

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Boeing Machinists in Washington
reject concession contract 2-1
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 77/NO. 44 DECEMBER 9, 2013

Subscription drive on target: Organize to go over the top!

BY EMMA JOHNSON

“We have mapped out daily plans for the remaining two weeks of the drive to make our goal and go over,” John Benson said over the phone from Atlanta Nov. 26. “We’ll have teams out every night going door to door and doing callbacks. One thing we’ll do is go back to the Kellogg picket line in Memphis, Tenn., where eight locked-out workers signed up when we were there last.”

Benson and Susan LaMont traveled to Memphis Nov. 14-15, where members of Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Union Local 252G have been locked out by Kellogg since Oct. 22.

Atlanta is one of the areas where supporters of the *Militant* around the world are making steady progress in the international subscription and books campaign. Coming out of the

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Fall ‘Militant’ subscription campaign				
Oct. 12 - Dec. 10 (week 6)				
Country	quota	sold	%	2,500

Bangladesh workers win big minimum wage raise

Workers say 77% increase still way too low



Reuters
 Bangladeshi government announced Nov. 21 it will raise minimum monthly wage from \$38 to \$68 in December, following six months of mobilizations by garment workers demanding 170 percent wage increase and safer working conditions. Above, garment workers in Gazipur rally Nov. 13. Two workers were killed in clashes with cops during strike of some 10,000 Nov. 18-19.

BY EMMA JOHNSON

Garment workers in Bangladesh have won a 77 percent increase in the minimum wage coming out of sustained mobilizations in the last six months. The raise takes effect in December.

“This is a substantial raise,” Alonzo

Suson, director of the Bangladesh Solidarity Center, said Nov. 25 in a phone interview from the capital Dhaka. “But it’s still the lowest wage of all big garment producers, it’s still

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Deaths on job, black lung rise for US miners

BY EMMA JOHNSON

The working conditions of miners in the United States is deteriorating today under the impact of the bosses’ intensifying drive for profit.

As of Nov. 22, 37 have been killed on the job — already one more than all of last year. And black lung disease, the main debilitating injury inflicted on miners, is on the rise. At the same time medical treatment for tens

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‘Militant,’ others press fight against prison censorship

BY JOHN STUDER

“Hope all is well for you guys and your struggle to keep us informed. We as readers rejoice in our victory,” a worker behind bars in Florida wrote in a letter the *Militant* got Nov. 20.

The prisoner was among some three dozen subscribers in Florida state prisons affected by an impoundment of the *Militant* after the paper ran a news article on the mass hunger strike by

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‘We must organize and unionize,’ say truckers at ports in California



Warehouse Workers United
 Truckers fighting for Teamsters union contract at ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach picket American Logistics truck depot and warehouse in Carson, Calif., Nov. 18 during 36-hour strike.

BY ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

CARSON, Calif. — Truckers fighting for a union at the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach carried out a 36-hour strike starting Nov. 18.

An estimated 100 drivers who work for three companies — Green Fleet Systems, American Logistics International and Pacific 9 Transportation — participated in the coordinated action. Supporters of the Teamsters organizing drive at Green Fleet also held a 24-hour strike in August.

During a visit to the picket lines at

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End all of Washington’s sanctions against Iran

Working people the world over should join in demanding that Washington and its allies lift all economic and financial sanctions against Iran. U.S. imperialism seeks to strangle Iran’s economy and impose maximum hardship on the population to force the Iranian government to comply with its demands.

Any alleviation of this condition

US-TEHRAN DEAL OPENS SPACE FOR IRAN WORKERS
 — See article page 9

will help the confidence and fighting capacity of workers and farmers. The interim deal reached between Tehran, Washington and its imperialist allies in France, the U.K. and Germany, as well as with the Russian and Chinese governments, will lift a small part of the massive web of sanctions in place, but its crippling effects will continue to weigh on working people.

At the same time, a de-escalation of

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Worsening conditions in mines

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of thousands of these workers, tossed aside like an obsolete piece of machinery, is practically nonexistent, as bosses — in collusion with lawyers, insurance giants and “doctors” — scheme to minimize company costs.

Incidents of black lung, once considered a dwindling problem of an earlier era, is “increasingly affecting younger miners and taking a new, more aggressive form,” according to a recent report by the Center for Public Integrity.

Between 1968 and 2007, 75,000 miners nationwide died of black lung, a preventable disease resulting from exposure to coal dust. It’s irreversible, debilitating and very often fatal.

A three-week militant strike in 1969 by tens of thousands of members of the United Mine Workers of America in West Virginia was a key factor in winning the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act, which set up a benefits program for workers afflicted with black lung and established stricter standards for coal dust exposure.

With the strengthening of the miners’ union and its safety committees, diagnosed incidents of black lung plunged more than 90 percent. While the laws didn’t change, with the subsequent weakening of the union this trend reversed in the mid-1990s and by the 2000s had almost reached the levels of the 1970s. Between 2000 and 2010, 26,632 miners officially died from black lung, according to the government National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

According to the Labor Department, fewer than 10 percent of coal miners who apply for paltry black lung benefits, which range from \$600 to \$1,250 a month, receive anything. When miners

are rewarded benefits, coal companies appeal almost every claim, often grid-locking them in legal limbo for decades. Law firm Jackson Kelly PLLC has a long record of shielding medical evidence and defiance of court orders in its nearly two-century service helping coal bosses squash miners’ claims for benefits and health care, the report states.

For 40 years a small unit of radiologists at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore have been among the main readers of chest X-rays on behalf of coal companies seeking to defeat miners’ claims. In more than 1,500 cases decided since 2000, Dr. Paul Wheeler, who leads the team, didn’t report a single case of complicated black lung. More than 800 miners lost their case in which other doctors saw black lung, but Wheeler disputed it, including 160 cases of the advanced fatal form of the disease.

Following the report, Johns Hopkins announced Nov. 8 it was suspending its black lung program, pending a review.

“I hope justice is brought to bear on the doctors and lawyers responsible,” Phil Smith, communications director with the United Mine Workers, said in a phone interview Nov. 19. “But the damage they have done to miners can’t be undone.”

In 2012, National Public Radio reported that the Mine Health and Safety Administration issued less than 2,400 coal dust violations, despite its own data showing 53,000 samples of dust levels exceeding government limits. Mining companies are often allowed to do their own sampling and reporting, which can be done while production is at half capacity. Sampling is required only eight hours a day, despite longer workdays.

A proposed law issued by MSHA



Revenue Virginius silver, gold and sulfides mine near Ouray, Colo., where two miners died from carbon monoxide poisoning Nov. 17. Twenty other miners were injured.

more than three years ago that would reduce coal dust limits was still “going through the process,” in Congress and in the Labor Department, MSHA head Joe Main told the *Charleston Gazette* in October 2012.

On Nov. 17, Nick Cappano, 34, and Rick Williams, 59, were killed from carbon monoxide poisoning while working underground in the Revenue Virginius Mine in Colorado. Twenty other miners

were injured. The mine, with 100 employees, is owned by Star Mine LLC and received a state permit Feb. 5 to mine silver, gold and sulfides.

The 37th miner killed on the altar of profit this year died Nov. 22 from injuries sustained four days earlier at the Cumberland River Quarry in Kentucky. Of the 37 killed, 19 are coal miners.

Only one-third of miners today are in unions, according to Smith.

‘Profit-sharing’ blood money turned over to build party

Betsy Farley, a member of United Steelworkers Local 1010 in East Chicago, Ind., sent the note below along with a contribution to the Socialist Workers Party Capital Fund, which helps finance long-range work of the revolutionary party. The “blood money” Farley refers to is a term used to describe one-time payments from bosses — safety, attendance, production and “profit-sharing” bonuses, contract-signing incentives, holiday gifts and other such bribes — intended to make workers accept speedup, wage cuts, concession contracts and dangerous working conditions.

