

Socialist Workers Party expands reach of 'Militant'

BY NAOMI CRAINE

"We've gotten a great response to the *Militant* while participating in labor resistance in Washington state," wrote Edwin Fruit, organizer of the Socialist Workers Party's fall drive to expand the paper's readership in that region. This includes several visits to Longview, where workers held a nine-day strike at the KapStone paper mill, and to teachers in the neighboring town of Kelso who are now on strike.

It's one example of how members and supporters of the SWP and Communist Leagues in several countries are using the eight-week drive to get the party press and books on working-class politics from Pathfinder Press into the hands of workers in union battles, social protests and on

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Socialist Workers Party drive for new readers!

Help win 2,300 subscribers
Sept. 5 - Nov. 3 (week 2)

Country	quota	sold	%
UNITED STATES			
Omaha	40	23	58%
Lincoln	12	5	42%
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Oakland	180	52	29%
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Boston	70	18	26%
Los Angeles	140	36	26%
New York	380	94	25%
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Washington	110	24	22%
Philadelphia	120	26	22%
Miami	120	18	15%
Total U.S.	1687	456	27%
UNITED KINGDOM			
London	100	41	41%
Manchester	100	36	36%
UK Total	200	77	39%
CANADA			
Calgary	65	20	31%
Montreal	80	18	23%
Canada Total	145	38	26%
AUSTRALIA	75	21	28%
NEW ZEALAND	65	20	31%
PRISONERS	15	5	33%
Total	2187	617	27%
Should be	2300	575	25%

Chicago conference: 'Fight for rail safety!'

Build Oct. 11 safety protest in Lac-Mégantic



Above, AP/Dave Tunge; inset, Militant/Dan Fein

Bosses have slashed crew sizes, "endangering rail workers and the community," Amtrak engineer Ron Kaminkow, left, told Chicago conference organized by Railroad Workers United. Above, Sept. 19 train derailment in Scotland, South Dakota.

BY DAN FEIN

CHICAGO — "There used to be five crew members on every freight train, three on the engine and two on the caboose at the rear," Ron Ka-

FIGHT FRAME-UP OF QUEBEC RAIL WORKERS! — Editorial, page 9

minkow, an engineer on Amtrak and member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen in Reno, Nevada, told 65 people at a

Sept. 19 conference here on "Railroad Safety: Workers, Community and the Environment."

"Some 20 years ago the carriers cut the crews down to two on a train and eliminated the caboose, endangering rail workers and the community," Kaminkow said. "Now they're trying to cut the 'crew' down to one."

Rail workers overwhelmingly voted down demands by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway for the one-man crew last year, he said.

Kaminkow is general secretary of

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Fired Walmart workers demand jobs back as Calif. store reopens



Militant

Jenny Mills speaks outside Walmart in Pico Rivera, California, Sept. 10, demanding reinstatement of 530 workers. From right are co-workers Evelin Cruz and Venanzi Luna.

BY DANIELLE LONDON

PICO RIVERA, Calif. — More than 150 Walmart workers and their supporters held a press conference and rally near the store here Sept. 10 to demand reinstatement of 530 workers.

Walmart laid off some 2,200 workers when it abruptly closed this store

and another four in Florida, Oklahoma and Texas April 13, claiming "plumbing problems." The retail giant recently announced it would reopen the Pico Rivera store in late October or early November and said employees could reapply for their jobs.

Walmart claims 75 percent of laid-

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Gov't bankers debate rates as depression for workers grows

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The Federal Reserve in mid-September decided to keep interest rates at effectively zero percent, where they've been for nearly seven years. The debate on whether or not to raise them shows that the capitalist rulers have no idea what to do about the economic crisis.

Former Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers argued against raising interest rates because the production crisis and its effect on jobs will last awhile. "The idea that you are promoting financial stability by shocking markets seems misguided," he told the *Wall Street Journal* Sept. 16, the day before the Fed vote.

"The main impact of suppressed interest rates is to encourage yield-seeking speculation," fund manager John Hussman wrote Sept. 21 in a letter to investors. The effect, he said, is "to reduce the long-term accumulation of productive capital, and to foment serial bubbles and crashes."

