

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Steel bosses push for steep concessions in contract talks
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 79/NO. 28 AUGUST 10, 2015

Turkish gov't opens base to US, attacks Kurd fighters

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is using a suicide bombing attack by Islamic State to launch an assault on fighters for Kurdish rights in Turkey and Iraq, and to deepen Turkish involvement in the civil war in Syria.

PROTEST ASSAULT ON KURDS!

We urge our readers to join or initiate protests against the U.S.-backed Turkish government assault on the Kurdish people

Ankara agreed July 23 to allow U.S. forces to use the strategically located Incirlik Air Base in southern Turkey to conduct bombing raids against Islamic State forces.

The deal includes setting up a buffer zone in northern Syria by driving Islamic State combatants from a stretch of the border. The Turkish rulers see this as a way to block any further territorial advances by Kurdish fighters in Syria.

Washington, while offering words of caution, backs Ankara's stepped-up offensive against the Kurdish fighters.

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Death of Sandra Bland in Texas jail spurs protests

BY ILONA GERSH

LISLE, Ill. — “There is an epidemic of police brutality and cop killings in this country, and it's got to stop,” 21-year-old Trace Money told the *Militant* outside the DuPage African Methodist Episcopal Church. “That's why I don't trust anything they say about her.” He was part of an overflow crowd of more than 800 who attended the funeral of Sandra Bland at her church in this Chicago suburb July 25.

The arrest and death in police custody of Bland has become a focus of outrage and protests against cop brutality, from Texas to New York and across the country. Bland, 28, died July 13 in the Waller County Jail in Hempstead, Texas, three days after she was arrested during a minor traffic stop. She was found hanging in the cell with a plastic trash bag around her neck; county officials ruled it suicide.

“She died because she was driving while Black,” said Yatasha Grant of Grays Lake. “I came today because it could have been me, my sister, my mother, my aunt. She shouldn't have

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SWP: ‘We need labor party based on unions’

Phila. candidates join working-class actions



Militant/Tony Lane

John Staggs, right, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Philadelphia City Council, at July 20 protest of ironworkers against frame-up and jailing of former union president Joe Dougherty.

BY JOHN STUDER

PHILADELPHIA — John Staggs, Socialist Workers Party candidate for City Council at-large, joined hundreds of celebrants and protesters at City Hall here July 25 to mark the 25th anniversary of President George H.W. Bush signing the Americans with Disabilities Act.

People in wheelchairs, veterans wounded in U.S. imperialism's wars and others took part and marched to the National Constitution Center.

“The law was the product of deep changes in the U.S. resulting from the massive Black-led working-class movement that overthrew Jim Crow

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Movement to raise minimum wage gains ground across US



Militant/Sara Lobman

Rally in New York July 22 after state wage board recommended \$15 fast-food minimum wage.

BY MAGGIE TROWE

NEW YORK — After three years of growing protests against wages that don't pay the bills, the fight of fast-food, Walmart and other workers for \$15 an hour scored a new round of victories and is gaining ground across the country.

Cheers went up July 22 at a rally outside the hearing of the New York State Fast Food Wage Board as participants watching the televised proceedings on a big outdoor screen saw the board unanimously recommend raising the minimum wage for fast-food workers in the state to \$15 an hour. Acting State Labor Commissioner Mario Musolino, who spoke at the rally, is expected to accept the increase and implement it.

The increase to \$15 for fast-food

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US, NATO expand military exercises on Russian border

BY EMMA JOHNSON

Washington and the U.S.-led NATO military alliance have ramped up their activities in eastern and northern Europe to a level not seen in decades. In June they carried out major exercises in Poland and the Baltic

states — countries that border Russia — and are increasing the positioning of troops and weapons in the region. While not posing an immediate threat of war, these moves increase tensions and the possibility of sharper conflicts with Moscow, which is also stepping up military maneuvers.

Responding to the Russian government's occupation and annexation of Crimea from Ukraine last year and intervention in support of separatist forces in eastern Ukraine, the rulers

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Castro speech conveys strength, confidence of Cuban Revolution

BY MAGGIE TROWE

In another sign of the strength and confidence of revolutionary Cuba, President Raúl Castro gave a speech at the July 15 closing session of the National Assembly of People's Power describing the country's economic progress despite Washington's embargo. He also spoke on developments in the class struggle internationally, reiterating Cuba's solidarity with the government of Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela and opposing U.S. and European economic sanctions against Russia and NATO operations on that

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Toronto Steelworkers vote to end 22-month strike against Crown

Communications Workers at AT&T in South fight for contract

Turkish gov’t attacks Kurds

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A July 20 suicide bombing attack by Islamic State in Surac, Turkey, a majority Kurdish city located six miles from Kobani, Syria, killed at least 32 people and wounded more than 100. They were part of a meeting of some 300 members of the Federation of Socialist Youth Associations who were planning to go to Kobani to help rebuild it from the devastation caused by Islamic State before being driven out by Kurdish forces in January. “We defended it together and we will rebuild it together,” read one of the banners at the scene.

On July 24 Turkish fighter jets carried out their first-ever attacks on Islamic State in Syria. At the same time they began bombing camps of the Turkish Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in northern Iraq for the first time in years. The *Financial Times* reported that Turkish warplanes hit three Islamic State targets in Syria that day while 75 planes have since hit 48 PKK targets in northern Iraq.

The airstrikes in Iraq targeted warehouses and living quarters, damaging

houses of civilians and wounding at least several children, according to a statement by the People’s Defense Forces, the military wing of the PKK. “The cease-fire has lost its meaning,” the organization said.

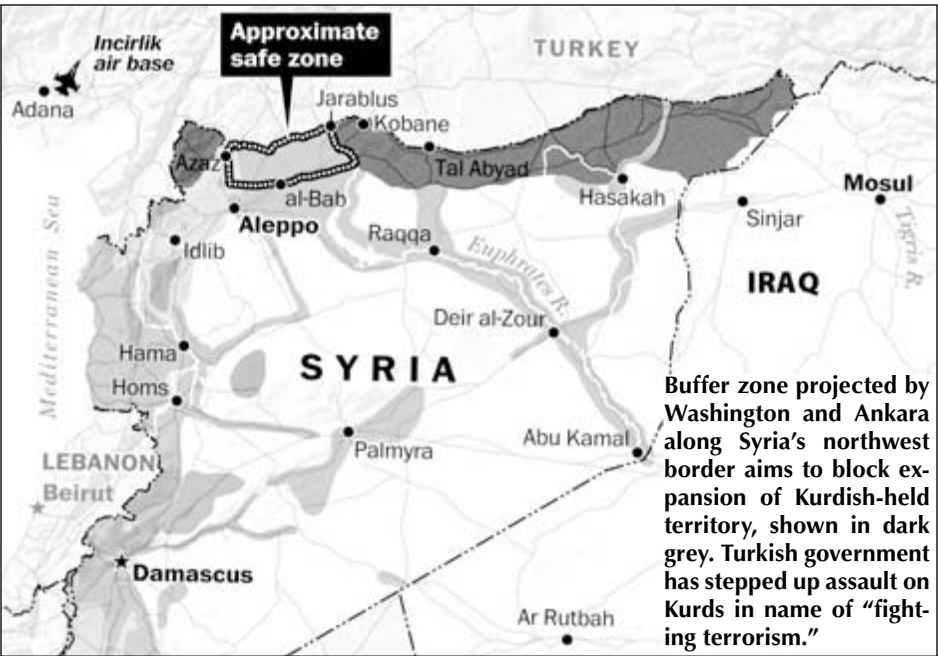
The PKK fought a three-decade guerilla war for rights and autonomy against the Turkish government until a cease-fire was agreed to in 2013. Both Ankara and Washington call it a terrorist organization.