On Nov. 13, workers at ArcelorMittal Indiana Harbor Works steel mill in East Chicago received profit-sharing checks in the mail. At 6:33 a.m. the same day, Michael Samuelson was killed as he was doing repair work in one of the East Chicago Basic Oxygen Furnaces. Samuelson, 39, was working for a contractor in the mill when he was crushed by a steel plate that he and two co-workers were in the process of replacing. The plate shifted and fell as they were burning a hole to move it. The other two workers were hospitalized.

On Nov. 14, ArcelorMittal CEO and owner Lakshmi Mittal welcomed President Barack Obama in a visit to the Cleveland mill. Obama congratulated Mittal for making his company “not just one of the most productive steel mills in the country, but in the world.”

ArcelorMittal reported a profit of \$1.7 billion in the third-quarter, an 18.5 percent increase over the previous quarter. It is a profit that comes at the cost of countless injuries, occupational illnesses and even the lives of workers it employs throughout the world.

The \$241.34 check I received truly is blood money. I can think of no better use than to donate it to the Capital Fund to strengthen the working-class struggle to end once and for all a world in which workers die for the capitalist bosses’ profit drive.

THE MILITANT

Support Kurdish fight for self-determination

Kurds are an oppressed nationality of 30 million concentrated in Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria. In the midst of the civil war in Syria, they have made steady progress in gaining control of the region where they live in the northern part of the country. The ‘Militant’ covers their fight.



Kurds in northern Syria celebrate Nov. 6.

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

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RENEWAL

☐ \$10 for 12 weeks

☐ \$20 for 6 months

☐ \$35 for 1 year

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

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

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

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

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

Australia: Send A\$50 for one year to P.O. Box 164 Campsie, NSW 2194, Australia.
Pacific Islands: Send NZ\$50 for one year to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland 1140, New Zealand.

Submissions to the *Militant* may be published in the newspaper in print and digital format. By submitting, authors represent that their submissions are original and consent to publication in this manner.

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

Subscription campaign

Continued from front page
best week so far with 433 subscriptions sold, we are now on schedule and in a good position to go well over our goal by the end of the drive Dec. 10.

Philadelphia and Twin Cities are at the top of the scoreboard. Philadelphia raised its goal last week and Twin Cities followed suit this week.

Paul Pederson in Washington, D.C., reported that they had their best week

so far, narrowing the gap substantially.

“Ethiopians here have been protesting against the crackdown and killing of at least three Ethiopian immigrant workers in Saudi Arabia after the government there ordered them to leave the country by Nov. 3 and they staged protests,” Pederson said.

After selling one subscription at an action Nov. 18, Pederson said a team went door to door the following night and signed up four new readers, two of them workers from Ethiopia.

A team of supporters in New York attended a program on the Korean War, featuring a film, a panel and a discussion at City College Nov. 21.

“After I spoke in the discussion, a woman came up to me and said she appreciated my remarks,” Seth Galinsky reported. “She decided to take out an introductory subscription. So did two other participants during the event.”

Galinsky was also part of a team that went to a demonstration to free Oscar López, the longest held Puerto Rican political prisoner in the U.S., where another four participants decided to subscribe.

During the weekend Nov. 23-24 supporters in New York signed up 50 new readers and sold 11 campaign books, bring-



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Celia Pugh sells subscription in Hoxton area of London Nov. 24 to Mwanaisha Ali, a cook, who is originally from Zanzibar and said she was pleased *Militant* supported 1964 Zanzibar revolution that overthrew sultanate and helped unite Africans and Asians in what is today Tanzania.



Militant/Laura Anderson

Maria Padilla, center, and her mother Martha Padilla buy *Militant* from Dennis Richter in Back of the Yards neighborhood on Chicago's southwest side Sept. 28.

ing the number of titles by Pathfinder Press sold there since the beginning of the drive to 96. Top seller is *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* with 22 copies. This is one of nine titles on special offer (see ad below).

“A team of three, including myself, went door to door in the Electchester housing complex in Queens,” Dan Fein reported. “We sold 10 subscriptions and five campaign books. We led with the social disaster in the Philippines being caused by capitalism and the discussion on this is what convinced most of the subscribers to sign up.”

An inmate in California became the eighth new subscriber behind bars. Along with six renewals this brings the prisoners column to the very top of the scoreboard, just one short of making the goal.

A team of supporters from Mon-

treau, Boston, Philadelphia and Des Moines, Iowa, took part in the Nov. 20-25 Sal6n de Livre in Montreal, the biggest book fair with French-language literature in North America and sold 18 subscriptions, twice as many as last year.

John Steele reported that 15 of the new subscribers took advantage of the book specials. Top seller were books in French by Thomas Sankara with 11 copies sold. Sales of books were up from 41 last year to 56 this year.

“We are paying attention to how we do every single day,” Betsy Farley in Chicago said by phone Nov. 26. “We plan door-to-door teams every evening. We are going to make our goal and this is what it will take. We had a couple good weeks, but we need to step up further.”

Farley says supporters there have gone to two community actions by workers protesting waste from a refinery piling up in their neighborhood.

“The refinery is stepping up production and dust is blowing all over the residential area,” she said. “We met steelworkers, autoworkers and construction workers. They demand the waste be moved or at least covered up. We sold a couple subscriptions at each of these actions. Health and safety issues follow workers everywhere.”

Special offers with ‘Militant’ subscription

The Cuban Five

Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free
from pages of the ‘Militant’
\$3 with subscription (regular \$5)

The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions
by Jack Barnes
\$10 with subscription (regular \$24)

The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning

The Fraud of Education Reform Under Capitalism
by Jack Barnes
\$2 with subscription (regular \$3)

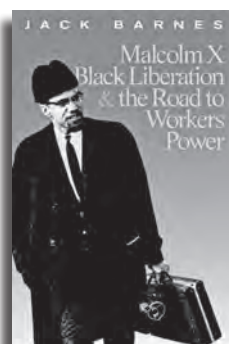
We Are Heirs of the World’s Revolutions

by Thomas Sankara
Speeches from the Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-87
\$5 with subscription (regular \$10)

Thomas Sankara Speaks

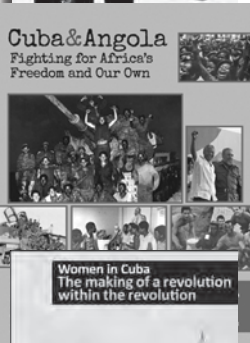
The Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-1987
\$10 with subscription (regular \$24)

See distributors on page 8



Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power

by Jack Barnes
\$10 with subscription (regular \$20)



Cuba and Angola

Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own
by Nelson Mandela, Fidel Castro, Ra6l Castro; Cuban generals and combatants; Gabriel Garc6a M6rquez
\$6 with subscription (regular \$12)



Women in Cuba

The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution
by Vilma Esp6n, Asela de los Santos, Yolanda Ferrer
\$10 with subscription (regular \$20)



Women and Revolution

The Living Example of the Cuban Revolution
by Asela de los Santos, Mary-Alice Waters and others
\$3 with subscription (regular \$7)

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

MINNESOTA Minneapolis

In Defense of a Woman's Right to Choose. Speaker: Diana Newberry, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 6, 7:30 p.m. 416 E. Hennepin Ave. Tel.: (612) 729-1205.