The slow-burning depression in

Continued on page 9

'Reset' with US allows Moscow to send arms, troops to Syria

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Moscow's rapid military buildup in Syria is a result of the "reset" in relations forged with the Russian and Iranian governments by the Barack Obama administration. The deal — reshaping alliances and conditions from Syria, Iran and the rest of the Middle East to Ukraine and surround-

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—On the picket line, p. 5—

Ft. Lauderdale airport workers strike for higher pay, benefits

Teamsters fight lockout at printing plant near Montreal

Malaysia: Thousands protest attacks on democratic rights

BY MIKE TUCKER

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — A rally August 29-30 swelled to 300,000 participants in Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia, reported its organizers, the Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections, also known as Bersih. The protest demanded the resignation of Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak and protection of the right to demonstrate and called for more democratic elections.

A similar Bersih rally in 2012 was violently attacked by police. But this time, despite being banned by the government, the action was not attacked. Bersih means “clean” in the Malay language.

Smaller demonstrations took place in the cities of Kuching and Kota Kinabalu. Outside Malaysia, solidar-

ity protests by Malaysians took place here and in 74 cities worldwide.

The protests flared after the *Wall Street Journal* reported accusations in July that \$700 million had been transferred from a state fund to Najib’s personal bank accounts. This built on anger at a new sales tax introduced in April. The Malay currency has plunged to a 17-year low, raising the cost of living for working people.

“Malaysia is seeing the worst corruption scandal in its history” and “an oppressive crackdown on freedom of speech,” Lydia Chai, a coordinator of Global Bersih, told more than 300 Malaysians and supporters at an Aug. 29 protest here.

“Hundreds have been detained under sedition laws in Malaysia the past two years,” Chai said. I got “so damned angry that I lost my fear” and decided to speak out.

Najib’s party, the United Malays National Organisation, has been in power since Malaysia won independence from Britain in 1957. Ruling by divide and conquer — pitting the indigenous Malay population against those of Chinese and Indian descent — has been a key feature of its regime. All Malaysians must carry identity cards that classify them by race and religion.

“They are not respecting the rights of the people. There is a lot of corruption, gerrymandering,” Darren Quah told the *Militant* at the Auckland rally. “They raise racial issues to cling to power. They talk about Christian, Chinese, Jewish plots.”

Canada march protests Turkish gov’t assault on Kurds



Militant/Rosemary Ray

MONTREAL — Hundreds marched in Toronto Sept. 5 (above) and again on Sept. 12 denouncing the Turkish government’s brutal attacks on Kurds.

A spirited crowd of 200 also marched here Sept. 12.

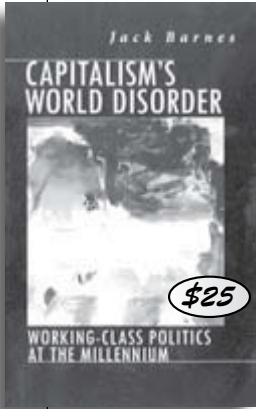
“We are carrying candles to show light for Kurdistan,” Nuran Cefin told the *Militant* in Montreal. “Every country is turning a blind eye to the repression. Many are getting hurt or killed. We are fighting for humanity, not just for Kurds, for Arabs, everyone.”

Beverly Bernardo, Communist League candidate in the Papineau riding here in the Oct. 19 federal elections for Parliament, and her supporters took part in the action. “My campaign demands that Ottawa end its complicity in the Turkish bombing of the Kurds and supports the Kurdish people’s fight for their national rights and a homeland,” Bernardo told participants.

— ANNETTE KOURI

Capitalism’s World Disorder

by Jack Barnes



The future can be changed by the united struggle of workers and farmers increasingly conscious of their capacity to wage revolutionary struggles for state power and to transform the world.

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Walmart workers give ‘blood money’ to build SWP

“I sent a check for \$41.28 today, blood money from Walmart called ‘My Share.’ The fact that we got this ‘bonus’ two weeks after our hours were cut was not lost on my co-workers,” wrote Jacquie Henderson from Omaha, Nebraska, in a note to the Socialist Workers Party Capital Fund.

