to the Vietnam War. —\$35

Pathfinderpress.com

Build int'l fight to free the Cuban 5!

Sept. 12 marked 15 years since the arrest and frame-up of René González, Fernando González, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero and Gerardo Hernández.

They refused to plea bargain. They proudly acknowledge their assignment from the Cuban government to defend their homeland and revolution. They won't cave-in to efforts by the U.S. government and prison authorities to break their spirit. They carry out political work among fellow workers behind bars and have a record as selfless revolutionary working-class fighters. Three of them took part in Cuba's internationalist combat mission in Angola to repel invasions by the white-supremacist regime of apartheid South Africa. All this speaks volumes about the type of individuals the Five are, why the U.S. capitalist rulers hate and fear the Cuban Revolution, and why working people everywhere should support the international campaign to free them.

When working people learn about the Five, the facts of the frame-up and the conditions of their imprisonment, many identify with their struggle. Millions have had a bitter taste of U.S. capitalist "justice" or know someone close to them who has. Prisoners in California recently concluded a hunger strike against solitary confinement and other

inhumane conditions, experiences the Five share and have also fought against. Confronting high unemployment and the bosses' drive to make millions of workers pay for the crisis of capitalism, more and more working people are beginning to look for ways to stand up. As this resistance grows within the U.S., we will find the "jury of millions" that can win their freedom.

The 15 new watercolors by Antonio, "I will die the way I lived," which depict the first 17 months they spent in the Miami Federal Detention Center leading up to their trial, are a powerful new tool that can be used to win new supporters to this fight.

The paintings, and the stories that go with them, show the brutality of the prison system, as well as the discipline, integrity, courage and creative spirit with which the Five have resisted. They highlight the kind of exemplary human beings who have been forged in the Cuban Revolution, the caliber of working-class fighters needed to build workers parties in the U.S. and around the world.

We have an important weapon in this fight: *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free*. Help get it out and join with others to "Free the Cuban Five!"

AFL-CIO tops turn further from struggle

Continued from front page

out organizing the ranks themselves to establish actual unions.

Liberal political organizations that share the labor federation's orientation to the Democratic Party, including the NAACP, National Organization for Women, National Council of La Raza and the Sierra Club, are invited to join the labor federation as well.

"The crisis for labor has deepened," AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka told the *New York Times* Sept. 6. "We really have to experiment." Nonunion affiliated workers can help lobby state legislatures for a higher minimum wage, push Congress to raise taxes on the wealthy and help press employers to improve safety conditions, Trumka said.

U.S. union membership stood at 14.4 million workers in 2012, representing 11.3 percent of the U.S. workforce, a 97-year low. In the last two decades, under the capitalists' unrelenting assaults, union membership has declined from 20.1 percent to its current level.

In a related move, United Auto Workers President

Bob King announced Sept. 6 that the union was cooperating with Volkswagen to create a German-style "works council" at the company's Chattanooga, Tenn., assembly plant, which employs some 2,400 workers. "Volkswagen is a great company and they really believe worker representation is part of their success," said King, according to the *Wall Street Journal*.

Under this proposal, workers at the Chattanooga plant would join the UAW, which would then represent them on the company-union "works council," which would include representatives of management, salaried employees and plant workers.

To date, none of the many auto assembly plants in the South owned by German, Japanese and South Korean manufacturers has been organized by the UAW or any other union.

Meanwhile, membership in the UAW stands at 390,000, down from 1.5 million in 1979. Promoting collaboration with car manufacturers and the government to "save the U.S. auto industry," UAW officials

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World Youth Festival

Continued from page 2

in Latin America today you can see an alternative in the process of integration," said Sánchez, referring to trade blocs and other initiatives between a number of governments in Latin America and the Caribbean to counter the economic and political domination of Washington and other imperialist powers.

Today PetroCaribe, an energy cooperation agreement initiated by the Venezuelan government in 2005, provides Cuba and other countries in the Caribbean and Central America with oil at preferential prices, weakening the stranglehold of the imperialist-dominated oil conglomerates. Other anti-imperialist initiatives include the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), which promotes trade and economic cooperation among certain countries of Latin America and the Caribbean as a counter to U.S.-dominated trade blocs, and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), an initiative launched in 2010 to counter the U.S.-dominated Organization of American States.