TEXAS

Houston
WikiLeaks, Edward Snowden, and NSA Spying: Do Whistleblowers Help the Working Class? Speaker: Cindy Jaquith, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 6, 7:30 p.m. 4800 W. 34th St., Suite C-50L. Tel.: (713) 476-0733.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland
Saudi Arabia: Migrant Workers Rally Against Saudi Government Repression. Speakers: Danyinate Shiferaw of Ethiopian community in Auckland; others. Fri., Dec. 6, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5 waged, \$2 unwaged. 4/125 Grafton Road. Tel.: (09) 369-1223.

‘Militant,’ others fight prison censorship

Continued from front page inmates against solitary confinement and other abuses earlier this year.

Prison authorities informed the *Militant* they decided Sept. 5 to impound the paper’s July 22 issue because it was a “threat to the security, good order, or discipline of the correctional system.” The following month prison authorities reversed the ban after a public campaign that included an appeal by the Florida American Civil Liberties Union.

“I received the July 22 issue,” wrote the Florida prisoner. “Two days later I was given seven other issues.”

In the course of this battle, the *Militant* learned about and joined similar fights against censorship in prisons by a number of other publications, including the *San Francisco Bay View* and *Prison Legal News*.

The *Militant* also heard from other prisoners who were not receiving their subscriptions. Among them was Patrick Drum, a prisoner at the Washington State Penitentiary in Walla Walla, who let the paper know in September that prison authorities had taken four issues from him. The issues were resent, but never delivered. On Sept. 25 Drum re-

ceived a notice that some mail had been rejected as a “threat to the safty [sic] and security of the institution.”

The Washington ACLU agreed to represent the *Militant* and followed with several calls and then a letter to Assistant Attorney General John Dittman.

The *Militant* then sent the four issues again. “We expect that [Department of Corrections] will ensure that Mr. Drum receives these issues and will not interfere with *The Militant*’s First Amendment right to inform and share its opinion with those who are incarcerated,” wrote ACLU staff attorney La Rond Baker Nov. 25.

“The hunger strike was a current event of public importance that was covered by most national and local television networks, cable news providers, and major news magazines and newspapers,” the letter said. “The only conceivable difference between coverage of the protest that was allowed into the facility and *The Militant*’s articles would be *The Militant*’s socialist editorial policy. ... The First Amendment prohibits governments from censoring speech based on its viewpoint.”

“Publishers have a First Amendment right to communicate with prisoners by mail,” the letter said, “and inmates have a First Amendment right to receive this mail,” quoting from a victory over previous Washington state censorship won by the *Prison Legal News*.

The *Militant*’s efforts to defend the right of prisoners to read what they want has been supported and recounted by others concerned with the rights and conditions of workers behind bars.

The *San Francisco Bay View* prominently displayed a combination of two *Militant* articles titled “Hunger Strikers Face Reprisals as Papers That Back Them Are Censored” on its website Nov. 17. “The *Bay View* thanks *The Militant* for its solidarity and strong opposition to prison censorship,” the paper said.

“The newspapers being censored are the newspapers prisoners love for recognizing their dignity and the righteousness of their cause,” the paper wrote, “and for reporting — often through publishing the writing of prisoners themselves — on the growing movement to stop mass incarceration.”

Prison Legal News reprinted another *Militant* article, “‘Militant’ Victory Part of Fight Against Prison, Other Censorship.”

“Thanks so much for my paper! I live for information and the strength it gives me,” concluded the Nov. 20 letter from the prisoner in Florida.



“The newspapers being censored are the newspapers prisoners love for recognizing their dignity and the righteousness of their cause,” read photo caption of inmates reading *S.F. Bay View*, above, accompanying reprinted *Militant* article.

New Mexico man files suit against cops’ colonoscopy ‘drug search’

BY JOHN STUDER

After pulling him over, saying he didn’t come to a full halt at a stop sign Jan. 2, cops in Deming, N.M., subjected David Eckert, 54, to the most egregious violations of Fourth Amendment protection from “unreasonable search and seizure.” On the excuse of looking for drugs, officers took Eckert to an area hospital, where, over his repeated objections, he was subjected to hours of body cavity searches, including two anal finger probes, three forced enemas and, still not satisfied, a colonoscopy.

After finding nothing, they let Eckert go. At cops’ suggestion, he received a hospital bill for more than \$6,000, which was turned over to a collection agency.

Eckert has filed a lawsuit challenging the gross violation of his constitutional rights, demanding over \$1 million in damages, against the cops, prosecutors, hospital and doctors who violated him.

“They seized him to collect evidence, to go on a fishing expedition on someone’s body,” Shannon Kennedy, Eckert’s lawyer, told the press.

Eckert was driving out of Walmart when he was stopped and ordered out of his car. In a statement he filed later, officer Robert Chavez said he noticed that Eckert was “clenching his buttocks.” The cops called in a drug-sniffing dog named Leo (whose credentials have since been questioned). Cops claim Leo smelled something on the driver’s seat.

When cops stopped Eckert four

months earlier for a cracked windshield Leo supposedly smelled drugs then too. Police seized Eckert’s car and searched it, finding nothing.

This time they placed Eckert in “investigative detention” and convinced a judge to give them a search warrant “to include but not limited to [Eckert’s] anal cavity.” Without arresting Eckert, they took him to the Mimbres Memorial Hospital in Deming, but the emergency room doctor refused to do the procedure.

The cops then found a willing out-of-county hospital, the Gila Regional Medical Center, where he was worked over for five hours. When an X-ray was negative doctors did finger probes. When they were negative, they did three enemas. Another X-ray followed. Then he was drugged and subjected to a colonoscopy.

Deming Police Chief Brandon Gigante says his cops did everything “by the book.” Eckert’s lawsuit documents how the cops’ warrant was based on false claims, Leo’s license lapsed two years ago, the Gila Regional Medical Center is outside the warrant’s jurisdiction and ran out three hours before the colonoscopy began.

The law firm representing Eckert has filed suit on behalf of Timothy Young, who was stopped Oct. 13, 2012, by cops who said he made a turn without using his signal. After Leo supposedly smelled drugs, Young was taken to the Gila Regional Medical Center and subjected to X-rays and an anal probe.

JOIN THE FIGHT

Help get out the word. Get copies of this article round.

Get statements of support for the *Militant*’s appeal from defenders of workers rights and free speech.

If you are a prisoner let the *Militant* know if you haven’t been receiving your subscription.

❖

Contribute to the Militant Prisoners’ Fund. Send a check or money order to the *Militant* earmarked “Prisoners’ Fund.”

Socialist Workers Party fund on track with four weeks to go

BY TONY LANE

This week’s collection of \$18,848 puts the SWP Party-Building Fund in the bold and brings the total to \$55,585. Local areas need to sustain

this effort to put the drive over the top by Dec. 17.

A number of areas report progress in winning new contributors and higher pledges this week.

Candace Wagner reports from New York that 15 contributors, the majority of whom are new subscribers to the *Militant*, gave to the Socialist Workers Party fund for the first time this week. Muba Yarofulam, who works midnight shift at a large department store, renewed her subscription and pledged \$10 to the fund. “I have learned so much from the paper,” she said.

Amanda Ulman from Houston notes that several pledges are \$50 to \$100 higher this year. “People are glad to see the return to a weekly Militant Labor Forum series,” said Ulman. A Militant Labor Forum in Seattle with a panel of speakers collected more than \$3,845 for the fund along with \$2,280 in new pledges, reports Clay Dennison. (See article page 7.)