Communist workers use the term blood money to describe bonuses and other bribes from the bosses that are designed to get us to accept speedup, lower wages, grueling hours, concession contracts and dangerous working conditions.

Henderson found some real interest when she said she would donate the money to build the communist movement. “When they started this they gave us a steak for dinner,” one co-worker with almost a decade in the store told her. “Now it’s a cake and we don’t even stop working. But it’s all the same.”

Several other Walmart workers have contributed their “My Share” recently. One reported that the bonus is based on an unknown aggregate of the store’s profits, the number of hours worked and then reduced with reported injuries.

“They say sometimes it can be a week’s pay!” she wrote. “And the managers halt their commands for a lunch period, put on a smile as they throw a celebration and serve the workers a free lunch. I declined to participate.”

Blood money donations are a political cornerstone of the Capital Fund, which finances long-range work of the party. To make a contribution, contact party organizations listed on page 8.

— EMMA JOHNSON

THE MILITANT

Stop attacks on Haitians in Dominican Republic

Moves by the Dominican government to deport Haitian immigrant workers and strip Dominicans of Haitian descent of citizenship are aimed at dividing and weakening the working class. The labor movement needs to take the lead in opposing these anti-worker measures.



“I am Dominican like you,” “We are equal before God and the law” read signs at protest in Santo Domingo last year.

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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.

SWP expands ‘Militant’ reach

Continued from front page
their doorsteps.

As capitalism’s deepening economic and moral crisis and attacks from the bosses, their governments and cops grow, more and more workers are looking to understand why these things are happening and how they can organize themselves independently to fight back effectively.

“At one door in Longview we met a union pipefitter. He and his wife bought a subscription and she got one for her father, who is a union member at Kap-Stone,” Fruit said. “They said working people need to defend themselves against the greed of the bosses.”

Kurt Gallow, the president of the paper workers’ local at KapStone, got a *Militant* subscription at the local Labor Day picnic. “Though the strike ended, he told us their fight isn’t over,” Fruit said. “They have printed union signs to be put in yards and businesses that support them.”

Members of the Kelso Education Association are on strike after teachers voted to defy a court injunction ordering them to go back to work.

“On Sept. 21 we joined their picket line,” Fruit said. “A teacher who had subscribed to the *Militant* the previous week got a copy of *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: The Fraud of Education Reform Under Capitalism*.”

“The highlight of the first week here was the Sept. 9 demonstration of locked-out meat workers in Wairoa,” a town of 8,400 people seven hours from Auckland, wrote Patrick Brown from New Zealand. “Workers welcomed all those who brought solidarity, and two subscribed to the *Militant*.”

“This week we knocked on doors in Ihumatao, the center of a fight to stop

the construction of housing on Maori ancestral land,” Brown said. “An article about that fight served us well in introducing the paper, but it was the broader coverage on the struggles of working people in different countries that convinced four people to subscribe.”

Thirteen participants in the Sept. 19 conference on rail safety in Chicago bought subscriptions. One of them is a driver who transports rail workers to their jobs. Along with the sub he got *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* and *New International* no. 14.

“He was interested in the article ‘The Clintons’ Antilabor Legacy: Roots of the 2008 World Financial Crisis,’” said Laura Garza, who attended the conference. “I described how it explains what was behind the massive expansion of frame-ups and imprisonment of working people, disproportionately those who are Black, under Clinton’s administration.”

Seven participants in the Asia-Pacific Regional Solidarity Conference with Cuba, held Sept. 8-9 in Hanoi, Vietnam, signed up for the *Militant*.

“A Vietnamese subscriber liked the positive coverage of the Cuban Revolution and the class struggle in the U.S. and the world,” said Ron Poulsen from the Communist League in Australia, who took part in the conference. “He also bought *Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa’s Freedom and Our Own* and *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?*”

Simultaneous with the subscription drive, the Socialist Workers Party is raising \$100,000. Many readers of the *Militant*, which presents the political views and program of the SWP, will want to contribute to this fund.