‘Anti-terror’ raids in Turkey

Coinciding with the bombings in Iraq, Turkish police launched “anti-terror” raids July 24-25 in 22 provinces, arresting some supporters of Islamic State and many more fighters for Kurdish rights. More than 1,000 people were detained, including members of the PKK, its youth affiliate and the People’s Democratic Party (HDP), the pro-Kurdish party that won 13 percent of the vote in the recent elections and entered parliament for the first time.

In Istanbul, some 5,000 cops were deployed at 140 locations in 26 districts. Helicopters and special operation forces backed the raids, reported *Today’s Zaman*. Kurds and others rallied in a number of cities in Turkey and beyond to protest these attacks. In the capital, Ankara, about 1,000 demonstrated July 25 despite police use of gas and water cannon to disperse the crowd. The government banned a march called for the next day in Istanbul, but thousands showed up anyway, displaying signs supporting those killed in Surac. Another 1,500 marched in Paris in support of the Kurds.

“Turkey is playing a double game. It is trying to convince international me-



dia that it’s hitting Daesh, but the reality is that it’s bombing Kurds over there in northern Iraq,” Kurdish doctor Saleh Mustapha, one of the protesters, told Reuters. Daesh is an Arabic name for Islamic State.

Erdogan said July 28, “It is not possible for us to continue the peace process,” and urged parliament to strip politicians with links to “terrorist groups” of their immunity from prosecution.

Buffer zone targets Kurdish fighters

From the victories won in Kobani in January and in the strategic border town of Tel Abyad in June to recent gains against Islamic State in Hasakah, in northeastern Syria, the Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG) has proven that it’s the most effective fighting force on the ground against IS. They now control about two-thirds of Syria’s 560-mile border with Turkey.

In response, Erdogan made clear in a June 26 speech that his government will “never allow” the Kurds to establish a state “in the north of Syria.”

The Kurds’ fighting capacity and high morale have attracted Arabs, Christians and a faction of the Free Syrian Army, formed to fight the dictatorial rule of President Bashar al-Assad, to join them. “Wherever the Syrian people can be found, the YPG will be,” said Ilham Ahmed, a member of the Executive Council of the Democratic Society Movement, which is affiliated with the PKK, according to mmediaNow. “It has the right to be in Aleppo, Damascus, Deir Ezzor, Raqqa, and on all of Syria’s

geography.”

The buffer zone Turkish officials project setting up is aimed at halting further advances by YPG-led forces. The zone, about 55 miles wide and 25 miles deep, would run from the east of the Kurdish city of Azaz to Jarablus and southward to the town of al-Bab, near Aleppo.

The plan involves driving IS forces out of this area through joint airstrikes by Ankara and Washington. Syrian refugees currently in Turkey would then be moved there by Turkish authorities.

On July 24 the Turkish army, using heavy tank fire, shelled positions held by YPG-led forces in the village of Zormikhar, near Islamic State-controlled Jarablus, injuring four fighters and several local villagers, reported YPG General Command. Another attack occurred two days later.

“Rather than shelling the positions of ISIS’s mercenaries, the Turkish army is shelling our positions,” a YPG statement said.

Meanwhile, Assad acknowledged July 26 that the Syrian army has had to “let go” of many areas and now controls less than half of the country. “There is a shortage in manpower” due to desertions and defections, he said in a televised speech.

The *Washington Post* reported that Iranian and Russian officials, Assad’s key allies, have pressured him to concentrate on holding “a strategic corridor that stretches from Damascus, runs along the border with Lebanon and extends to the western costal areas of the country.”

For further reading New International no. 12

“One of capitalism’s infrequent long winters has begun. Accompanied by imperialism’s accelerating drive toward war, it’s going to be a long, hot winter.”

— Jack Barnes

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THE MILITANT

Oppose capitalist assault on Greek workers

The debt ‘deal’ between the Greek government and the other capitalist rulers of Europe amounts to making workers and farmers in Greece pay for the world capitalist downturn. The ‘Militant’ explains the crisis in class terms and takes the side of the working class.



June 23 protest in Athens against demands by German capitalist government for measures that increase exploitation of workers.

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Ukrainian government bans Communist Party

BY JOHN STUDER
AND EMMA JOHNSON

On July 24, Ukrainian Justice Minister Pavlo Petrenko signed a decree effectively banning the Communist Party and two smaller groups, the Communist Party of Ukraine (renewed) and the Communist Party of Workers and Peasants.

For the last year the government has been seeking a court ruling banning the CP, so far without success. So Petrenko acted under one of the “decommunization” laws signed by President Petro Poroshenko May 15, which also makes it a crime punishable by fines and prison to distribute communist “propaganda” or in any way deny “the criminal character of the communist totalitarian regime of 1917-1991 in Ukraine.”

Poroshenko’s capitalist government accuses the Communist Party and others who oppose its course, including workers protesting lack of pay and attacks on their unions, of being a traitorous “fifth column” in the war with separatists who are backed by Moscow. “After the passage of the decommunization law, the situation for CP depu-

ties and party members has been tense and more complicated,” Vladymir Konstantinovych, Communist Party of Ukraine deputy to Dnepropetrovsk City Council, told the *Militant* via Skype July 13. “All the Communist Party’s newspapers in Ukraine have been shut down. Two weeks ago we began our campaign for deputies in the local government. Now the Communist Party has been denied the right to participate. They told us we cannot run.”

In response to the July 24 decree, CP General Secretary Petro Symonenko said the party would run in the Oct. 25 local elections anyway. The party received 13 percent of the vote in the 2012 parliamentary elections.

The drive to push the party out of politics has gone hand in hand with physical attacks on its offices and members. There are dozens of instances of CP national headquarters and regional offices being attacked and individual members brutalized and harassed.

“Since February last year two CP members in Dneprodzerzhynsk have been kidnapped and held, accused of



Petro Symonenko, leader of Communist Party in Ukraine, after being smeared with yogurt at May Day rally in Kiev. “They attack the Communist Party and set a precedent to use against others they want to silence,” said union leader Alexei Simvolokov in *Militant* interview.

being collaborators with the separatists in Donetsk and Luhansk,” Konstantinovych said. “We are trying to reach agreement with other left-wing groups to form new political blocs. We created the Left March, an action front. Along with the Progressive Socialist Party, we established the Left Opposition to participate in politics.”

The Ukrainian CP was formed in 1993, after the fall of the Soviet Union. Its political views are similar to those

of the CP in Russia, presenting a prettified, nostalgic view of Soviet life under Stalin.

“Without freedom of speech there is no freedom. They attack the Communist Party and they set a precedent to use against others they want to silence,” said Alexei Simvolokov, chair of the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine in Dnepropetrovsk, who took part in the exchange with the *Militant*. “Different left-wing organizations working for social justice have suffered physical attacks and harassment.”

“The situation is very difficult for unionists also,” he said. “We face pressure from the authorities, the bosses and some union people as well,” he said. “After six months the new independent union at the rocket plant here has still not been recognized as a legal union.”

On July 24, the International Trade Union Confederation in a statement protested draft legislation requiring state registration of individuals and community groups. It “would weaken the autonomy of the trade unions and deprive them from protection from external interference, including by the public authorities.”

Halya Coynash of the Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group published an article July 25 opposing the ban on the CP and the decommunization laws. She cited attorney Volodymyr Yavorsky’s opinion that the ban is “manifestly in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights” and demonstrates that “the new government is infringing the rights of opposition political parties.”

NATO expands exercises on Russian border

Continued from front page

of Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have pressed for more NATO involvement as a deterrent to Moscow, which regards those countries as part of its “near abroad.” The governments of Finland and Sweden, who are not NATO members, are increasing participation in the alliance’s cooperation and training.

NATO — the North Atlantic Treaty Organization — is a U.S.-dominated imperialist military bloc formed following World War II. It was directed against the workers states in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe during the so-called Cold War. Since the collapse of the Stalinist regimes in those countries more than two decades ago other governments were brought in. There are now 28 member states in NATO, including five that border Russia.