Militant readers and supporters can send contributions to the Socialist Workers Party office nearest you (see directory on page 8) or directly to the SWP National Office at 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Party-Building Fund			
Week 5 of 9			
Area	Quota	Collected	%
San Francisco	\$13,000	\$9,785	75%
Seattle	\$8,800	\$6,095	69%
Des Moines*	\$3,000	\$2,006	67%
Atlanta	\$8,800	\$5,426	62%
Boston	\$3,500	\$2,085	60%
New York	\$20,000	\$11,505	58%
Los Angeles	\$8,200	\$4,458	54%
Lincoln	\$200	\$100	50%
Twin Cities	\$5,750	\$2,666	46%
Philadelphia	\$4,200	\$1,937	46%
Miami	\$3,000	\$1,242	41%
Washington, DC	\$7,500	\$2,910	39%
Omaha	\$2,500	\$757	30%
Houston	\$3,000	\$827	28%
Chicago*	\$10,000	\$2,535	25%
Other		\$1,250	
Total	\$101,450	\$55,585	56%
Should Be	\$100,000	\$55,555	56%
* Raised goal			

Missouri prisoners begin hunger strike

Some 15 prisoners being held in solitary confinement at the Potosi Correctional Center in Mineral Point, Mo., began a hunger strike Oct. 13 to protest abusive conditions and to support prisoners “in California and across the nation held captive in these SHU units and Ad-Seg units” — referring to “Security Housing Units” and “Administrative Segregation.”

The strike began after guards harassed and beat Shyheim El-Mumin, the *San Francisco Bay View* reported Nov. 17, and then threw him naked into an air-conditioned cell for a week without mattress or blankets. The paper printed a petition signed by 35 inmates there supporting the strikers.

The hunger strikers ask that letters backing their struggle be sent to Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon and George Lombardi, director of the Missouri Department of Corrections, P.O. Box 236, Jefferson City, MO 65102, and Warden Troy Steele, Potosi Correctional Center, 11593 State Hwy O, Mineral Point, MO 63660, with copies to the Missouri American Civil Liberties Union, 454 Whittier St., St. Louis, MO 63108.

— JOHN STUDER

ON THE PICKET LINE

Machinists at Boeing in Wash. reject concession contract 2-1

SEATTLE — Machinists who work at Boeing rejected 2-1 the company's proposed eight-year concession contract in exchange for a \$10,000 signing bonus and a supposed promise of a decade of steady work.

The vote by 31,000 members of Machinists Local 751 took place Nov. 13 amid company threats that a "no" vote would result in moving production of its new wide-body 777X aircraft out of state.

Boeing's proposed contract included a no-strike pledge through 2024, pension freezes for current workers, the replacement of pensions for new hires with a company retirement savings account and higher employee medical costs. It also extends the period for workers to reach top pay scale to 16 years from six years, according to Bloomberg News. Prior to the vote, the Washington state legislature passed a bill giving Boeing \$8.7 billion in tax breaks through 2040, one of the company's stated conditions for maintaining production in Washington. Boeing is in competition with rival Airbus, which produces an A350 wide-body aircraft.

"The whole purpose of this contract is to destroy the union. Everything else is smoke and mirrors," Boeing worker Eugene Riggs told the *Militant* at a union rally outside Boeing's plant in Renton the day before the vote.

"They are driving a wedge between us and the new hires coming in behind us" said John Lopez III, a second-generation Boeing worker.

Some 250 people turned out Nov. 18 for a support rally for the Machinists called by the Washington State Labor Council.

"I'm here to support the union members at Boeing," said Charlie Wilson, an iron worker, who came to the rally with other members of his union local. "What we have in the unions is always on the verge of disappearing."

"In the last 40 years we have seen an erosion of the unions," said Todd Pierce, a member of the Painters and Allied Trades Union. "Unemployment is another issue the corporations use against us. Boeing's demands are a threat to all of us. It's time to wake up."

"I'm starting to see what is happen-

ing to the workers," said Patrick Mick, 33, a member of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 19 here. He has worked on the docks for 11 years. "The unions before me fought for us. I want to educate myself and then help educate others about this situation."

Hazel Powers, 55, a tooling inspector in Auburn, said she voted "no" to defend the pension and to save new hires from a reduced wage structure. "I'm not going to sell out," she told the *Seattle Times*. When asked, what if Boeing places the 777X somewhere else? Powers responded, "Boeing is going to do what they are going to do."

— Mary Martin

DC cab drivers seek union, fight upgrade costs, fees

WASHINGTON — Hundreds of cab drivers lined up in the plaza in front of One Judiciary Square here Nov. 13 holding signs demanding respect and displaying the Teamsters union logo. Eventually, after long delays, some 280 of them were allowed to attend the meeting of the District of Columbia Taxi Commission.

Cab Commissioner Ron Linton abruptly adjourned the meeting during the public comment period. Commissioners demanded that anyone speaking at the meeting have written comments because of "the language barrier," according to one commissioner. Many of the drivers hail from East Africa, but all speak English.

In October more than 1,000 drivers voted to form the DC Taxi Operators Association, affiliated with the Teamsters union. They are fighting for representation on the taxi commission to push back a slew of upgrades and fees imposed on them by the commission this past year that drivers say are lining the pockets of select government contractors who are profiteering at their expense and giving city cab inspectors and police a new club to use against them.

"They want to turn us into modern sharecroppers," said Chama, a driver who asked that only his last name be



AP Photo/Elaine Thompson

Teamster Pedro Olguin leads chants at Nov. 18 rally for Machinists at Boeing, who voted down concession contract by 2-1 margin despite threats by company to move production of new wide-body aircraft 777X out of state. Protest was called by Washington State Labor Council.

used. "They still need us as the laborer. What they want to deprive us of is the ownership. They use legislative council, executive council, and the mayor to come up with very harsh and strict mechanisms, use media to tarnish our name, they write so many outrageous regulations, stiff penalties, very excessive enforcement — all these are the tools they use."

In New York City, cab drivers who want to own their own cab have to purchase a medallion from the city. In April of this year the cost of a medallion rose to over \$1 million. Here there is no such medallion system. As a result, it is much less expensive to own your own cab, and most who drive a cab for a few years choose to do that rather than work for a company. Drivers point out that the new regulations are aimed at the individual owner-operator. Large Internet-based car services that are taking a bigger and bigger share of the D.C. market are exempt.

— Paul Pederson

SAfrica platinum miners strike over wages, conditions

More than 6,200 workers at Northam Platinum's Zondereinde mine in South Africa's Limpopo province went on strike Nov. 3 for higher wages and better working conditions.

Workers at Zondereinde, the world's deepest platinum mine, make less than \$500 a month. The union had originally asked for a \$200 a month wage increase and an increase of the monthly housing allowance to about \$350, National Union of Mineworkers chief negotiator Ecliff Tantsi said by phone Nov. 22. The company's offer of an 9 percent wage increase "is not going to make a dent in the low wages" miners receive, he said.

When a strike wave swept South Africa's platinum belt last year, Northam Platinum workers did not join it. "Those workers in the unprotected strike, they got some improvements," Tantsi said. "The Northam workers thought since we remained loyal to the company, we produced and respected the law, the company would be genuine with us this time. Now workers are saying the company cannot treat us this way."

The Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union became the main union of platinum miners in the course of last year's strike wave. Both AMCU and the NUM are currently in negotiations with the three largest platinum companies — Anglo American Platinum, Impala Platinum and Lonmin.

— Seth Galinsky

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



December 9, 1988

Several South African government officials, including President Pieter Botha, have said that Nelson Mandela will not be returned to Pollsmoor Prison.

Mandela is being held under guard at the Constantiaburg clinic. He was transferred from Pollsmoor Prison to a nearby hospital after contracting tuberculosis.

Mandela is a central leader of the African National Congress, which is fighting to overthrow the apartheid regime and to establish a nonracial, democratic South Africa. He was imprisoned on a life sentence along with other leaders of the ANC in 1964. International pressure for his release has intensified over the last year.

Mandela has consistently rejected all offers by the apartheid rulers to release him on the condition that he renounce the use of violence in fighting against apartheid, and collaborate with the regime.