“One bus driver made a donation to

Petition: ‘No hazardous cargo til tracks are fixed’



Ronald Martel

LAC-MÉGANTIC, Quebec — Robert Bellefleur, spokesperson for the Citizens’ Coalition and Groups Committee for Rail Safety, delivers petitions to Mayor Colette Roy Laroche here Sept. 21. Close to half the population of 6,000 has signed the petition, demanding the City Council go to court to get an injunction barring the Central Maine and Quebec Railway from hauling hazardous cargo until the company repairs its unsafe tracks crisscrossing the town.

The Citizens’ Coalition was set up following the July 6, 2013, oil train derailment and explosion that killed 47 people. The 80 people attending applauded as the mayor accepted the petition.

A temporary ban on crude oil train shipments through the town expires in January 2016, after which the rail company is expected to restart shipments of the highly volatile cargo.

“The mayor said that the Council would consult its lawyers and make a decision on the demands in a few days,” coalition member André Blais told the *Militant*. “If the City Council decides not to act then the coalition itself will consider going to court for the injunction.”

The Citizens’ Coalition has called a march for Oct. 11 to back up the demands, beginning at 1 p.m. at the Lac-Mégantic Sports Centre. For information, contact infosecurail154@gmail.com.

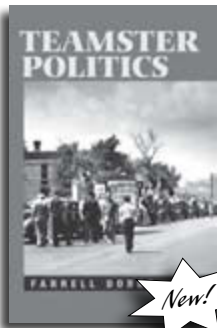
— JOHN STEELE

the Communist League election campaign when he renewed his subscription,” said Michel Dugré from Calgary, Alberta. “We have had several examples like this of people donating to the CL in

Canada. They know a paper like the *Militant* could not exist without a party.”

To join in the effort to reach new readers, contact party organizations listed on page 8.

Special book offers for *Militant* subscribers



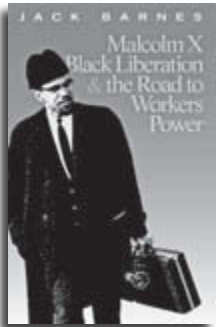
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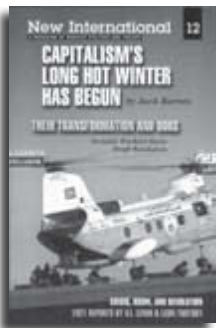
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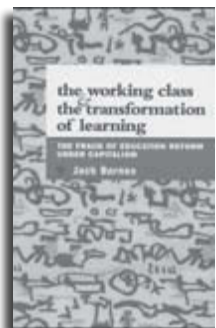
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Also in Spanish, French, Icelandic, Swedish, Farsi, Greek

Raise Socialist Workers Party fund goals

BY JOHN STUDER

With \$10,710 in hand and \$5,960 in the mail — \$3,430 from Atlanta and \$2,530 from Oakland — we have raised almost \$19,000 towards the Socialist Workers Party eight-week \$100,000 fund drive.

The fund is decisive for the party’s work — international collaboration, like participation in the Asia-Pacific Conference in Solidarity with Cuba in Vietnam; guiding the party’s work building solidarity with locked-out Steelworkers at ATI and other workers fighting boss attacks; expanding support for rail workers Tom Harding and Richard Labrie in Quebec; building actions against cop abuse and murders from Charleston, South Carolina, to Baltimore; and more.

Area quotas are currently some \$10,000 short of the goal. Over the last week, I raised with party leaders across the country that many quotas don’t jibe with the political opportunities. The deepening capitalist crisis, which has spawned boss assaults against wages and working conditions and government attacks on social and political rights, is fueling labor resistance, social struggles and greater interest in the party. There is growing disgust with the moral and political standing of the capitalist ruling families.

“We will discuss whether we can set a higher target based on the political openings and on the party’s needs,” Joel

Britton from Oakland, California, wrote when he sent in their latest check.

We meet more and more combatants who are interested in the party and value their collaboration with it. They will want to help finance the party’s work.

Join us in making the drive in full and on time. Make as generous a contribution as you can. And tune in next week to see our progress in getting the goals over \$100,000.

John Studer is the 2015 fund drive director.