Venezuela's PetroCaribe program and other cooperative trade agreements have been a lifeline for the Cuban Revolution, helping defend it from the ongoing economic war against it led by the U.S. government. The international campaign opposing Washington's 52-year trade and financial embargo against Cuba will be among the topics discussed at the festival.

At the festival preparatory meeting in June delegates approved a statement celebrating "the return of René González to Cuba. His release, a victory won through the political struggle worldwide for the freedom of the Cuban Five, has helped breathe new life into the struggle for the freedom of Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González, and Ramón Labañino, who have been imprisoned for 15 years.

"The five were arrested and charged with conspiracy to commit espionage, and in the case of Gerardo, conspiracy to commit murder," the statement continued. "Their real crime in the eyes of the U.S. imperialist rulers, however, was their bold and steadfast defense of Cuba's socialist revolution. ... Join us in making this festival a powerful vehicle in the battle to free the Cuban Five!"

Cuban Five: 'Revolutionaries we seek to emulate'

"For the young socialists in the United States the Cuban Five are examples of the kind of revolutionaries we seek to emulate," said Williamson.

The festival takes place a few months after the 60th anniversary of the cease-fire that registered the defeat of U.S. war aims in the Korean War in 1953. Delegates from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will be present to talk about the fight that continues for unification of Korea and for the withdrawal of the 28,000 U.S. troops that still enforce its division.

Among the political questions under debate at the festival will be the grinding civil war in Syria. WFDY released a statement Aug. 30 condemning the threats of U.S. imperialist intervention in Syria. At the same time, there are sharp disagreements between those who support the struggles of working people in Syria and those who defend the course of the Bashar al-Assad regime. Workers there began over two years ago to fight to bring an end to the brutality of the Assad government as they press for political rights.

One of the struggles that has gotten attention at recent festivals has been that of the Saharawi people of Western Sahara, who have been waging a fight for self-determination for decades, first from Spanish colonial rule, and today against occupation by the Moroccan government of King Mohammed VI. "For us the festival is a space where we can raise our voices and where we can communicate to the world what is happening in the occupied zones of Western Sahara and in the refugee camps," Omar Hassena told the *Militant* at the meeting in Spain. Hassena came to the meeting from the refugee camps in Algeria where hundreds of thousands of Saharawi live in exile.

The two member organizations of WFDY in the U.S. — the Young Communist League and Young Socialists — have established a National Preparatory Committee to build the U.S. delegation. If you are interested in learning more, you can contact the distributors on page 10 or email the USNPC at WFDY-SEcuador2013@gmail.com.

Tom Baumann contributed to this article.

LETTERS

Life of working-class organizer

The *Militant* and the Socialist Workers Party lost a good friend June 29 when Cecilio Santillana of San Jose, Calif., died at age 85.

Cecilio worked for 14 years as an agricultural laborer, starting in the 1940s as a bracero, a program under which the Mexican and U.S. governments collaborated to supply agribusiness with a temporary, highly exploited workforce. He was active in the fight to win money owed to the many thousands of braceros whose meager pay was cut by 10 percent and placed in "savings accounts" for the workers' use when they retired.

Concepción Santillana, Cecilio's wife, told us July 8 that he did not succeed in getting all that was due him. She said he remembered with satisfaction the braceros' fight and the immigrant rights marches he had helped to organize and participated in, including the massive outpouring in San Jose of more than 100,000 working people on May Day 2006. Cecilio spoke at Militant Labor Forums in San Francisco on the fight for immigrant rights on several oc-

casions.

Gerardo Sanchez and Joel Britton
San Francisco, Calif.

Disagree on 'whistle-blowers'

This letter is in regards to the article "Whistle-Blowers: Neither Heroes nor Traitors for Working Class" in the July 8 issue.

Can the exposure of the U.S. government's widespread spying programs be used to show the contradictions within this capitalist and so-called free democratic system? I think so. Why would a truly free and "democratic" government need such a vast and widespread capacity to spy, collect and store such massive amounts of data on

its own citizens?

Also, I disagree with the statement that spying is not currently directed against political activists or Militant Labor. A recent case shows U.S. government accessing all twitter activity during Occupy Wall Street protests.

I agree that we must not lose sight of the true struggle and let the symptoms distract us from the disease itself. However, I firmly believe that as revolutionaries, as socialists, as communists, we need to be vigilant in spotting these contradictions, these symptoms of the disease that is capitalism. And expose them in the correct context and light.