December 9, 1963

A growing wave of demonstrations climaxed by the self-immolation of a 20-year-old girl, Tran Bath Nga, is rocking South Vietnam. The deep unrest of the people of that unhappy nation was not eased by the substitution of a gang of power-hungry generals for the tyrant Diem.

Tran Bath Nga was reported to have left a note saying that her suicide was to protest "Vietnamese fight Vietnamese," that is the war against peasant guerillas.

Continuation of the mass demonstrations and self-immolations that were the beginning of the end for Diem shows that the Buddhist protest expressed a deep and powerful mood among the Vietnamese.

The crisis of Vietnam will be resolved only by the withdrawal of American troops and the end of U.S. intervention in that country's affairs, when the people of South Vietnam will be free to determine their future for themselves.



December 10, 1938

HOUSTON, Nov. 29 — The militant young workers who last week struck the warehouse industry in one of its most vital spots, the Walgreen Drug and Supply Warehouse, are determined to win a real victory. Only sixteen in number and entirely new to unionism, they are fast learning the value of progressive unionism and the need for workers' vigilance.

The warehouse is tied up 100 percent and effective secondary picketing is being conducted at all the key downtown stores of the notorious national drug chain.

The company, in a desperate effort to smash the effectiveness of the strike, has hired almost fifty ten-dollar-a-day finks who just stand around and look at the pickets and "guard" Walgreen's precious real estate. Squads of union cabs are parked near the key stores waiting for any finks who might dare to attack the strikers.

TRADE UNIONS in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay

by Leon Trotsky

TRADE UNIONS

In the epoch of imperialist decay

by Leon Trotsky

PREFACE BY FARRELL DOBBS

INCLUDES: Their Past, Present and Future

by Karl Marx

"More food for thought (and action) than will be found in any book on the union question."

—FARRELL DOBBS

INCLUDES: "Trade Unions: Their Past, Present and Future" by Karl Marx

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Protests in Puerto Rico, NY demand 'Free Oscar López!'

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK — Tens of thousands marched in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Nov. 23 to demand the release of political prisoner Oscar López Rivera, who has been jailed in the U.S. for more than 32 years. López, who spent 12 years in solitary confinement, was framed up by the U.S. government on charges that include seditious conspiracy for his participation in the fight to win independence for Puerto Rico, a U.S. colony.

The fight to free López has been gaining broader support, especially in Puerto Rico, including from labor unions, churches, and virtually every political party on the island, including those opposed to independence.

Catholic Archbishop Roberto González Nieves; Methodist Bishop Rafael Moreno Rivas; Ponce Mayor María Meléndez, a member of the pro-statehood New Progressive Party; Democratic Party Congressman Luis Gutiérrez from Chicago; and López's daughter Clarissa López Ramos were among the speakers. A message of support was read from Puerto Rico Gov. Alejandro García Padilla.

The San Juan march was initiated by the groups 32 for Oscar and the Puerto Rico Human Rights Committee.

"Oscar has won the respect of the people of Puerto Rico, including among those who don't necessarily share his ideology," Rita Elena Zengotita, one of the march organizers, said by phone Nov. 25.

"Our people showed their patriotism," Rafael Cancel Miranda, said in a phone interview the same day. "The demonstration showed that our people are still alive." Cancel Miranda is a veteran fighter for Puerto Rican independence who himself was a political prisoner in the U.S. for 25 ½ years.

"We need unity to win Oscar's release," Cancel Miranda said, referring to the range of political views among demonstrators, from *independentistas* to those who think Puerto Rico should

be the 51st U.S. state. "But I marched for a man who has fought for freedom. I don't believe in annexation to the U.S. That would be the end of the existence of our people."

Demonstrations to demand the release of López also took place in Washington, D.C., and New York the same day. In Chicago volunteers collected signatures on a petition demanding his freedom.

Gabriela Ramírez, a student at American University in Washington, D.C., joined the New York demonstration of 150 people who marched from the Lower East Side to Brooklyn. "I couldn't go to the march in Puerto Rico, so I came here," she said. "We have to stand up for Oscar, but also for justice and for our own rights."

The New York action was organized by the Community Coalition for the Freedom of Oscar López Rivera.

The marches take place in the midst of the deepening capitalist economic crisis in Puerto Rico. The island's official unemployment rate reached 14.7 percent in October, the fourth straight monthly increase. The Puerto Rican



Top, tens of thousands march in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Nov. 23 to demand release of independence fighter Oscar López, framed up by the U.S. government and jailed for more than 32 years. Inset, march of 150 same day in New York.

government is some \$87 billion in debt, most of it owed to bondholders in the U.S. For the past six years, interest has been paid by issuing more debt.

A few days before the march, the White House announced it was sending an advisory team to "offer strategic ad-

vice to assist Puerto Rico in promoting its economic development."

"But the problem is that they're the ones who are guilty. U.S. colonialism has destroyed our agriculture and our economy," Cancel Miranda said. "We don't control our own economy."

'Organize and unionize,' say Calif. port truckers

Continued from front page

American Logistics and Green Fleet facilities here, drivers temporarily blocked trucks from going in and out. Chants, marches and rallies marked the round-the-clock disciplined picket lines, and truck drivers and other passersby honked in solidarity. At the same time, drivers who work for Pacific 9 Transportation picketed outside that company's facilities in Long Beach.

Strikers at the American Logistics picket line said two pickets had been hit by a truck and suffered minor injuries shortly before the walkout ended at 4 p.m. the next day. One of those hit works for another nonunion trucking company and came to show solidarity and learn

about the organizing drive.

"Organizing and unionizing — this has to be done, and actions like this give us confidence," James Love told the *Militant* at the picket line here Nov. 18.

"I'm here now because I believe in this drive," said Daniel Perry.

Both Love and Perry said they were terminated for pro-union activity by American Logistics.

Strikers say they are demanding the companies end retaliatory firings and other intimidation against supporters of the Teamsters union, who are fighting for safer working conditions, higher wages and overtime pay and respect.

The three companies have not returned calls requesting comment.

Port truck drivers from around the country joined the picket lines, including five from Savannah, Ga.

"Their problem is our problem. That's why we are here," said Yosief Belay, who came from the Port of Seattle in Washington to join the picketing.

"Safety is one of the most important issues in the industry and one reason we need unions," said Rene Noel from Toll Group at the Port of Newark, New Jersey, who flew in to join the action. Noel said three truckers were killed at work at the port last year.

In July 2013, 70 percent of the 112 Toll drivers who work at the Newark port voted to join Teamsters Local 469. They are fighting for a contract similar to that won in December 2012 after a two-year fight by members of Teamsters Local 848, who work for Toll Group in Los Angeles. That contract codifies wage increases of \$6 an hour, overtime pay, lower employee health care costs, paid holidays, sick days and personal days.

Truckers from Toll Group, the only large company at both Los Angeles and Long Beach ports with a union contract, joined the picket lines at the three struck companies.

Supporters of Warehouse Workers

United, a group that is backing drives to improve working conditions and wages at warehouses, walked the American Logistics International picket line and held a news conference on the conditions their members face.

Warehouse Workers United organizer Guadalupe Alma told the media that they had filed a complaint with the state Occupational Safety and Health Administration citing unsafe conditions, which include workers trapped in trailers while forklifts are operating, exposure to hazardous material without proper training, working under boxes stacked as high as 30 feet and lack of separate bathrooms for men and women.