Party-Building Fund Week 2

Area	Quota	Collected	%
Atlanta	\$8,600	\$175	2%
Boston	\$3,250	\$605	19%
Chicago	\$10,000	\$1,350	14%
Lincoln	\$175	\$50	29%
Los Angeles	\$8,000	\$1,310	16%
Miami	\$3,000	\$610	20%
New York	\$20,000	\$2,240	11%
Oakland	\$13,500	\$3,200	24%
Omaha			0%
Philadelphia	\$3,200	\$620	19%
Seattle	\$8,300		0%
Twin Cities	\$3,100	\$550	18%
Wash., DC	\$7,700		0%
Other	\$1,200		0%
Total	\$90,025	\$10,710	11%
Should Be	\$100,000	\$25,000	25%

If you subscribe or renew, these special offers are for you.
Contact a distributor listed on page 8.

Bail: A weapon to beat down working people

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS
AND SETH GALINSKY

“Every year, thousands of innocent people are sent to jail only because they can’t afford to post bail.”

That’s the opening sentence of an article in the Aug. 16 *New York Times Magazine* that describes how bail — originally a means to protect people accused of a crime from being arbitrarily jailed in advance of a trial — has become a routine and widely used weapon to beat down working people and pressure them to plead guilty.

The U.S. has the largest prison population in the world, with 2.2 million people incarcerated, most of them in state and local jails. Some 60 percent of the 750,000 in city and county jails at any given time are awaiting trial or hearings and have not been convicted of anything. They were either denied bail or couldn’t pay it.

The *Times* article “The Bail Trap” by Nick Pinto is a reflection of the concern in ruling class circles that the huge number of prisoners is becoming too expensive to maintain, is causing hatred for the capitalist justice system and could lead to social explosions.

Their worries have deepened in the face of large protests against police brutality that have taken place coast to coast over the last year, which have succeeded in forcing the rulers to rein in some of the cop violence.

The examples cited by Pinto are enough to make your blood boil.

Construction laborer Tyrone Tomlin was arrested in November 2014 after buying a soda at a corner store. Cops claimed the straw he was given with the soda was “a commonly used method of packaging heroine residue.”

Prosecutors offered him a plea bargain: admit to a misdemeanor charge of criminal possession of a controlled substance and they would propose just 30 days at the infamous Rikers Island New York City prison. Tomlin refused. The judge set bail at \$1,500, which Tomlin couldn’t pay.

He spent the next three weeks at Rikers, until going to court for a Dec. 10 hearing. Prosecutors then handed over a Nov. 25 report from the police laboratory that said “No Controlled Substance Identified.” All charges were dropped and Tomlin went home, but not before being roughed up while incarcerated.

Kalief Browder, arrested at age 16, spent three years at Rikers — nearly

two of them in solitary confinement — accused of stealing a backpack. He never went to trial. Like Tomlin he insisted he was innocent, and refused to take a plea deal, including one that would have released him immediately. Prosecutors finally dropped the charges, but he never recovered from beatings and nightmarish conditions he faced in Rikers. He committed suicide this summer at age 22.