A prisoner
Arkansas

'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

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

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

Guerrero painting exhibit

Continued from front page

pressions in shallow surroundings,” said Brooke Dillard-Saunders, a young worker who has been part of protests against the police killing of Terrance Franklin here. “It had an us versus them effect for me.”

In an introductory note Guerrero says, “All these images have one thing in common: they were memories of the unjust and cruel treatment given to us since the very first day of our detention.”

Guerrero further writes, “They portray moments of our days of survival, isolated in the punishment cells of the ‘hole’ of the Federal Detention Center of Miami for 17 months. After finishing painting number 15, I made the decision to stop in this number, because it coincides with the number of years that soon will mark our captivity.” Some of the paintings also help capture the resilience and fighting spirit of the Five.

“They not only take away your freedom, but they turn you into a number,” Guerrero writes in a description of “Number,” the second piece in the series. “The Letter P” and “Fishing” show how prisoners communicated by spelling out words through a small glass window and used hooks and string to exchange messages and other items. “The Vent” illustrates how during a period in which some of the Five were in adjoining cells they were able to communicate through air vents. “The Chains” depict the shackles used whenever they were taken out of the “hole.”

After initially being kept apart, the Five eventually won their fight to share cells and later to join the general prison population.

Three of the paintings depict games — chess, Parcheesi and *cubilete*, a dice game — fabricated with materials at hand and secretly played to pass time.

Rose Brewer, a professor of African American and African Studies at the University of Minnesota, and Mel Reeves, a longtime campaigner against police brutality in the city, spoke during a brief program.

“We are glad to announce that two Minnesota unions — AFSCME Local 3800 and UFCW Local 1189 — have

added their voices to the list of organizations in support of releasing the Cuban Five,” reported August Nimitz, speaking for the Minnesota Cuba Committee, an event sponsor along with the Minnesota Immigrant Rights Action Committee. A prominent article in *Insight News*, a local Afro-American newspaper, helped attract people to the event.

Fifteen copies of *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should be Free* were sold at the event.

Those interested in organizing an exhibition can contact the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban 5 at info@thecuban5.org.



Militant/Joanne Murphy

Participants at exhibit opening view Guerrero's “I Will Die the Way I Lived” paintings.

Protests, meetings mark 15 years since arrest of Cuban Five

BY SETH GALINSKY

In the early morning hours of Sept. 12, 1998, FBI agents simultaneously burst into the homes of Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González and René González and arrested them. In a textbook example of capitalist “justice,” the Five were framed up and railroaded to prison following a trial that served to advance the U.S. rulers’ broader assaults on workers’ rights and constitutional protections. Fifteen years later all except for René González remain in prison.

In a message “to the conscience of the world and the North American people,” the Five point out the U.S. government “used cruel conditions of confinement to try to break us and to impede our preparations for a proper defense. Lies dominated the courtroom. Evidence was adulterated, damaged or suppressed.”

Prosecutors tried to intimidate the Five into collaborating with the U.S. government. “But we didn’t plea bargain because the display of brute force does not imply the possession of a moral high ground by the one who unleashes it. We did not plea bargain because the price of lying to satisfy the demands of the prosecutors seemed to us too degrading. ... because implicating Cuba — the nation we were protecting — with false accusations that would bolster the U.S.

charges against the island would have been an unpardonable act of betrayal to the Cuban people who we love.

“We decided to go to trial,” they said, “a trial that if it had been reported on would have put into doubt not only this case, but the U.S. justice system itself. If the knowledge of what happened in this hall of justice had not been hidden from the people of the United States to whom we never caused, nor intended to cause the slightest harm, it would have been impossible to carry out the Roman circus that this parody of justice became.”

Over the years, knowledge of the fight to free the Five has little by little become more known in the U.S. and garnered support from working people, labor unions and a wide range of organizations and prominent individuals around the world. In Mexico the Network of Intellectuals and Artists in Defense of Humanity issued a statement Sept. 12 signed by scores of writers and artists and political activists from more than 30 countries calling for the return of the Five to Cuba.

The Cuban Five statement said, “Fifteen years have passed during which the U.S. government and justice system have turned a deaf ear to the demands of U.N. bodies, Amnesty International, Nobel prize winners, parliamentarians and parliaments, personalities and religious and legal institutions.”