In September last year, NATO adopted a “Readiness Action Plan” of measures “in, on and around the territory of NATO Allies in Central and Eastern Europe” as a “direct result of Russia’s aggressive actions in Ukraine.”

These measures include increased air patrols over the Baltic states and deployment of fighter jets to Romania and Poland; intensified maritime patrols in the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean; and deployment of ground troops to NATO countries in eastern Europe for training and exercises.

NATO doubles ‘response force’

The NATO Response Force will more than double from 13,000 to 30,000 troops. It will be spearheaded by a new Very High Readiness Joint Task Force of around 5,000 troops capable of deployment within 48 hours to be drawn from all member states.

Multinational NATO command and control posts will be established in Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania.

Defense Secretary Ashton Carter said June 22 that Washington will station dozens of tanks, Bradley armored



fighting vehicles and self-propelled howitzers in these six countries and this weaponry will be moved around Europe for training purposes.

The new Joint Task Force conducted its first training exercise in June, staging a mock attack on a beach near Ustka in northern Poland to defeat enemy forces occupying the coast, as part of the naval exercise BALTOPS. It was one of a string of drills in eastern Europe, the Baltics and the North Atlantic that month, each involving thousands of troops from a dozen or more NATO member states.

In March U.S. troops conducted a weeklong, 1,100 mile vehicular road march. That show of force, dubbed Operation Dragoon Ride, involved some 100 vehicles, including 60 Stryker armored tanks, traversing Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Czech Republic and Germany. They were accompanied by combat helicopters, NATO jets and U.S. warplanes.

In April defense ministers of the Nordic countries — Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden — announced a plan for closer military co-

operation, citing increased military activity by Moscow in the region.

Increased military spending

Washington has long criticized its European allies for not footing enough of NATO’s bill. “They are not doing enough,” Carter said in April. “They are spending a smaller share of their GDP than they have done in the past, [than] we do now and [than] many, like Russia, are spending. It’s too low.”

NATO’s target is that every member state should have military spending be at least 2 percent of its gross domestic product. Estonia, Greece, the U.S. and the U.K. do so. Turkey and France are close.

The Polish government plans to increase military spending by 19 percent in 2015, Lithuania by 50 percent, Latvia by 15 percent. Stockholm will increase military spending by 5 percent this year, reversing decades of cuts.

The Russian government aims to renew equipment for 70 percent of its armed forces by 2020. In June, President Vladimir Putin said Moscow will add over 40 new intercontinental ballistic missiles to its nuclear arsenal. The military buildup is centered in Crimea, Kaliningrad and the Arctic Coast. Kaliningrad is a Russian enclave on the Baltic Sea between Lithuania and Poland, separated from the rest of Russia. It is Russia’s only ice-free European port.

Putin celebrated Navy Day July 26 in Baltiysk in Kaliningrad, home to part of Russia’s Baltic Fleet, attending a massive naval parade. Many young people there regularly visit Poland but have never been to mainland Russia. The economic situation is dire. In local elections in Baltiysk in May, Putin’s United Russia Party failed to get a single candidate elected. Moscow is trying to increase Russian patriotism with a program called, “We are Russians.”

For further reading

U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War

by Jack Barnes

in *New International*
no. 11 \$16

Also in Spanish, French, Farsi,
Swedish, Greek, Icelandic



Capitalism's World Disorder

Working-Class Politics at the Millennium \$25

by Jack Barnes

Also in Spanish, French



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Steel bosses push for steep concessions in contract talks

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

CHICAGO — The 30,000 members of the United Steelworkers who work for ArcelorMittal and U.S. Steel face company concession demands as negotiations take place in Pittsburgh with the current contracts expiring Sept. 1.

Steel bosses in the U.S. confront weakened demand and increasing competition from overseas capitalists, particularly from China, pushing prices down. In response, the two steel giants are laying off thousands of workers, demanding the government install protective tariffs and seeking steep concessions from the union.

The initial proposal from ArcelorMittal, the world's largest steel producer, includes a three-year contract with no wage increase, a two-tier system of lower wages and benefits for new hires and major reductions in vacation pay and sickness and accident benefits, a July 20 Steelworkers negotiations update said. The steel giant proposes changes to health care plans for active and retired workers that reduce coverage and increase costs, instituting for the first time monthly premiums of \$150 for an individual and \$250 for a family. The company also demands the ability to propose more concessions.

"This is all about money," Candy Colvin, a paramedic, and member of USW Local 1010 at ArcelorMittal in East Chicago, Indiana, for 11 years, told the *Militant*. "We have to watch out for the retirees. How can they live if they triple the cost of health insurance?"

ArcelorMittal also wants to end contributions to the Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association, which covers health care and prescription drug costs of retirees who had benefits terminated by bankrupt steel companies.

VEBA was set up in 2002 by the USW and the International Steel Group, which was later bought out by ArcelorMittal. Its funds are based on company profits and steel tonnage.

"We do not have two tiers here now," Reuben Ervin, a member of Steel-

workers Local 979 at ArcelorMittal in Cleveland, told the *Militant* in a phone interview. "The new hires get the same wages and benefits as everyone else. But ArcelorMittal wants two-tier in this contract. This is a union-breaking system that will divide us." Ervin, who is on the local's grievance committee, has worked at the mill since 1978.

"It's not like we are getting a free ride," he said of the current health care coverage. "We work around a lot of dangerous chemicals — acid, lime and magnesium — that take a toll on your body. You see it in the air. My father worked in this plant for 42 years and died in the coke plant.

"I don't know what is going to happen with this contract," Ervin said, "but ever since negotiations began, we see more and more bosses doing hourly work which is against the contract. They are learning the jobs."

Negotiations take place as steel and taconite iron ore prices have plummeted and fierce competition between the bosses for markets increases. With a worldwide glut in steel, steel prices have dropped 23 percent since Jan. 1. Global prices for taconite iron ore fell to the lowest level since 2009. Taconite, a low grade of iron ore, is the main ingredient used to make steel.

"The company thinks that because of the state of the industry right now they can take advantage of us," Louis Alcorta, a USW Local 1010 member who has worked at ArcelorMittal for 40 years, told the *Militant*.

The East Chicago mill is the largest integrated steelmaking plant in North



Militant/Rita Lee

Steelworkers in Washington, Pennsylvania, rally July 9 against concession demands by Allegheny Technologies Inc. Their contract fight comes as talks start with U.S. Steel and ArcelorMittal.

America with over 4,000 workers. "They say steelworkers make a lot of money, but you have to live out here to make it," Alcorta said. "In the machine shop we are skilled craftsmen and make only \$25 per hour. We don't have two tier, and we are not going for this."

Thousands of layoffs

The bosses are making the workers bear the brunt of the slowdown. U.S. Steel has cut back production at eight mills, idling blast furnaces in Gary, Indiana; Fairfield, Alabama; and Granite City, Illinois. At Gary Works the coke plant was permanently closed.

At the U.S. Steel-owned Minntac and Keetac iron ore mines in Minnesota's Iron Range, hundreds of workers have been laid off. ArcelorMittal shut down two plants in East Chicago and announced July 2 it was cutting 2,800 jobs at a steel mill in Mexico.

U.S. Steel in Fairfield, Alabama,

competes with nonunion Nucor Corporation's large mill in Decatur 90 miles north. Nucor produces the same amount of steel as Fairfield Works, 2.4 million tons, but with one-third as many workers. Plant manager Mike Lee boasted, "We hire can-do innovative guys who want to bust their butts every day."

U.S. Steel CEO Mario Longhi told the *Northwest Indiana Times*, "We have many cost levers we can pull in response to a downturn in market conditions and we are pulling them as quickly and as hard as we can." The USW has not received an initial proposal from U.S. Steel.