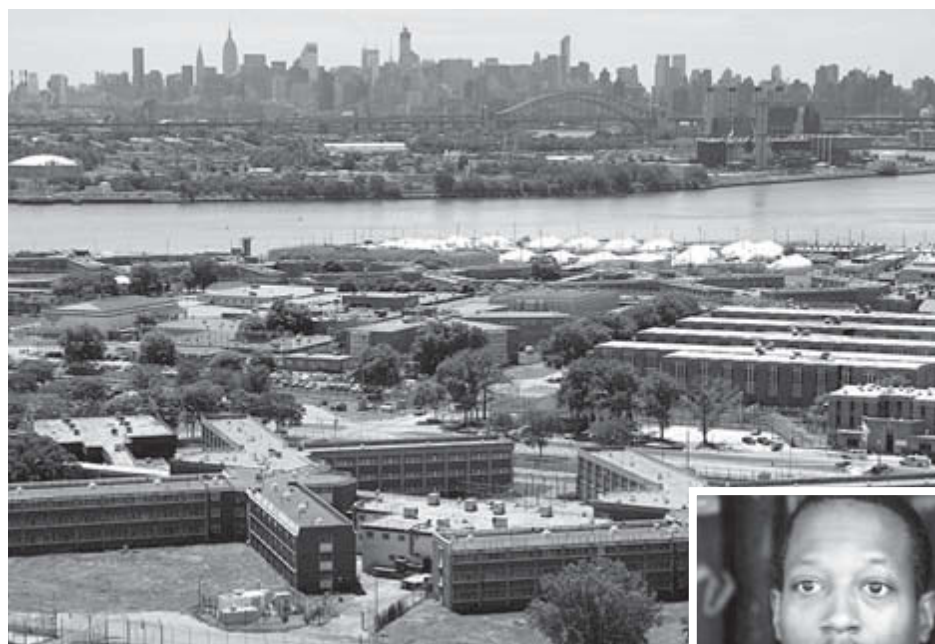
Plea deals instead of trials

Tomlin and Browder are unusual. Some 95 percent of defendants accept plea deals, giving up their right to a trial.

In non-felony cases half of those who were not detained, either because no bail was required or they were able to pay it, were convicted, compared to 92 percent of defendants who are jailed until their trial, a 2012 report by the New York City Criminal Justice Agency stated.

The Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states, “Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.” As U.S. law evolved, bail was imposed for charges considered capital offenses to assure a defendant’s appearance at trial where there was an alleged flight risk or danger to the community. Most defendants were released on their own recognizance. But today, judges routinely set bail at hundreds or thousands of dollars for the most minor charges.

The way bail is used today makes a mockery of the right to be considered innocent until proven guilty. Pinto



Above, AP/Seth Wenig
Kalief Browder, inset, was arrested and thrown into New York’s infamous Rikers Island, above, at age 16. He spent three years there, two in solitary confinement, because he insisted he wasn’t guilty of anything and couldn’t make bail. The rulers use bail to pressure people to accept plea bargain sentences and 95 percent agree.

points out that the judge asks defendants who agree to a plea bargain “Are you pleading guilty freely and voluntarily, because you are in fact guilty?”

“Everyone in the room knows it’s not ‘freely and voluntarily,’” Public Defender Scott Hechinger told the *Times*.

Markese Mull from Ferguson, Missouri, can attest to that. In 2011 he was arrested and accused of assault for defending himself from an attempted robbery.

“Bail was set at \$75,000, cash only,” Mull told the *Militant* by phone Sept. 14. He spent five months in jail before the judge agreed to lower bail. As a result Mull lost his new job at a bakery.

“The public defender only saw me two times. They’re not working for you for real,” Mull said. “I was innocent, but I still had to plead guilty. I didn’t have money for the fight.”

Over the last several years there has been a shift in the debate in the ruling class, with conservatives and liberals alike recognizing the problem posed for capitalist rule in the large number of prisoners and the disproportionate number of them who are African-American.

The 2016 Democrat and Republican presidential candidates “are showing how far they have moved from the days of their ‘tough on crime’ messaging,” noted Kira Lerner on the Thinkprogress.org website Feb. 18.

Both Republicans and Democrats are talking about ending mandatory sentences, focusing on “treatment” instead of jail time for drug offenses and limiting the use of solitary confinement, all part of what John Malcolm, a spokesperson for the conservative Heritage Foundation, calls a “paradigm shift.”

Fired Walmart workers demand jobs back

Continued from front page

off workers who requested a transfer to another store received an offer to do so. Company spokesman Brian Nick said that the retailer’s goal is “to rehire as many high-performing associates as possible so we can serve our customers in these communities.”

“This was the strongest store with the most activity, the most members of OUR Walmart, the most outspoken leaders, and Walmart could not take that so they decided to close it down,” Evelin Cruz told the rally. She worked at the store for almost 11 years until she was fired last November. “We were the loudest in the fight for fair wages and enough hours,” Cruz said. “We were the first to go on strike. We were the first to do a sit-down. We will be the last to shut our mouths when it comes to this fight.”

OUR Walmart — Organization United for Respect at Walmart — is a national group fighting for \$15 an hour, full-time work and regular schedules.

Jenny Mills worked at the Pico Rivera store for nine years and joined OUR Walmart two and a half years ago. She told the rally she became homeless two years ago when she was unable to pay her rent.

Fight for respect and dignity

“I want all the workers in every store to be treated with respect and dignity,” Martha Sellers, a cashier for 12 years at the nearby Paramount Walmart, told the *Militant*. “They’re sleeping in their cars and going to food banks. Everyone should be able to provide for their

families.”