Supporters of the fight to free the Five marked the anniversary of their arrest with protest demonstrations, vigils, public meetings and other events to build support for the Five and break through what the Five called “the other blockade, the one imposed on the people of the United States.”

Picket lines demanding their release were held Sept. 12 in New York,

Chicago and Montreal. In Washington, D.C., the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban 5 held a vigil in front of the White House. That same day an exhibit of watercolors by Guerrero opened in Minneapolis.

Thousands join march in Havana

In Cuba thousands joined a march in Havana organized by the Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba, the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples, and the Committee in Solidarity with the Five. That evening thousands more attended a Havana concert opened by René González in solidarity with the imprisoned revolutionaries. Similar events took place across the island.

“The heroic example of a revolutionary people resisting for more than half a century the most powerful empire in history is the main source of nourishment for our spirit of struggle, our decision to resist and our confidence that we will return to our homeland,” Fernando González said in a message sent to the concert in Havana. “Sooner or later the bars that keep us captive will have to open up.”

An article René González wrote was printed that day in the *Guardian* newspaper, a major daily in London, titled, “Today marks 15 years since ‘Cuban Five’ arrest, another US injustice: Four Cuban patriots languish in US prisons after a phony trial. Every day they spend in jail is a mockery of human decency.”

On Sept. 13 the University of the District of Columbia Law School hosted a forum that drew 200 participants, mostly students. It was sponsored by the National Committee to Free the Cuban Five and campus chapters of the Black Law Students Association, Black Men’s

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Who are the Cuban Five?



Fernando González, Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino and René González are Cuban revolutionaries who during the 1990s accepted assignments from the Cuban government to gather information on the operations and plans of Cuban-American paramilitary groups based in southern Florida. These rightist outfits, organizing on U.S. soil with virtual impunity, have a long record of carrying out bombings, assassinations and other deadly attacks, both against targets in Cuba and supporters of the Cuban Revolution in the United States, Puerto Rico and elsewhere.

On Sept. 12, 1998, the five were arrested by the FBI. They were framed up and convicted on a variety of charges, which included acting as unregistered agents of the Cuban government and possession of false identity documents. Without a shred of evidence, three were charged with “conspiracy to gather and transmit national defense information.”

Hernández was also convicted of conspiracy to commit murder based on the pretext that he bore responsibility for the Cuban government’s 1996 shoot-down of two Brothers to the Rescue aircraft that had invaded Cuban airspace in disregard of Havana’s repeated warnings. He is serving two life terms plus 15 years. His wife Adriana Pérez is barred from entering the United States.

All but René González remain in prison. He was allowed to return to Cuba in May this year, half-way through a three-year term of supervised release.



Militant/Illona Gersh

Herlinda Hernandez (left) of Service Employees International Union and Michael Barry pass out information to passersby about Cuban Five at Sept. 12 picket line in Chicago.

US imposed capitalist-landlord gov't on SKorea

Even before 1950-53 war, over 100,000 workers, peasants, youth killed in suppression of popular rebellions

BY STEVE CLARK

The last issue of the *Militant* opened this series marking the 60th anniversary of the Korean people's triumph over Washington's murderous 1950-53 war to conquer that country. On July 27, 1953, the U.S. government and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea signed a cease-fire agreement in the village of Panmunjom, which straddles the border dividing the northern and southern halves of Korea.

In September 1945, at the end of World War II, the Korean people — after 40 years of fighting Japanese colonial rule — saw their country torn in two at

PART II

roughly the 38th parallel by the governments of the United States and the Soviet Union.

What's more, when U.S. occupation forces landed in Korea that month, they refused to recognize the Korean People's Republic, which had been established in the South by representatives of People's Committees that had been formed across the country. Instead, Washington not only imposed a U.S. military government but initially kept in place officials of the hated Japanese colonial administration.

U.S. military government

It didn't take long, as a State Department adviser to the U.S. Army brass in Korea put it, for Washington's occupation regime to conclude that "removal of Japanese officials is desirable from the public opinion standpoint."

But the State Department official cautioned that Tokyo's appointees should be removed "only in name," since "there are no qualified Koreans for other than the low-ranking positions." He did, however, call attention to a layer of Korean bourgeois figures who could be drawn into governing the country.