"Everything is on the table. We want to be more flexible than Nucor," Longhi told the *Wall Street Journal*. Nucor has two electric arc furnaces that use scrap instead of iron ore and can be started and stopped easily in response to the fluctuating demand. U.S. Steel just installed a similar furnace at the Fairfield mill.

Movement to raise minimum wage gaining ground

Continued from front page

workers — a 70 percent raise from the current \$8.75 an hour state minimum wage — will be applied in increments, reaching \$15 for New York City workers by Dec. 31, 2018, and for those outside the city by mid-2021. The wage hike applies to all workers in outlets that are part of chains of 30 or more restaurants that serve food and drinks paid for at counters by eat-in or take-out customers. Some 180,000 people are employed at fast-food restaurants in the state.

Los Angeles, San Francisco and Seattle have recently implemented \$15 an hour minimum wage laws, also incrementally applied over several years.

University of California President Janet Napolitano announced July 22 that the minimum wage for direct and contract employees working more than 20 hours a week will be raised to \$15 an hour by October 2017, a move that will have an impact on about 3,200 workers throughout the state.

On July 21 the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, in a room packed with people, voted to increase the minimum wage for county workers and those who work in unincorporated areas of the county from \$9 to \$15 an hour by 2020.

In Washington, D.C., the Board of Elections gave the go-ahead to a \$15-an-hour initiative that will appear on the ballot next year if its supporters gather 23,000 signatures. The minimum hourly wage in the District of Columbia is currently \$10.50.

The fight by fast-food workers for

"\$15 and a union" began in 2012 and has gained support since then. Thanksgiving weekend "Black Friday" protests at Walmart stores began the same year and also picked up steam.

On April 15 of this year thousands of workers in several hundred cities and towns across the U.S. and around the world marched in "Fight for \$15" actions, with Walmart, airport, home health care and other workers joining the fast-food fighters.

Activists from the growing "Black Lives Matter" actions have joined the Fight for \$15 actions, and "Black Lives Matter" is a popular chant and T-shirt slogan at rallies to raise the minimum wage.

Feeling the pressure, Walmart announced Feb. 19 it would raise starting pay to \$9 per hour in April and another dollar by February 2016. Then on April 1 McDonald's announced it would raise wages to at least \$1 more than the local minimum wage for the 90,000 workers employed directly by the company. Some other retailers, including Target and TJ Maxx, have followed suit.

Union support

Unionized workers who earn more than \$15 per hour have turned out in force to support raising the minimum wage. Contingents of the Hotel Trades Council, janitors from Service Employees International Union Local 32BJ, health care workers with 1199SEIU and members of the Laborers and Carpenters construction unions joined the march of thousands April 15 and the

July 22 rally here.

"I'm here to support the fast-food workers," Brandon Brigman, 29, a porter in a commercial building in Manhattan and a member of Local 32BJ, told the *Militant* at that rally. "They need \$15 an hour, and they need a union, too. There's a big difference being in a union."

Many at the rally who are not fast-food workers were buoyed by the increase and confident it can be spread to others.

"I get \$10 an hour and I only get 36 hours a week," home health care worker Oneka Rock, 37, told the *Militant*. "I couldn't pay the \$950 a month rent on the studio I share with my daughter, so we moved in with my mother." Still, Rock is optimistic about the fight for \$15. "My friend works in fast food for \$8.75. I'm trying to get her to come to the protests, because only by doing that can we win anything."

On another front in the fight for unions and higher wages, airport workers at Aviation Safeguard, a contractor that employs 1,200 baggage handlers, wheelchair attendants and security officers at Kennedy and LaGuardia airports, called off a planned one-day strike July 21 after the company agreed to stay neutral in their drive to be represented by Local 32BJ. Workers said they planned the strike to protest company intimidation against those fighting for higher wages and a union.

Deborah Liatos in Los Angeles contributed to this article.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CANADA

Montreal

Relentless Fall of Employment in Canada Since 2008: The Challenge for Working People. Speaker: Annette Kouri, Communist League. Fri., Aug. 7, 7:30 p.m. 7107 St. Denis, Room 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

Ukraine Toilers Fight to Defend Jobs, Sovereignty, Political Rights. Speaker: Baskaran Appu, Communist League. Fri., Aug. 7, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5. 188a Onehunga Mall. Tel.: (09) 636-3231.

UNITED KINGDOM

Manchester

Cuba Helps Push Back Washington's Threats on Venezuela. Speaker: Andrés Mendoza, Communist League, participant in delegation of youth from around the world in solidarity with Venezuela. Sat., Aug. 1, 6:30 p.m. Donation: £2.50. Room 301, Hilton House, 26-28 Hilton St. M1 2EH. Tel.: (016) 1478-2496.

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

MAGGIE TROWE, EDITOR

Help the *Militant* cover steel, auto and other contract fights!

This column is dedicated to spreading the truth about the labor resistance that is unfolding today, to give voice to those engaged in battle and help build solidarity. National steel and auto contracts are expiring this summer and fall. I invite workers involved in fights against concessions to contact me at 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018; or (212) 244-4899; or themilitant@mac.com. We'll work together to ensure your story is told.

—Maggie Trowe

Toronto Steelworkers vote to end 22-month strike against Crown

TORONTO — United Steelworkers Local 9176 members narrowly voted to approve a new six-year collective agreement with Crown Metal Packaging July 19. The vote came after a 22-month strike against company demands for steep concessions. The unionists, who received substantial solidarity from Steelworkers locals and other unions, pushed back the company's union-busting effort to exclude a list of about three dozen union activists from returning to work and retain strikebreakers, but lost ground on other issues.

"We're pleased that the strike's over," Lawrence Hay, the lead union negotiator, told the *Toronto Star*. "We're not so pleased with the terms and conditions." Referring to Crown's attack on the union, he said, "They couldn't destroy those folks."

The new contract states that all striking employees may return to their jobs. It includes enhanced retirement and severance provisions for those who decide not to go back to work.

Crown, which produces beer cans, pushed through wage cuts and other takebacks. According to two workers who asked that their names not be used, the wages for the least skilled workers are cut from around \$24 an hour to \$16 and overtime pay rates are reduced. There will be annual pay increases of around 2 percent over the life of the contract. Crown will no longer permit a union office in the plant.

The strikers won solidarity from unions in the U.S., Britain, France, Italy and Turkey. They urged a boycott of canned beer, leafleted at provincial beer stores and picketed company board meetings.

"I'm not anxious to go out on strike again any time soon but after the solidarity shown us by other workers I will show my support for others when they go out on strike," Sid Butt, who has worked at Crown for more than 29 years, told the *Militant*. "I know how important it is and I know now what they are going through."

—Tony Di Felice and Toni Gorton

Communications Workers at AT&T in South fight for contract

ATLANTA — Members, retirees and union supporters of the Communications Workers of America Local 3204 picketed here July 17 in front of the AT&T Building. "We want a contract" and "Union yes" were among the chants at the lively picket line of 50 people.

The contract between AT&T and more than 27,000 CWA District 3 members in eight Southern states and Puerto Rico expires Aug. 8. Issues in dispute include working conditions, health care and wages. "The rally will be to show support to our bargaining team and send a strong message to AT&T that we will not accept cutbacks for our members," read a message on the District 3 website

calling the action.

Several workers carried handmade signs saying, "It's our turn."

"Our members are ready to go on strike if we've got to," Ed Barlow, Local 3204 president, told the rally.

"We don't want to give back," said retiree Rita Scott, who worked as a service technician. "We want a time out for the owners to get wealthy. We will fight for a contract."

"It's our time to get some back," retiree Gail Hankerson told the *Militant*.

The bargaining team has rejected the company's proposals to severely restrict night differential and to force technicians onto mandatory standby.