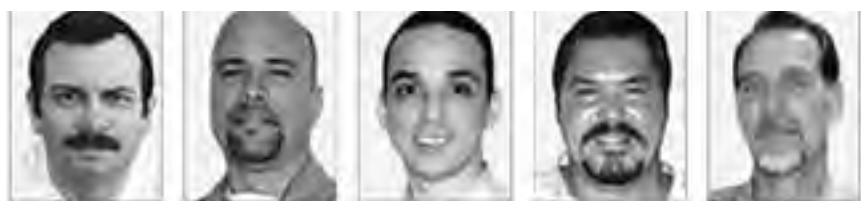
"We stand with the warehouse workers," Teamster supporter Leslie Richard told the press. "We are here because we need to win being treated with dignity and respect and to win a union."

With the deregulation of the trucking industry in the 1980s, more trucking companies classified employees as "contractors" or independent owner-operators as a way to get workers to bear costs of fuel, repairs and wait time and as a scheme to say they are not entitled to union membership.

Workers at American Logistics are classified as workers, but get paid by the load, not by the hour. At Green Fleet, workers say the company is cutting the loads of workers who are part of the organizing effort, and have categorized some workers as independent contractors not entitled to overtime pay.

"There was no problem when we went back to work. We let the company know we've put up with the unfair treatment as long as we can, and that they are going to get a fight," Leslie Richards who works at American Logistics said by phone Nov. 19 after the strike ended. "The mood was quiet. I don't want workers who haven't decided to support the union yet to get the wrong impression, so I listen to what they have to say."

Free 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, halfway through a three-year term of supervised release.

Forum discusses struggles by workers in Washington

‘Need to stand together and fight to the end’

BY EDWIN FRUIT

SEATTLE — A Militant Labor Forum held at the Bethany United Church here Nov. 16 drew together the experiences of three recent workers’ struggles in Washington state.

The program — titled “Unify the Working Class: What Has Been Gained in Recent Struggles by Farm Workers, Machinists and Teamsters” — featured presentations by Cliff LaPlant, chief

MILITANT LABOR FORUM

shop steward for Machinists Local 79 at the Belshaw Adamatic plant in Auburn; Ramón Torres, president of Familias Unidas por la Justicia, a farmworkers union at Sakuma Brothers Farms berry fields in Burlington; and Sydney Coe, a member of Teamsters Local 117, which carried out a three-month strike against Davis Wire in Kent last year.

Forty-five people attended the event, which included a dinner prior to the program and raised money for the Socialist Workers Party and Familias Unidas por la Justicia.

“The one place you could find accurate information on the three struggles represented on the panel tonight was the *Militant*,” said John Naubert of the Socialist Workers Party, in introducing the speakers. “And getting out the truth through its pages helped these fighters find each other.”

“We’ve done it!” said LaPlant to applause, referring to the victory by the 63 members of Local 79 who waged a six-month strike that ended Oct. 2 with ratification of a contract that met most of the union’s demands.

“We got support from the *Militant* and their group, which led us to other supporters like the International Longshore and Warehouse Union. It was this solidarity that helped us win our strike,”

LaPlant said. He explained how Belshaw Adamatic, which manufactures bakery equipment, tried to ship out a container during the strike and how members of the ILWU in Tacoma prevented it from being loaded. “I want to thank the ILWU, the Teamsters union and others who also supported us,” he said.

“People ask us, how did we do it after the company initially fired most of us during the strike,” said LaPlant. “Our workforce is multinational with Hispanics, Pacific Islanders, Filipinos, African-Americans, Asians and whites. We had a negotiating committee of myself, a Hispanic woman and a Vietnamese worker. We told the truth and kept all the workers informed. We said 63 went out and we won’t go back until all 63 were accepted back by the company.”

“As a result of the strike we have more solidarity with each other now than we had at any time during the 35 years I had been working at the plant. I always say there are two times when you know who your friends are — when you pack up and move and when you are on strike. So having been on strike now I know who my friends are!”

“I met Ramón [Torres] and others when I attended their rally and I toured their camp housing,” said LaPlant, who spoke at a rally of the berry pickers in September. “I was impressed that these workers fought on their own without any other union to back them up.” Turning to Torres he said, “If I had a hat on I would take it off to you and your struggle.”

Farmworkers form union

“I am 28 and originally from Guadalajara,” said Torres. “Many of the other workers come from Oaxaca and speak their indigenous languages of Trica or Mixteca.”

Torres introduced seven other farmworkers, spouses, and members of the



Militant/Clay Dennison

Militant Labor Forum in Seattle Nov. 16. Panel of speakers from left, Ramón Torres, president of Familias Unidas por la Justicia; Sydney Coe, Teamsters Local 117 member at Davis Wire; co-chair Mary Martin, Socialist Workers Party; Cliff LaPlant (speaking), chief shop steward for Machinists Local 79 at Belshaw Adamatic; and co-chair John Naubert, SWP.

Community to Community support group in Bellingham who came to the forum. “I would also like to thank those on the stage here who have supported our struggle,” he said.

Torres explained how the fight for a union and a contract at Sakuma Farms began to develop in July after a worker was fired for complaining to the company that the workers were being shorted on their pay. After 250 workers marched to the company offices demanding his reinstatement, the company backed down. Workers then organized a series of six off-and-on strikes through the end of the season in October.

Torres said the workers elected a leadership committee of 11 with 14 demands for a contract. These included a raise in pay, medical insurance, better living conditions in the company housing camps and reimbursement for travel to and from California, where many of the workers lived off season.

He said the company could well afford to meet these demands because they flew in replacement workers from Mexico under the U.S. government’s H2A program, paid for their travel, paid these workers \$12 an hour and gave them new facilities to live in. “We get the used things, old mattresses, housing with tin roofs that leak and no stoves or refrigerators.”

Torres said that the company uses chemicals that are harmful for both the workers and consumers. “We want the company to put on the packages what chemicals are being used and provide medical aid to workers who get sick from exposure,” he said.

Torres said the farmworkers have called a boycott of Sakuma Farms products — raspberries, blackberries and blueberries — until the contract is secured.

Davis Wire strike

Sydney Coe spoke about the fight he was part of against Davis Wire. “During our strike we got solidarity from other unions,” he said. “We had 85 families — Filipinos, Russians, Asians, Hispanics, African-Americans and whites.”

“We struck for better pay, working conditions, medical insurance, safety and lunch breaks. We won a lunchroom and lunch breaks, which we didn’t have before. We still have unsafe conditions with dangerous machines, including machinery that is run without safety covers. So now we use the safety committee and we tell the bosses ‘if the machine is unsafe we won’t run it until it is fixed,’” he said.

“I went to the Belshaw Adamatic picket lines and I went up to support the

berry pickers in their fight. I saw their living conditions and this is unacceptable for the workers and their families. I did this because others gave me solidarity when I was on strike. The *Militant News Tribune* came down to our strike, the ILWU came down to our strike, nurses from Arizona came to our strike and many more.

Coe said he had also learned about and become a supporter of the Cuban Five in the course of the struggle. He read part of a statement he had sent to the Five on the occasion of René González’s return to Cuba in May: “Every working-class person should support the Cuban Five because we are all the Cuban Five. We are all labeled and paying for something we didn’t do.”

“What connects all these struggles I am talking about?” said Coe. “The need to never stop fighting and to stand together. Without solidarity, we have nothing. Keep your eyes on the prize and stand together and fight to the end.”

“Often we hear it said that the labor movement is weak,” said Mary Martin of the Socialist Workers Party, who co-chaired the meeting with Naubert. “But no one listening to the fighters tonight on this panel would conclude that labor is weak. The answer is what we have heard here tonight. Rely on ourselves and each other, because we are the union. The farmworkers in Burlington did not wait for anything — they organized themselves.

“No one would conclude that the Machinists at Boeing who just rejected a concession contract 2-1 are weak,” she continued. “What we see too often is that union memberships don’t yet have the leadership that they need and deserve.”