"Although many of them have served

with the Japanese," he said, "that stigma ought eventually to disappear." It didn't.

A 1947 assessment from the newly established Central Intelligence Agency reported that politics in South Korea was "dominated by a rivalry between Rightists" (whom the U.S. military government had ensconced in power) and a "grass-roots independence movement which found expression in the establishment of the People's Committees throughout Korea in August 1945."

Referring to the "numerically small class which virtually monopolizes the native wealth and education," the CIA noted that "this class could not have acquired and maintained its favored position under Japanese rule without a certain minimum of 'collaboration.'"

In short, the U.S. spy agency concluded, the newly established government in the South was "substantially the old Japanese machinery," enforcing its authority through the Tokyo-established National Police, which had been "ruthlessly brutal in suppressing disorder."

Hoping to pretty up the collaborationist character of the government it was imposing, Washington organized in October 1945 to fly Syngman Rhee from the United States to Tokyo, where he met with U.S. Gen. Douglas MacArthur, and then flew on to Seoul on MacArthur's personal plane — the Bataan.

"Through its puppet, Dr. Rhee, the [U.S. military government] attempted to engineer a working coalition of the reactionary political parties which would 'govern' the country" under U.S. control, the *Militant* reported in its Jan. 12, 1946, issue.

As U.S. occupation authorities



Protest in South Korea, Dec. 31, 1945, against U.S.-Soviet division of Korea and imposition of U.S. military government in south. "Fighters for freedom worldwide hailed anti-imperialist action in Korea," *Militant* wrote at the time.

stepped up their attacks on the Korean People's Republic, they implemented measures that struck directly at the economic and social needs of workers and farmers. First, the military government halted distribution to working farmers of lands confiscated from Japanese landlords. Second, the regime lifted price controls on rice and "reformed" the rationing system, cutting in half by mid-1946 the amount of rice Koreans had been getting under Japanese rule.

Over several days at the end of December 1945 and early 1946, thousands of working people in Seoul poured into the streets and organized strikes calling for an end to the U.S. military government and protesting Washington's and Moscow's planned "joint trusteeship" over Korea.

The actions had initially been called by a coalition of the South Korean Workers' Party and bourgeois currents that opposed the partition. But shortly thereafter — on orders not to embarrass Moscow for its complicity in the division — the South Korean Workers' Party turned on a dime and condemned the mobilizations.

The *Daily Worker*, newspaper of the Communist Party in the U.S., denounced the "violent outbursts," which it said "appeared to have been provoked by extreme right-wingers." The *Militant*, to the contrary, said that "fighters for freedom throughout the world hailed the anti-imperialist demonstrations in Korea."

Beginning in late September and October 1946, strikes protesting the American occupation and demanding food were organized by rail workers, postal workers, electrical workers, printers and others. What began as the Taegu uprising in southeastern Korea spread by November to some 160 villages, towns, and cities across North and South Kyongsang and South Cholla provinces, with peasant rebellions and attacks on the despised National Police.

The police, overwhelmed by the size and scope of the rebellion, relied on U.S. armed forces to crush it. The military government declared martial law. Hundreds of Koreans were killed or injured; thou-

sands were beaten, tortured and imprisoned.

A U.S. soldier who witnessed this bloody repression, Sgt. Harry Savage of Yankton, S.D., described the horrors he had seen in a letter to President Harry Truman. "My name is Sergeant Savage," he wrote. "I have just been discharged from the army after spending some ten months in the Occupation Forces in Korea. I am writing this now while I have it fresh in mind and while I am eager to do something about it. ...

"Why were the American people not told of riots that took place in that country and of the hundreds of people who were killed in those riots?" Sergeant Savage asked. He recounted being deployed to put down an uprising in the coastal city of Tongyong, during which "scores of people were killed."

Then, a few days later in nearby Masan, "our entire Battalion patrolled that town all day with dead bodies lying all over the streets, and we kept our machine guns blazing." Many Koreans were beaten and subjected to torture by members of the National Police, he said.

"Many of the GI's got very angry at this," Sergeant Savage reported. "Most of the [U.S.] officers however stood calmly by and let these beatings go on without letup. In fact our Division Artillery sent a letter to our Battalion to the effect not to criticize what the police were doing. ...

"Most of us thought surely these things would reach American newspapers. About two weeks later the 'Stars and Stripes' had an article about it. They said that there had been a riot in Masan, 'but American troops restored law and order without firing a shot.'"