—Janice Lynn

LA port drivers advance fight for union, wage hike

BY BILL ARTH

LOS ANGELES — Port truck drivers at Pacific 9 Transportation in nearby Carson July 23 took down their picket line after a two-day strike over misclassification. The drivers are fighting to be recognized as employees and to join the Teamsters union. They accuse Pac 9 of wage theft by misclassifying them as independent contractors, pushing the costs of truck maintenance and waiting time on them. This was their sixth strike against the company, and the seventh by drivers in the area, in the last two years.

Forty drivers have filed wage theft claims totaling more than \$6 million against Pac 9. Hearings began before the California Labor Commissioner July 27. "Last year, the DLSE [Division of Labor Standards Enforcement] ruled that three of my co-workers are misclassified and ordered Pac 9 to pay them a quarter million dollars in back wages and penalties," said Daniel Linares, a striker who has filed a claim, according to a July 21 union press advisory. "We have every

reason to believe that the DLSE will make a similar ruling for us."

The Pac 9 drivers are part of a larger fight being carried out on both U.S. coasts. Teamsters-supported drivers testified at a state Senate hearing in Savannah, Georgia, July 21 protesting misclassification there.

The ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, the biggest in the country, use more than 10,000 drivers from 560 companies, almost all misclassified as independent contractors. A 2014 report by the National Employment Law Project says approximately 80 percent of port truck drivers nationwide are labeled independent contractors and estimates that 80 percent of those, or 50,000 workers, are misclassified. The report says the shift to the independent contractor model, which occurred with the deregulation of the trucking industry in the 1980s, "is correlated with a 30% decline in wages between 1980 and 1995."

On July 8 the 88 drivers at Eco Flow Transportation unanimously voted to

join the Teamsters. This brings the total number of unionized drivers in the ports to 450 at four companies — Eco Flow Transportation, Shippers Transport Express, Toll Group and Horizon Lines.

The establishment of Eco Flow in May showed the impact of the port truckers' fight. The new company, which hires drivers as employees and does not oppose Teamsters representation, was founded by Saybrook Capital, which also owns Total Transportation Services, one of the companies Teamsters have struck several times over the last two years.

The May 4 press conference announcing the new company was attended by Saybrook Capital's co-managing partner, Jonathan Rosenthal; Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti; and Teamsters representatives.

Teamsters Local 848 will now negotiate its first contract with Eco Flow as it also enters into negotiations with Toll Group and Shippers Express, whose contracts expire at the end of the year.

Verizon workers in 9 states and D.C. authorize strike



Militant/Mike Shur

Several thousand members of the Communications Workers of America and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and supporters rallied in front of the Verizon corporate headquarters in New York July 25. At the rally the unions announced that their members in nine states — Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Virginia — as well as Washington, D.C., had voted 86 percent to authorize a strike. Their contract, covering 39,000 workers, expires Aug. 1. Verizon wants increased health care contributions from the workers and concessions on pensions, union officials said.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



August 10, 1990

HAVANA, Cuba — Under huge billboards that read, "Socialism or Death!" hundreds of thousands gathered here in the Plaza of the Revolution to hear Cuban President Fidel Castro on July 26.

"It is hard to acknowledge that our most extraordinary effort for the development of the country and for consolidation of socialism in our homeland coincides with a catastrophe in the socialist camp," Castro said.

"Socialism is not a conjunctural option, it is not a passing game," Castro noted. "It is not, nor can it be, a temporary decision. Socialism was an undeniable historical necessity. Socialism was the result of the political and ideological development of our society, the greatest and best product of our history."



August 9, 1965

In an article entitled "What Should the Peace Movement Do?" in the June 28 *I.F. Stone's Weekly*, the editor makes the following statement: "If the cause of world peace depends on the overthrow of American capitalism there isn't much hope for the world." Marxists would put it the other way around: If the cause of world peace depends on maintaining American capitalism, there is no hope for the world because capitalism contains within itself an inexorable tendency toward war. This is not to say that the temporary settlement of any particular war crisis must wait on a socialist revolution in this country. But it does mean that the capitalist rulers in this country cannot be peaceful.



August 10, 1940

The stubborn fact remains that 30,000 steel workers have already lost out in the industry and the jobs of thousands more are immediately threatened. Technological change is wreaking havoc among the steel workers.

The sliding scale of wages and hours is the fundamental approach to the problem of unemployment. The maximum hours of work should be reduced immediately to a point where jobs would be made available for all steel workers presently unemployed. The hourly rate of pay should be automatically increased whenever the hours of work are reduced so that the workers will suffer no loss in their total wages.

Bland's death spurs protest

Continued from front page
been pulled over, or thrown in jail. She shouldn't be dead."

A police dashboard camera and a bystander's cellphone captured the arrest. State Trooper Brian Encinia told Bland she had been pulled over for failing to signal a lane change properly. She explained that she was trying to get out of the cop's way. Encinia asked her to put out her cigarette; Bland declined. Encinia ordered her to get out of the car, and when Bland insisted on her rights he drew his stun gun. "I will light you up!" he shouted, pointing it at Bland. "Get out! Now!"

Bland got out of the car, and Encinia escorted her to the curb, out of sight of the police camera. A shouting match developed. Bland is heard protesting that Encinia slammed her into the ground, she hit her head, and she couldn't hear or feel her arms. She told Encinia that she had epilepsy. "Good," he replied.

"I'm infuriated and everybody else should be infuriated," Sharon Cooper, Bland's sister, told reporters July 22, the day after the police video was released.

Waller County District Attorney Elton Mathis said he would open a criminal investigation of the cop's actions. Encinia has been placed on administrative leave.

Bland was taken to the county jail and held on a charge of assaulting a public servant. Officials say that at the time she was admitted, Bland told them she had tried to commit suicide the previous year and had suffered

from depression. She was placed alone in a cell, and not monitored as being at risk. She was held over the weekend while her family worked to arrange a \$5,000 bond.

The Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences, which conducted an autopsy for the Waller County prosecutor, claims that Bland committed suicide by hanging.

A fighter who 'refused to be silenced'

Bland was a "young lady who refused to be subdued and silenced," Rev. Theresa Dear, AME minister and president of the DuPage County NAACP, told the press outside the church before the funeral service. Among other activities, Bland was a supporter of the Black Lives Matter movement.

"We'll be celebrating the life of Sandy Bland," Dear said. "We have much to celebrate. We're happy that she found her voice, found her purpose in social justice."

People came to the funeral from all over the Chicago area. "I didn't know her personally," said Carl Pace of Crestwood. "I thought it was important to be here because I felt the pain of many across the country."

George Wright, president of Prairie View A&M University, where Bland graduated with a degree in agriculture, spoke at the funeral. "She was one of thousands of youth from Chicago who chose to return to Texas, Mississippi and Alabama to continue their education," he said. Bland was headed to the campus to accept a job

Cleveland event gathers fighters against cop brutality



Militant/Glova Scott

CLEVELAND — Participants in the Movement for Black Lives conference in Cleveland protest the death in police custody of Sandra Bland at a rally on July 25. More than 1,000 participants in fights against police brutality from all over the country, overwhelmingly youth, attended the conference. In one powerful session, more than 20 families affected by police and racist violence addressed the crowd with two-minute descriptions of their cases. Relatives of Emmett Till, Oscar Grant, Eric Garner, Michael Brown and Tamir Rice were among those who spoke. Participants in the July 24-26 conference took part in workshops and plenary sessions on police violence.

— JAMES HARRIS

offer when she was pulled over.

"They are painting my baby as shiftless, as a criminal," her mother, Geneva Reed-Veal, said at the funeral. "That is not my baby. She had a purpose. It was to stop racial injustice."

Her daughter "did not take her own life," she insisted. "I want to know what happened to my baby, and I'm going to find out."

The family and friends of Bland

dispute the findings of the official investigation. They say that her spirits were high and that she was excited about starting her new job. They have called for an independent impartial investigation, and have ordered a second autopsy.