“Ultimately, the working class needs to make a revolution in this country to take power away from the capitalist class,” said Martin. “This is what the working people of Cuba did when they overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship and set out to transform society from one based on the dog-eat-dog values of capitalism to one based on solidarity and meeting needs of the vast majority. This is something the U.S. government has never forgiven the Cuban people for and why the Cuban Five, products of that revolution, were locked up. Every fight of our class is part of the road to taking power. If this sounds right to you, join with the Socialist Worker Party.”

Farmworkers, shipyard workers and others participated in a lively discussion following the presentations.

Tomas Madrigal, who works with

Continued on page 9



Militant photos: Top, Clay Dennison; bottom, Edwin Fruit

Top left, Teamsters Local 117 picket line in August 2012 during three-month strike against Davis Wire in Kent, Wash. **Top right,** berry pickers and supporters picket Seattle grocery store Aug. 20 in fight for union and contract at Sakuma Bros. Farms in Burlington, Wash. **Bottom,** Machinists Local 79 members picket Belshaw Adamatic in Auburn, Wash., March 27.

'Fate of humanity rests on socialist revolution in US'

Below is an excerpt from *Teamster Rebellion*, one of *Pathfinder's Books of the Month* for December. The book by Farrell Dobbs is the first in a four-volume participant's account of the strikes and organizing drives that transformed the Teamsters union in the 1930s into a fighting social movement. Dobbs was one of the central leaders of those battles and, until his death in 1983, of the Socialist Workers Party. The selection is from an August 1966 talk by Dobbs to an audience substantially composed of members of the Young Socialist Alliance in California. Copyright © 1972 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY FARRELL DOBBS

We must be constantly aware of the key role of the United States in the world. United States imperialism is today the powerhouse of world reaction, as the war in Vietnam is abundantly demonstrating.

It is an iron fact that until capitalism is overturned here in the United States of America, the gang of imperialist mad dogs that rule this country are going to remain a mortal threat to all humanity. We must never forget that.

That means the showdown battle for world socialism is going to be fought right here in the United States of



Farrell Dobbs speaking at New York banquet to celebrate publication of *Teamster Rebellion*, June 1972. Dobbs dedicated book "to the men and women who gave me unshakable confidence in the working class, the rank and file of General Drivers Local 574."

America. And when the revolutionary victory is won, outlived, decadent capitalism is going to disappear literally overnight from the face of our planet. Humanity is going to march forward to the building of an enlightened socialist society where people for the first time can really live together on this planet in peace and in security and with freedom. Humanity will finally realize the type of rewarding life that human intelligence is so abundantly capable of making, even at the present level of technological development. Once humanity learns how to conduct itself politically, organizationally, and socially, it can take advantage of these wonders.

That's what we dedicate our lives to. We of the party, we revolutionaries in the United States — acting as best we can in solidarity with revolutionary fighters across the world — must always keep in mind that in the last analysis the fate of humanity rests on the socialist revolution in the United States. Our task is to build a party capable of leading that revolution, going up against the most heinous of the reactionary, monstrous ruling class regimes that exist on the face of this planet: the imperialist ruling class of the United States.

The road ahead in that struggle is going to be strewn with obstacles, and

there are going to be many pitfalls. There's no roadmap, no way you can find some kind of a detailed handbook that's going to tell you what to do at each juncture. Our task is to chart a revolutionary course, based on a fundamental understanding of our program — a basic feel of our revolutionary strategy — and to hammer out the tactics in that direction as we go along.

There's no timetable. Nobody can say how long it's going to take or when it's going to happen. I personally feel that those of you sitting in this room today, who have got all your youth going for you, have got at least Damon Runyon's six-to-five chance of seeing that explosion.

But in saying so I want to add immediately: *don't make that a condition. Don't adopt the criterion that the revolutionary change must happen in your time.* Don't take as a guide to your active life that narrow, provincial, self-centered notion that if it doesn't happen during the time of your own subjective existence on this planet, it's not important.

Always remember that history is magnificently indifferent to the problems of the individual. History doesn't care whether you die at six or live to be seven hundred, if that were possible, or what happens during your particular

lifetime. As the German poet Goethe once said, "History marches like a drunken beggar on horseback."

A lot can happen during your limited lifespan, or you can live a dull existence. Some people have had the good fortune to live more in a year than others at a different historical juncture could live in their whole lifetime. Or, as Plekhanov once put it, "If it hadn't been for the French Revolution, Napoleon would probably have ended up as a corporal in the French artillery."

Don't make it a condition that the socialist revolution must come in your lifetime. Be not only a citizen of the planet; be a citizen of time. Recognize that what's fundamental is to be in rapport with the human race from the dawn of history, on to heights we can only vaguely begin to dream of.

And what's the alternative? The alternative is to make a compromise with this rotten capitalist system. Do you know what people who do that are like? You remember the movie, *The Devil and Daniel Webster*? Jabez Stone, you know, sold his soul to Scratch, the devil. He did so on the promise that his personal ambitions would thus be served. Later he regretted the action and asked to have his soul returned. Scratch, who was played by Walter Huston, that magnificent actor, finally said all right, he'd give it back.

So Scratch took a small matchbox from his pocket. He opened the box and began poking around in it with his stubby finger trying, and trying, to find the mean little soul of Jabez Stone so he could give it back.

That's symbolic of what you do to your own soul if you make a compromise with this rotten system.

Our job is to build a movement of men and women who emulate the seasoned fighters of the Continental line in the first American Revolution. Learn to be professional revolutionary fighters. Don't be summer soldiers. Don't dabble; don't vacillate. Put nothing above the considerations of the movement. Maintain your place in the front ranks of the revolutionary fighters, and stand in that place for the duration.

There is no other way in which you can find so rich, so rewarding, so fruitful, and so purposeful a life.

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December

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OFFER GOOD UNTIL DECEMBER 31

End all US sanctions against Iran!

Continued from front page

tensions makes it easier for working people to carve out political space to resist the bosses’ attacks on their living conditions and press for greater rights.

Working people in the U.S. and other imperialist countries should champion the right of semicolonial nations to expand electrification, including the use of nuclear power, which is crucial for development of industry, agriculture, medicine and culture.

U.S. imperialism, the world’s greatest hypocrite, selectively dictates to nations like Iran and North Korea that they have no right to nuclear technology, lest they seek to develop nuclear weapons. All the while, Washington sits atop the largest nuclear arsenal in the world, the only power to ever use this tool of mass murder, against the civilian populations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Nuclear weapons have only one purpose — to kill millions of innocent people. Their existence and pos-

session by any government are antithetical to the interests of toiling humanity.

The Cuban Revolution — from the battles that led to its victory in 1959, transforming the country’s workers and farmers into the authors of their own history, to today — has set an example of working-class morality, rejecting outright the use of any tactics that target the innocent. For decades revolutionary Cuba has defended itself by relying on the political consciousness and mobilization of millions of workers and farmers — and no nation in the world can claim to have done a better job at staying the imperialists’ hand.

“Our nuclear weapon is the invincible power of moral weapons,” Fidel Castro said in 2005. “Weapons to combat death, to combat AIDS, to combat diseases, to fight against cancer, that’s what we dedicate our resources to.”

End all imperialists sanctions against Cuba, Iran and North Korea!

US-Tehran deal opens space for Iran workers

BY EMMA JOHNSON

After drawn-out talks, the Iranian government struck a provisional deal with Washington and the other members of the U.N. Security Council plus Berlin Nov. 24 that offers to ease some of the imperialists’ harsh sanctions in exchange for Tehran curtailing further development of its nuclear program.

If followed through, it’s unclear how much of an effect the easing will have on Iran’s economy, and even less clear on how much it would alleviate the grind on workers and farmers. But the de-escalation of imperialist pressure affords more space for Iranian working people to organize and press their interests against capitalist exploiters in power, who have wielded Washington’s threats and relentless squeeze as a pretext for clamping down on workers’ rights and struggles.