Syngman Rhee regime

In May 1948 Washington rigged elections for a National Assembly in North Korea. The vote, given the blessing by United Nations inspectors, was restricted to landowners, to taxpayers in towns and cities, and, at the village level, to elders.

The new assembly established the Republic of Korea, with Syngman Rhee as president. Inaugural ceremonies were held in August. Rhee maintained his corrupt and brutal regime until 1960, when a mass uprising by workers and youth overturned it.

As Rhee was being anointed in Seoul, South Korean troops and police, backed

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Top left, Syngman Rhee, Oct. 20, 1945, at ceremony in Seoul shortly after Washington flew him in from United States via Tokyo to help stabilize capitalist rule. Seated at left is U.S. Gen. John Hodge. Top right, unit of Korean National Police force, 1946. Bottom, demonstrator against U.S.-rigged elections led away by Korean police in Seoul, March 1, 1948, as rightist paramilitaries, in white, watch crowd.

Nelson Mandela: Cuba's aid to Africa is unparalleled

Below is an excerpt from *How Far We Slaves Have Come!*, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for September. It contains the speeches given by Nelson Mandela and Fidel Castro at a July 26, 1991, rally in Matanzas, Cuba. Between 1975 and 1991 some 425,000 Cubans volunteered for duty in Angola to help defend the newly independent country from invasions by South Africa's white-supremacist regime, backed by its allies in Washington. In March 1988 South African troops suffered a decisive defeat at Cuito Cuanavale. Copyright © 1991 Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY NELSON MANDELA

The Cuban people hold a special place in the hearts of the people of Africa. The Cuban internationalists have made a contribution to African independence, freedom, and justice, unparalleled for its principled and selfless character.

From its earliest days the Cuban revolution has itself been a source of inspiration to all freedom-loving people.

We admire the sacrifices of the Cuban people in maintaining their independence and sovereignty in the face of a vicious imperialist-orchestrated campaign to destroy the impressive gains made in the Cuban revolution.

We too want to control our own desti-



Militant photos by Mary-Alice Waters
Rally in Matanzas, Cuba, July 26, 1991, where (inset) ANC President Nelson Mandela (left) and Cuban President Fidel Castro speak about Cuba's role in defeat of white-supremacist South African forces in Angola.

ny. We are determined that the people of South Africa will make their future and that they will continue to exercise their full democratic rights after liberation from apartheid. We do not want popular participation to cease at the moment when apartheid goes. We want to have the moment of liberation open the way to ever-deepening democracy.

We admire the achievements of the Cuban revolution in the sphere of social welfare. We note the transformation from a country of imposed backwardness to universal literacy. We acknowledge your advances in the fields of health, education, and science.

There are many things we learn from your experience. In particular we are moved by your affirmation of the historical connection to the continent and people of Africa.

Your consistent commitment to the systematic eradication of racism is unparalleled.

But the most important lesson that you have for us is that no matter what the odds, no matter under what difficulties you have had to struggle, there can be no surrender! It is a case of freedom or death!

I know that your country is experienc-

ing many difficulties now, but we have confidence that the resilient people of Cuba will overcome these as they have helped other countries overcome theirs.

We know that the revolutionary spirit of today was started long ago and that its spirit was kindled by many early fighters for Cuban freedom, and indeed for freedom of all suffering under imperialist domination.

We too are also inspired by the life and example of José Martí, who is not only a Cuban and Latin American hero but justly honored by all who struggle to be free.

We also honor the great Che Guevara, whose revolutionary exploits, including on our own continent, were too powerful for any prison censors to hide from us. The life of Che is an inspiration to all human beings who cherish freedom. We will always honor his memory.

We come here with great humility. We come here with great emotion. We come here with a sense of a great debt that is owed to the people of Cuba. What other country can point to a record of greater selflessness than Cuba has displayed in its relations with Africa?

How many countries of the world benefit from Cuban health workers or

educationists? How many of these are in Africa?

Where is the country that has sought Cuban help and has had it refused?

How many countries under threat from imperialism or struggling for national liberation have been able to count on Cuban support?

It was in prison when I first heard of the massive assistance that the Cuban internationalist forces provided to the people of Angola, on such a scale that one hesitated to believe...