DuPage AME held a prayer walk of several hundred and a petition-signing event after their Sunday services July 19. A parallel service was held the same day at the Hope AME Church in Prairie View, Texas.

Sen. Dick Durbin and Rep. Bill Foster, who spoke at the funeral, are requesting a Justice Department investigation into her death. The Houston chapter of the NAACP has launched its own investigation. The group plans to request an independent autopsy and request police records to determine how she died while in a jail cell, said chapter President James Douglas.

Abortion rights supporters defend Planned Parenthood

BY LEA SHERMAN

Planned Parenthood is the target of the latest attack in the ideological offensive against women's right to choose abortion.

Over nearly three years, anti-abortion activists carried out an operation to portray the health care provider as "selling baby parts." They set up a fictitious biotechnology company, formed the cynically titled Center for Medical Progress and masqueraded as supporters of Planned Parenthood.

In July David Daleiden released two videos that he secretly taped of staff doctors discussing the procedures for ob-

taining fetal tissue for medical research with him and an associate over lunch. Daleiden claims the videos show that Planned Parenthood sells fetal tissue for profit. But in the videos both doctors affirm that the sale of fetal tissue is illegal and that Planned Parenthood receives a minimal fee to cover their costs.

Daleiden says he could release a dozen videos in the coming months.

While apologizing for "the tone and statements" of the staff, Planned Parenthood President Cecile Richards said in a July 16 video statement, "The allegation that Planned Parenthood profits in any way from tissue donation is not true.



Planned Parenthood of the Heartland

Defenders of women's right to choose abortion in Cedar Falls, Iowa, counter anti-abortion protest at Planned Parenthood clinic by forces trying to slander health care provider July 28.

Our donation programs follow all laws and ethical guidelines."

Fetal tissue, which some women who have an abortion choose to donate, is used in medical research, including the study of eye diseases, diabetes and muscular dystrophy, as well as Parkinson's disease and Hodgkin's lymphoma. The *New York Times* reported that scientists and universities doing this research do not want to disclose their names because abortion opponents have threatened them with violence.

Opponents of a woman's right to choose have begun holding protests in front of dozens of Planned Parenthood clinics, calling for an end to federal funding to the organization on the basis of the videos.

Three dozen supporters of women's rights rallied behind a banner reading "Health Care Happens Here" in front of Planned Parenthood's clinic in Des Moines, Iowa, July 28 to counter an

Continued on page 9

Events on anniversary of killing of Michael Brown

Ferguson, Missouri
Sunday, August 9, 11 a.m.

Silent march
Starts at Canfield Drive,
where Brown was killed
Sponsor: Ferguson Action Council

Brooklyn, New York
Sunday, August 9, 12 noon

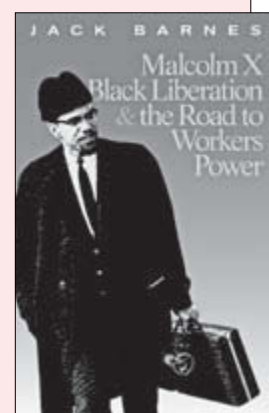
Starts at Barclays Center
620 Atlantic Avenue
Sponsor: Peoples Power Assemblies
Look for events in your area

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

by Jack Barnes

"Don't start with Blacks as an oppressed nationality. Start with the vanguard place and weight of workers who are Black in the broad proletarian-led social and political struggles in the United States. From the Civil War to today, the record is mind-boggling. It's the strength and resilience, not the oppression, that bowls you over." \$20

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Castro speech conveys confidence of revolution

Continued from front page
country's borders.

"The decelerating growth rate of the gross domestic product ... has clearly been reversed," Castro said, adding that 4 percent growth is expected for the year, up from 1 percent last year.

In spite of "severe external financial restrictions," Cuba has been "rigorously fulfilling its payment obligations to foreign creditors and providers," he continued, "a practice that contributes to the gradual re-establishment of the credibility of the country's economy, despite the U.S. blockade, which remains in full force."

Castro said annual inflation has been contained between 3 and 5 percent, "although we cannot ignore the justified concerns of the population regarding the high prices of agricultural products, which are increasing more than the average salary."

"The first half of the year has been marked by intense international activity," the Cuban president said, recalling Cuba's participation in the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States summit in January and the 7th Summit of the Americas in April.

'Return Guantánamo'

The opening of the Cuban Embassy in Washington, D.C., July 20 completes the first phase of the process of resuming diplomatic relations begun last December, Castro said, "and a new, long and complex stage will now begin." However, he said, "it is inconceivable, while the blockade is maintained, that there be normal relations between Cuba and the United States." It will also be necessary "that the territory illegally occupied by the Guantánamo Naval Base be returned; illegal radio and television transmissions to Cuba ended; programs aimed at promoting destabilization and internal subversion eliminated; and the Cuban people compensated for the human



Above, Granma/José M. Correa Armas; inset, AIN
Above, crowd celebrating 62nd anniversary of attack on Moncada Barracks in Santiago de Cuba July 26. The rally was held in front of the site, inset, of 1953 assault that launched Cuban Revolution.

and economic damages caused by the policies of the United States."

He added, "Changing everything which must be changed is the sovereign and exclusive domain of the Cuban people."

"We are carefully following the dialogue underway" between Caracas and Washington, Castro said, reiterating solidarity with the Maduro government "in face of destabilization attempts and any act of foreign intervention." Talks between U.S. and Venezuelan officials took place in June for the first time in several years, after Cuba and other Latin American governments denounced Washington's threats and sanctions against Venezuela.

Referring to recent NATO moves in the Baltic region, Castro condemned "the attempt to extend NATO to Russia's borders" and U.S. and European economic sanctions against Russia.

"We welcome the agreement reached

between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the U.N. Security Council member countries plus Germany," the Cuban president said. "We reiterate our support for the inalienable right of all states to the peaceful use of nuclear energy."

Castro said Cuba is preparing to welcome Pope Francis in September "with the affection, respect and hospitality he deserves."

Castro noted the "solidarity, altruism and personal courage" of the recently returned medical volunteers who fought the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, and those soon to return from Nepal, where they have treated victims of the April earthquakes there.

"Our country will continue to fulfill, in accordance with its means, our internationalist duty to support peoples in need, as today tens of thousands of compatriots in over 80 countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia are doing, under the principle that

those [countries] that can meet the cost of the collaboration do so, and we will continue helping those who do not have the resources," Castro said.

July 26 rally in Santiago

July 26 marked the 62nd anniversary of the assault led by Fidel Castro on the Moncada barracks in Santiago in eastern Cuba, which launched the revolutionary war to bring down the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. Raúl Castro and other Cuban leaders attended a mass rally in front of the barracks, which bears bullet holes from the 1953 battle. Vice President José Ramón Machado Ventura gave the main address at the rally, which began in the cool of the morning at 5:12 a.m., the time of the assault.

The rally also celebrated the 500th anniversary of the founding of the city of Santiago and its long history as a center of revolutionary struggle.

Machado Ventura cited the struggles of the indigenous people against the Spanish conquistadors in the eastern part of Cuba centuries ago, and the rebellion of slaves in early copper mines. These combative traditions continued with the wars for independence from Spain and the Cuban Revolution that triumphed in 1959.

The vice president praised the reconstruction of Santiago in the wake of the devastation wrought by Hurricane Sandy in 2012. "Those who saw this city the day after Hurricane Sandy passed through and who see it today have to repeat the words spoken by compañero Raúl at the last session of the National Assembly, 'Nothing is impossible for a united people like ours.'"

N.Y. meeting celebrates Cuban Revolution

BY MAGGIE TROWE

NEW YORK — "It's a very special moment to be at the site that honors the revolutionary Malcolm X," said Rodolfo Reyes, Cuba's ambassador to the United Nations, at a meeting to celebrate the

62nd anniversary of the opening of the Cuban Revolution. The July 24 event took place in the Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz Memorial and Educational Center here — the historic Audubon Ballroom where Malcolm X often spoke and where he was assassinated in 1965.