The “Joint Plan of Action” is a six-month interim deal with the idea that a long-term agreement will follow.

The Iranian government agreed not to add to the current operable 11,000 centrifuges used to enrich uranium; to allow increased U.N. inspections of nuclear facilities; and not to enrich uranium beyond 5 percent purity or increase its stockpile.

In exchange, Washington has agreed to provide Iran with \$6 billion to \$7 billion in sanctions relief. This includes some \$4 billion from oil income that has been frozen in foreign banks. The U.S. and European Union will suspend their ban on trade of petrochemicals, precious metals, automobile and airplane spare parts. The majority of the most severe sanctions remain in place.

Washington, which has led the imperialist squeeze on Iran, has imposed trade sanctions on the country for decades. Broader economic and financial sanctions under the United Nations rubric began in 2006, aimed at forcing Tehran to abandon its nuclear program. They were substantially tightened last year through an EU oil embargo and severe banking restrictions.

Since 2006, oil exports, the country’s lifeblood, have shrunk by more than half. Official inflation was 45 percent in late July, and many economists assert that the actual rate is between 50 and 70 percent.

U.S. officials have testified that the gross domestic product for 2012-2013 would drop 5 to 8 percent. Joblessness, which has risen to about 20 percent, encompasses a wide range of industries and services.

Signs of growing dissatisfaction among Iranian workers and farmers and initial efforts to organize and fight back are coming through in some of the Iranian press.

On Nov. 2, 700 workers in Isfahan at the Polyacryl factory, which produces polyester and acrylic fibers, took part in a demonstration over job security in face of a breakup of the company and to demand reinstatement of the factory shora (council), which was disbanded by the authorities more than a year ago, according to the semiofficial Iran Labor News Agency. Workers told the news agency that they have acted with discipline to give no excuse for security forces to crack down. They have not shut down production, but

maintained their protest for weeks. On Nov. 19, 700 workers spent the night in the factory mosque and the following morning the protests swelled to 1,000.

After a sustained fight over four months, 235 steelworkers laid off by Zagros Steel Factory in the Kurdish city of Qorveh were paid back wages Oct. 31. They traveled twice to Tehran to press their demands in demonstrations outside Parliament.

This struggle was also reported by the Iranian Labor News Agency, which is not typical coverage for the semiofficial agency.

The regime is concerned about the ascending struggle by Kurds for self-determination in the region. The establishment of Iraqi Kurdistan, the wresting of control of territory by Kurds in northeast Syria and political advances in Turkey are being watched closely by both the Iranian rulers and the 9 million Kurds in Iran.

On Nov. 5, residents in Mariwan in Iranian Kurdistan demonstrated against the executions of three Kurdish political prisoners during the prior two weeks, according to ekurd.net. Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps attacked the demonstration and arrested several participants.

On Nov. 8, hundreds of residents in Saqqez demonstrated against the executions. The Revolutionary Guards opened fire, injuring several and arresting 80. In an attempt to prevent further demonstrations, they moved in and militarized a number of Kurdish cities.

Obama criticized for deal

President Barack Obama used the executive powers of the White House to sign the deal in face of divisions in Congress and a range of differing views in the U.S. ruling class. Among legislators in both the Democratic and Republican parties is a sizable section pressing to enact new sanctions and restrict the president’s executive power to lessen them.

“The disproportionality of this agreement makes it more likely that Democrats and Republicans will join together and pass additional sanctions when we return in December,” Sen. Charles Schumer, a leading Democrat, said in a statement Nov. 24.

Obama has also come under heavy criticism from some of Washington’s main allies for being too lenient on Iran. Among some of the most vocal opponents of the deal are the monarchy in Saudi Arabia and the Israeli government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu — although divisions among the Israeli rulers on this are apparent.

The ruling monarchy in Saudi Arabia has kept a telling silence since the accord was struck. The Saudi monarchy made its displeasure over U.S. policy toward Iran and Syria clear last month when it announced it was rejecting a seat on the U.N. Security Council.

On Nov. 22, Sen. Bob Corker, ranking Republican member of the Foreign Relations Committee, introduced the Iran Nuclear Compliance Act of 2013, requiring Iran to fully comply with any interim deal and further agree to the terms of an acceptable final agreement before the president of the United States could waive additional sanctions.

Bangladesh wages

Continued from front page

a starvation wage. Manufacturers really oppose any increases, they promote the industry as the one with the lowest labor costs in the world. They don’t want to lose this argument for investment in the country.”

The government approved the new wage of 5,300 taka (\$68) a month on Nov. 21 after the Garment Manufacturers Association agreed to the raise. When the proposal was made public Nov. 4 bosses opposed it, saying they would not accept anything higher than 4,500 taka (\$58).

Strikes, demonstrations and rallies intensified in response. Hundreds of factories were forced to shut down the following two weeks as workers took to the streets. From Nov. 18 to 19 at least 10,000 workers in Ashulia and Gazipur, two industrial belts north of Dhaka, walked out, forcing bosses to shut more than 200 plants. Cops killed two workers and injured at least 100 in clashes Nov. 18.

Rubber bullets, water cannons and tear gas fired by the police failed to break up the demonstrations. Bangladesh has a 2,900-strong special Industrial Police Force set up in 2010 in the midst of monthslong actions by the workers that forced the government to raise the minimum wage to 3,000 taka (\$38). The government has deployed paramilitary border guards to assist the police.

“We’ll comment when we get the agreement in writing from the government,” Babul Akhter, president of the Bangladesh Garment and Industrial Workers Federation, told the *Militant* Nov. 25. “We were promised this in June, in November and now in December. So we’ll see if it actually happens this time.”

Both Suson and Akhter said protests have subsided the last week after the agreement was sealed.

Garment union federations have been unified in the demand for a minimum wage of 8,000 taka (\$103) and say 5,300 taka is still way too low.

“We say this is what we need,” Amirul Haque Amin, president of the National Garment Workers Federation said by phone Nov. 11. “Workers can’t live on 5,300 with rents and prices going up. And the 77 percent increase is for unskilled workers, but for skilled operators it is less. We demand the same increase for them.”

“If the higher wages don’t come through this time either, workers will be very, very angry,” Akhter said.

Militant Labor Forum

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Community to Community in Bellingham, explained that he is a member of United Auto Workers Local 2865, which organizes teaching assistants at the University of California at Santa Barbara. “We will be going on strike on Nov. 20 to support facilities workers organized by the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. I applaud the workers from Mexico who bring their own struggles here and are part of the fight in the U.S.,” he said.

Another participant, Patti Ford, asked Torres how he came to be involved in the struggle.

“At first, I thought the indigenous workers, who mostly came from Oaxaca in Mexico, were different than me, that they didn’t understand what was going on with the job and the company,” Torres said. “But as I worked with them I saw that our interests are the same. I was fired Sept. 11 and Sakuma Farms has a restraining order for me to stay off their property. I could leave and take my wife and daughter and go back to California, but I am staying to continue the fight.”

In his final remarks Cliff LaPlant said that in spite of discouragement from IAM officials on the possibilities for solidarity from other unions, he got tremendous help from the ILWU and the Teamsters. “We are the union,” he said, “and we decided to get the solidarity we needed. Without the help of these other unions we would not have won.”

“I think the Boeing workers did the same thing we did,” LaPlant said when a participant asked what he thought about the recent rejection of the Boeing contract. “They went against the pressure to take a lousy contract offer. Go Machinists!”

Melinda LaPlant, a part-time worker at a local retail store, commented after the program, “Everyone leads their personal lives and has problems, but when you see people in struggle you can put those things behind you.”