We in Africa are used to being victims of countries wanting to carve up our territory or subvert our sovereignty. It is unparalleled in African history to have another people rise to the defense of one of us.

We know also that this was a popular action in Cuba. We are aware that those who fought and died in Angola were only a small proportion of those who volunteered. For the Cuban people internationalism is not merely a word but something that we have seen practiced to the benefit of large sections of humankind.

We know that the Cuban forces were willing to withdraw shortly after repelling the 1975 invasion, but the continued aggression from Pretoria made this impossible.

Your presence and the reinforcement of your forces in the battle of Cuito Cuanavale was of truly historic significance.

The crushing defeat of the racist army at Cuito Cuanavale was a victory for the whole of Africa!

The overwhelming defeat of the racist army at Cuito Cuanavale provided the possibility for Angola to enjoy peace and consolidate its own sovereignty!

The defeat of the racist army allowed the struggling people of Namibia to finally win their independence!

The decisive defeat of the apartheid aggressors broke the myth of the invincibility of the white oppressors!

The defeat of the apartheid army was an inspiration to the struggling people inside South Africa! Without the defeat of Cuito Cuanavale our organizations would not have been unbanned!

The defeat of the racist army at Cuito Cuanavale has made it possible for me to be here today!

September BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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South Africa and Cuba in Today's World

by Nelson Mandela, Fidel Castro

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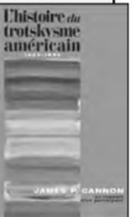
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US in Korea

Continued from page 9

by Washington's occupation forces, were brutally suppressing a rebellion on Cheju Island, 60 miles below the peninsula's southernmost tip.

Actions denouncing the U.S.-engineered elections and demanding food and jobs had begun there in March 1948. In face of government arrests and killings, there was an armed uprising on April 3, led by the South Korean Workers' Party and other forces.

Expressing the imperial arrogance and contempt for working people that distinguished the U.S. occupiers, Col. Rothwell Brown wrote at the time that the ranks of the fighters were "ignorant, uneducated farmers and fishermen."

The uprising had largely been crushed by the summer of 1949. "The job is about done," U.S. Ambassador John Muccio wired the State Department in May.

According to the government's own figures, at least 30,000 people on Cheju Island had been killed out of a population of no more than 300,000. More recent estimates place the figure as high as 80,000 dead.

In a brutal campaign later used by Washington during the Vietnam War as a model for its "strategic hamlets" program, South Korean troops and police drove peasants from their homes into heavily fortified villages. By the end of the bloodletting, only 170 of 400 villages remained on Cheju; nearly 40,000 homes had been destroyed; and tens of thousands had taken refuge in Japan.

Another uprising began in October 1948, in the southeastern city of Yosu. There many soldiers in the Korean army's 14th and 6th regiments rebelled in face of orders to go to Cheju and take part in a bloody crackdown on fellow Koreans.

According to an article by Joseph Hansen in the Nov. 8, 1948, issue of the *Militant*, a dispatch in the *New York Herald Tribune* reported that when orders came for deployment to Cheju, rebel troops instead killed "all the loyal officers at Yosu and seized an arsenal of American and Japanese weapons." Hansen wrote that soldiers seized a train and went to nearby Suncheon, where they



Left, artist Kang Yo Bae's depiction of the 1948 South Korean police attacks on demonstrators in Cheju demanding food and jobs, and protesting rigged elections. **Right**, U.S. and South Korean officers meet on Cheju Island, May 1948, during uprising there that was crushed by South Korean forces with Washington's active help. As many as 80,000 were killed out of population of 300,000 during yearlong revolt.



"ran up the flags of the North Korean People's Republic" — established just weeks earlier on Sept. 9 — and were joined by hundreds of local residents.

The rebellion was quelled by Korean troops under the command of U.S. officers.

The *Militant's* account of the *Herald Tribune* dispatch continued:

More than 5,000 men were rounded up on the playing field of a school [in Suncheon] for questioning "to find out where they were during the rebellion and how they acted." Batches were then executed on the spot. "One of the first sights to meet the eyes of American correspondents reaching here today was a rifle squad of executioners standing over fallen enemies." ...

The report concludes: "The four American correspondents at the scene of the fighting here have been urged strongly to point out that if the American troops are taken from the area in the discernible future, the whole country is sure to be conquered by organized Communists."