The meeting was chaired by César Sánchez of the July 26 Coalition and Joan Gibbs, general counsel for the Center for Law and Social Justice at Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn.

A video of Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez raising the Cuban flag at the opening of the Cuban Embassy in Washington, D.C., July 20 was greeted with a standing ovation.

"We've been clear that normalizing relations between Cuba and the U.S. will be a long process," Reyes said. "We are not naive. The embargo is still in place. Our sovereign territory in Guantánamo needs to be returned."

Reyes called the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries "a victory for all Latin American people and

all revolutionary and progressive people around the world." After 10 administrations, he said, the U.S. government has to recognize that "the Cuban people will never compromise any principle."

"We will always be fighting for the liberation of Oscar López Rivera," the Puerto Rican independence fighter imprisoned in the U.S. for 34 years, "and for African-Americans in their fight for the full enjoyment of their rights," Reyes said.

"We will always be building our socialist project and defending our sovereignty and dignity," he continued. "Sixty-two years after Moncada we have a revolution that's totally alive."

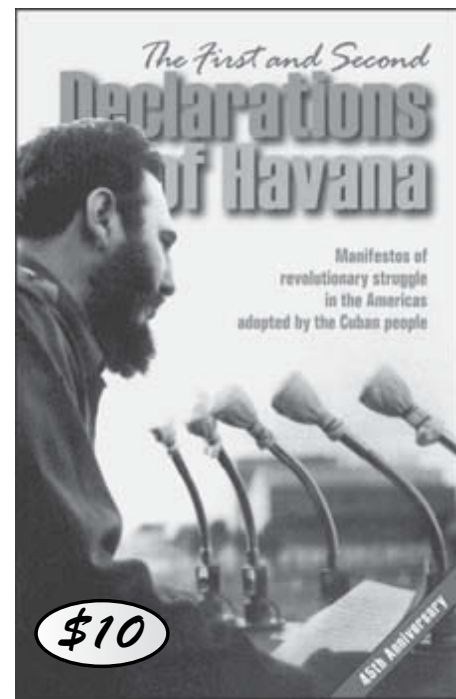
Speakers included Ben Ramos, a leader of ProLibertad, an organization that fights for the release of Puerto Rican political prisoners; Aminifu Williams, a representative of the People's Organization for Progress in Newark, New Jersey, who invited participants to the Million People's March in Newark the next day; and others.

Negash Abdurahman, an Ethiopian-born filmmaker, showed excerpts from a documentary he is preparing on Cuba's internationalist missions in Angola in the 1970s and '80s.



Militant/Mike Shur

Cuban Ambassador to United Nations Rodolfo Reyes speaking at July 24 New York meeting.



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Hudson Guild Fulton Center
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the Cuban Five and how they won
their freedom

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Reception, 6 p.m.; program, 7 p.m.

For information call Jim Furlong,
director of arts, (212) 760-9837

How Trotsky, secretaries countered Stalin's frame-up

Below is an excerpt from Joseph Hansen's introduction to My Life by Leon Trotsky. The title is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for August. A central leader of the Russian Revolution, Trotsky led the fight to continue V.I. Lenin's internationalist course against the political counterrevolution headed by Joseph Stalin in the Soviet Union. Stalin staged four major show trials — arresting and executing almost every important Bolshevik participant in the revolution — with frame-up slanders against Trotsky at the center of each. Hansen served as part of the Bolshevik leader's secretariat from 1937 until Trotsky's assassination in 1940. During that time Trotsky was living in exile in Mexico, under constant threat from the GPU, Stalin's political police, who murdered his son Leon Sedov in February 1938. Copyright © 1970 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JOSEPH HANSEN

The household was still in agony over the death of Leon Sedov when Stalin made another move. On February 23, the Mexican trade-union confederation, which was controlled by the Mexican Communist Party through Lombardo Toledano, passed a slanderous resolution against Trotsky. The aim of the



“Working with Trotsky was a serious matter,” wrote Joseph Hansen, who was secretary for Bolshevik leader 1937-40. “It was an extraordinary school for the young comrades on his staff.” From left, Hansen, Trotsky and Natalia Sedova in Mexico, October 1937.

resolution was to put pressure on the [Lázaro] Cárdenas government to cancel Trotsky's asylum and deport him.

There was no alternative but to answer immediately. Trotsky did this the following day.

Unknown to us or the public in general, on precisely the same day that Laborde and Lombardo Toledano had their resolution passed by the CTM, Andrei Vyshinsky, the procurator of the USSR, signed an indictment against twenty-one members of a “Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites.” This was announced in Moscow on February 27. The trial was to open March 2.

Among the defendants were some internationally famous names, including Nikolai I. Bukharin and Alexei I. Rykov. As part of the “amalgam,” Stalin included one of his own faithful lieutenants, Yagoda, the former head of the secret political police and organizer of the first “great” show trial in 1936 that doomed Zinoviev and Kamenev and others. A poignant figure for L.D. [Trotsky] and Natalia [Sedova, his wife,] was Christian Rakovsky, a longtime friend of the family.

As in the previous trials, the main defendant, of course, was Trotsky, named by the prosecutor as the chief conspirator and archplotter.

Although Stalin had taken a year to prepare the script he had no intention whatever of prolonging the show. This was indicated by the suddenness of the

announcement and the short time permitted the defendants before the trial opened. Stalin's purpose in carrying the affair through at such a fast pace was to block efforts in other countries to mount pressure for a fair trial. It could be expected that the courtroom drama would be brief and that the defendants, or at least most of them, would be immediately executed. Perhaps Stalin counted on the whole thing being completed and the victims buried before Trotsky could expose the frame-up. Then as interest died, let the exiled revolutionary leader and his handful of followers try to overcome the weight of the worldwide propaganda machine of the Comintern backed by the mighty resources of the Soviet state. ...

As the Moscow trial proceeded, L.D. followed the press closely. Each day he wrote a long statement which was then translated, typed up in a number of copies, taken to the wire services and daily papers in Mexico City, and airmailed to our cothinkers in various areas. We did not use a mimeograph, partly because it would have meant another step in a process where speed was at a premium.

Trotsky worked relentlessly — something like eighteen hours a day during the opening phase of the trial. Some of us who were younger worked still longer. We did not miss a single deadline.

Thus we functioned as a quite effi-

cient and rather smooth, if small, team. This was in the tradition of Trotsky's earlier staffs, a tradition handed down from one group of secretaries to another. In Russia, Trotsky's secretariat was famed. Stalin had good reason to strike special blows at its members in hope of reducing and crippling Trotsky's effectiveness. I never had the privilege of meeting the Russians. They perished in the concentration camps or from a shot in the head from a GPU pistol. But I know what they were like. They were the kind that enjoy work, do not mind working under high pressure, are independent minded, and not without skills in several fields. With such coworkers, Trotsky collaborated on an equal basis, all working together for the great common goal. And this inspired them to reach a bit beyond themselves.

The impact of Trotsky's statements on the third “great” Moscow trial was devastating. The swift response to the indictment, exposing the frame-up before the show even opened, turned the trial against Stalin in the eyes of world opinion from the first day, and each day became worse. Trotsky, the chief defendant, succeeded in turning the tables on Stalin, becoming the chief accuser. From then on, among knowledgeable people, it was definitive. Stalin, already dented by the findings of the John Dewey Commission in 1937, which had shown Trotsky and Leon Sedov to be innocent of the charges leveled in the previous frame-up trials, was now burdened with a “credibility gap” from which he could never escape.