By July 1950, even before Washington launched its murderous war in Korea, more than 100,000 workers, peasants, and youth had already been killed by the landlord-capitalist regime and the U.S. occupation army that imposed it on the southern half of the divided country.

(To be continued)

Actions demand 'Free Cuban 5'

Continued from page 8

Law Society, Latino/a Law Student Association, National Lawyers Guild and the Criminal Justice Society.

Speakers at the forum included actor Danny Glover; attorney Richard Klugh, part of the Five's legal team; Mara Verheyden-Hilliard, executive director of the Partnership for Civil Justice Fund; and Gloria La Riva, coordinator of the National Committee to Free the Cuban Five. Chrisarla Houston, an associate professor at the university, chaired the meeting.

"The case of the Five is a political case," said Glover, the featured speaker. "They are in jail today because of the more than 50-year-old hostility of the U.S. government toward the Cuban Revolution. It is part of this government's attempt to punish the Cuban people for their revolution, their sovereignty, their integrity."

"We need to tell [President Barack] Obama to free the Five and end the embargo of Cuba," he said. "We can and should raise our voices."

Later that evening more than 70 people participated in an event for the Five sponsored by the Embassy of Venezuela and the International Committee for the

Freedom of the Cuban 5, held at the embassy. Speakers there included Glover; Stephen Kimber, author of *What Lies Across the Water*, a new book on the Cuban Five; and attorney Jose Pertierra. Pertierra is representing the Venezuelan government in its effort to have Luis Posada Carriles face trial in that country for his role in masterminding the Oct. 6, 1976, bombing of a Cubana airline flight that killed all 73 people on board — the type of murderous attack the Five were in the U.S. to prevent. Venezuelan Charge d'affaires Calixto Ortega welcomed participants.

Kimber has been on a tour sponsored by the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban 5 speaking at meetings in New York; Boston; Columbia, Md.; and Washington, D.C.

The statement by the Five concludes: "We will continue to denounce this injustice that has already lasted 15 years and we will never cede one inch of the moral advantage that has allowed us to resist and to grow as we bear all the weight of the hateful vengeance of the most powerful government on earth."

Omari Musa in Washington, D.C., contributed to this article.

for further reading

New International no. 12

Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun

by Jack Barnes



Today's sharpening interimperialist conflicts are fueled by the opening stages of what will be decades of economic, financial, and social convulsions and class battles. Class-struggle-minded working people must face this historic turning point and draw satisfaction from being "in their face" as we chart a revolutionary course to confront it.

Notebook of an Agitator

From the Wobblies to the Fight Against the Korean War and McCarthyism

by James P. Cannon

Contains three letters written in 1950 and 1951 by Cannon, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, to President Truman and Congress demanding that Washington "withdraw the troops and let the Korean people alone."

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AFL-CIO tops turn from struggle

Continued from page 7

have promoted concession contracts, establishing divisive wage tiers. Efforts by the union tops to increase the AFL-CIO's size by including nonunion workers and groups is not aimed at strengthening unions, but rather at stemming the loss of the officials' dues base and regaining a measure of influence in capitalist politics, above all in the Democratic Party.

By promoting class collaboration with the bosses and election of "friendly" capitalist politicians as the unions' main purpose, the officialdom's decades-long class-collaborationist course has hamstrung the union movement. It has been key to the union's continued bleeding of membership and inability to recruit new forces, at a time of capitalist crisis when workers are starting to look for a way to fight back.

Unions strong, not weak

Supporters of the *Militant* who distribute the paper door to door in working-class areas around the country each week are meeting workers who want to discuss what is happening in the labor

movement and how the unions can be strengthened.

In these discussions, communist workers explain that the unions are not "weak," as many labor officials claim, pointing to declining numbers. This is simply an excuse for their refusal to organize workers and use union power — instead of subordinating workers and their organizations to the bosses, their government and the capitalist Democratic and Republican parties.

The unions are not a "thing," but an activity, a movement — a "we" of all its members. Even today the unions encompass millions of workers with enormous potential to deal major blows to the bosses.

Our unions can and will become powerful instruments to fight back against attacks by the bosses and their government when workers start to take hold of them. During a recovery in hiring after a long period of high unemployment in the 1930s, "men and women from nowhere" started to gain confidence and waged mighty battles in the plants and on the streets that built the industrial unions.