Working with Trotsky was a serious matter — he was no dabbler in politics and he found dabbling intolerable in others; but it was also an extraordinary school for the young comrades on his staff. The way he responded to the March, 1938, Moscow trial served as a model demonstration of the importance of timing in meeting a deadly challenge and converting it into an opportunity. It meant pushing everything else aside with the utmost decisiveness, rising above personal problems, concentrating on the work at hand with maximum energy and every resource available. It was a rare opportunity for those of us then in our twenties to see Trotsky in action as a political fighter in a very acute battle.

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Phila. SWP candidates

Continued from front page

segregation in the 1950s and '60s," Staggs said the next morning at a gathering of campaign supporters preparing to petition to put him and Osborne Hart, the SWP candidate for mayor, on the ballot. "It followed the victories forcing the U.S. rulers to get out of Vietnam, winning women's right to abortion and other social gains."

Over the weekend, campaign supporters gathered 989 signatures, putting the drive at over 2,700, more than twice the requirement of 1,325.

"I talked to many at the rally who are fighting to use the act against discrimination," Staggs told the *Militant*. "Basil Weiner, who signed the SWP petition, said he is helping a Vietnam vet whose apartment needs modifications because of his injuries.

"They went to all kinds of local agencies and kept getting turned away. They were told they couldn't help him get on disability, release funds or order his landlord to make the necessary changes to make the place livable," Staggs said. "They've been fighting for two years and are still at it.

"Another worker, who came with a group from Harrisburg, compared the Americans with Disabilities Act with a 'hollow hammer,'" Staggs said. "It was a weapon, but it had to be filled up with protests to be effective. That's why he came.

"When the ADA was passed, it opened the door to significant changes. Today, you often see accessible ramps on streets, buildings and buses. But the law didn't include any enforcement measures," Staggs said. "I support the people who are fighting to get their rights implemented."

"We've found real political interest in the demands and proposals the

Socialist Workers Party campaign is raising as we discuss them on workers' doorsteps in neighborhoods across the city," Staggs told those at a spirited campaign forum here July 24. "And we've taken our campaign and petition drive to labor struggles, demonstrations against cop brutality and other social protests.

Participation in labor struggles

"Each of the last two weeks I've gone with supporters to the hiring hall of the International Longshoremen's Association to talk to workers there," he said. "We've discussed the three-tier wage structure they face, and the looming contract fights at ATI Steel, Verizon, U.S. Steel, Arcelor-Mittal and the Big Three auto companies. And we talk about the situation around the world, from the deep attacks on the working class in Greece to how the nuclear deal between Iran and Washington will affect the continuing coming apart of the capitalist world order today."

Twenty people signed the nominating petitions when Staggs and campaign supporters joined more than 100 ironworkers in a rally protesting the jailing of Joe "Doc" Dougherty, former president of their local. "Dougherty was sentenced to 19 years in prison on racketeering conspiracy charges," Staggs said. "He's 73, so even the judge admitted it was basically a death sentence. And the prosecutors said there was no evidence he actually *did* anything. They wanted to 'send a message' to the unions." SWP campaign supporters have been explaining how these kinds of government frame-ups and intervention in the unions are an attack on the entire working class.

"Going door to door, some workers asked us about Democratic Party



Disability Pride Phila

Socialist Workers Party candidates support those fighting for rights of disabled. Above, march in Philadelphia July 25 marks 25 years since passage of Americans with Disabilities Act.

presidential candidate Bernie Sanders, who calls himself a socialist," Staggs said. "We explain that Sanders is running, and getting a hearing, because of the big changes in the attitudes of working people.

Break with bourgeois parties

"Workers today face attacks from the bosses and their government, whose only way out of the capitalist crisis is to deepen the exploitation of the working class," he said. "Workers are interested in how we can defend ourselves and how we can find a new perspective forward, including politically. Sanders presents a radical image with the intention of corralling us back into bourgeois politics.

"The Socialist Workers Party runs to point the road to workers breaking with the capitalist political parties," Staggs said, "the road of independent working-class politics, forming a labor party based on the unions. This

opens the door to the fight for working-class political power, like the Cuban workers and farmers did when they overthrew U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista and transformed themselves in the process. They have continued along this road for more than 55 years, an example for working people everywhere."

The Socialist Workers Party candidates plan to hold a press conference and turn in their petitions Aug. 3 at City Hall.

Discussion about the SWP campaign has deepened following a July 24 court ruling. "A federal judge has ruled that Pennsylvania unfairly treats its third-party political candidates, likely clearing the way for their return to the ballot after nearly disappearing during recent election cycles," began a front-page article in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* the next day.

U.S. District Judge Lawrence Stengel ruled against sections of the state election code, the *Inquirer* reported, that "forced third-party candidates to gather many times the number of signatures required of Republicans or Democrats — and then pay as much as \$100,000 in legal fees when their petitions are challenged."

The legal challenge to Pennsylvania's restrictive ballot law was brought jointly by the Green, Libertarian and Constitution Parties.

Abortion rights supporters defend Planned Parenthood

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anti-abortion rally of about 100 people. Clinic supporters reported they received many honks of support.

Similar actions by supporters of a woman's right to choose and keeping abortion safe and legal took place that day at other clinics in the region, including in Lincoln, Nebraska; Cedar Falls and Sioux City, Iowa; and Rochester, Minnesota.

Some politicians have joined the charge against Planned Parenthood. Sen. Rand Paul, a Republican presidential candidate, introduced legislation to stop all government funds to the organization. Other Republican candidates, including Gov. Bobby Jindal of Louisiana and Gov. Scott Walker of Wisconsin, along with House Speaker John Boehner, have called for investigations aimed to stop funding.

Nationwide, Planned Parenthood receives some \$500 million in government funding through Medicaid and Title X for reproductive health services, but not for abortion, which is not funded under federal law.

With some 700 clinics throughout the country, Planned Parenthood provides millions of women with birth control, treatment for sexual transmitted diseases, cancer screenings, abortions and other medical procedures. A large number of their patients are working-class women, with many on Medicaid.

While anti-abortion groups have not succeeded in outlawing the procedure in the more than 40 years since the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision, they have used the tactic of state-by-state restrictions and harassing the clinics with laws requiring hospital-like conditions hoping to force clo-

tures, as happened in Texas. With the false claim of misuse of fetal tissue they hope to further pressure one of the main abortion providers that exists in many areas of the country.

Laura Garza in Omaha, Nebraska, contributed to this article.

LETTERS

Facts on racist memorial

Many readers of the *Militant* were struck by the odiousness of the inscription on the Battle of Liberty Place monument in New Orleans [depicted in the July 27 issue]. I did a little cursory research on the monument to try to learn about its history. It, like the Confederate battle flag, has been a focus of struggles that have burst forth several times in recent decades. But what is not clear to me is whether the inscription, as captured in the photo that appeared in the *Militant*, remains part of the monument.

An article on the New Orleans Historical website says, "In addition to planting the marker in a less obtrusive location, the city removed the plaque championing white supremacy and affixed a new plaque commemorating the Metropolitan Police casualties, several of whom were African-American."

Many readers of the *Militant* will have the impression that the monu-

ment as it exists today continues to display the inscription hailing white supremacy. It is not clear to me that it does. Of course this does not change the character of what this is a monument to, or how it has been a rallying point of white supremacists.

*David Rosenfeld
Minneapolis, Minnesota*

Editor's note: Rosenfeld is correct. The photo and caption as they appeared don't tell the whole story. The inscription glorifying white supremacy, which was added to the monument in the 1930s, was covered with a slab

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of granite in 1981 after attempts to have it taken down failed. The entire monument was removed to a warehouse during street repairs in 1989.

It was reinstalled in a less prominent location as a result of a suit by supporters of David Duke, a white supremacist, anti-Semite and former leader of the Ku Klux Klan who served in the Louisiana legislature from 1989 to 1992. Duke organized a rededication ceremony in 1993, which was protested by Black rights supporters. These facts underscore why fights around the Confederate battle flag and racist monuments are part of the class struggle today.

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.