“We will continue to show up if we’re not reinstated,” Venanzi Luna, a leader of OUR Walmart who has worked at the store here for eight years, told the rally.

Management “told us they were going to get us back into another store,” said Julia Sanchez, a cashier who supports the OUR Walmart actions. “I did all the things they told me to do. They called me up and said, ‘We can’t find anything.’”

Members of the UFCW, Teamster port truckers and carwash and fast-food workers active in the fight for \$15 attended the rally.

Also speaking were Rusty Hicks, executive secretary-treasurer of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, and Gregory Salcido, mayor of Pico Rivera.

“An injustice to one is an injustice to all,” Mario Gonzalez, a Teamster port trucker, told the *Militant*. “We support the fight for reinstatement. They’ve supported us and the fight for \$15. Their fight is our fight. Port truck drivers have family members that work at Walmart.”

Walmart workers, the UFCW, Making Change at Walmart and OUR Walmart announced they had filed charges with the National Labor Relations Board that workers who had participated in protests against the company faced discrimination in the transfer process. An earlier complaint alleging Walmart closed the five stores in an act of retaliation against the activities of OUR Walmart supporters here is under

NLRB investigation.

Walmart has a history of fighting workers’ organizing efforts. In 2004, it closed the store in Jonquiére, Quebec, after workers voted to unionize. Ten years later the Canadian Supreme Court ruled the company had violated labor laws. Two weeks after butchers at a Jacksonville, Texas, Walmart voted to join the UFCW in 2000, the company closed 180 meat departments in stores nationwide and switched to prepackaged meat, eliminating all butcher jobs. More than 70 workers who participated in strikes in June 2013 were fired and disciplined.

In February, responding to increased OUR Walmart activity, including Black Friday Thanksgiving weekend actions and a petition drive, Walmart announced it would raise wages for current employees to \$9 an hour in April and \$10 in February 2016, a step affecting 500,000 workers.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA Oakland

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Solidarity with Toilers in the Middle East! What Is Behind the Refugee Crisis in Europe? Speaker: Michel Dugré, Communist League. Fri., Oct. 2, 7:30 p.m. 4909 17th Ave. SE. Tel.: (403) 457-9044.

The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions

by Jack Barnes

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

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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

MAGGIE TROWE, EDITOR

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

This column is dedicated to giving voice to those engaged in battle and helping build solidarity. ATI Steelworkers are locked out; major contracts in rail, auto, basic steel and East Coast Verizon have expired or are approaching expiration. I invite those 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

Ft. Lauderdale airport workers strike for higher wages, benefits

FT. LAUDERDALE, Fla. — Sandra Smith works as a skycap 25 hours a week and as a cabin cleaner 32 hours a week at the international airport here. She does two jobs to scrape by at the rock-bottom wages she receives.

Smith works for G2 Secure Staff and Eulen America, contractors to Southwest, Spirit, American and JetBlue airlines. She and other contract airport workers held a one-day strike Sept. 1 to draw attention to low pay and lack of benefits at the two companies. They average \$8.14 an hour and get no medical coverage, holiday or vacation pay, according to the Service Employees International Union.

Smith told the *Militant* that when she went into the hospital for five days, she lost a whole week's paycheck because she gets no sick pay. "It's hard to rent an apartment because your paystubs show how little you make," she said. "Your phone is always being turned off."

Theotis Presley, a wheelchair attendant at the airport, said he joined the protest because at his current pay, "you're not able to enjoy a life."

Janitor Belkis Martinez, who takes home about \$425 for two weeks' work, said Eulen keeps employees below 40 hours a week.

After picketing in the morning the workers rallied outside the Broward County Commissioners meeting to demand that airport workers be covered by Broward's Living Wage Ordinance, from which they are excluded. It mandates county employees be paid at least \$11.68 an hour.

—Cindy Jaquith

Quebec teachers gain support fighting attacks on school funding

MONTREAL — Thousands of Quebec teachers will strike for one day Sept. 30 against the Liberal provincial government's proposed budget cuts. On Sept. 8 Sylvain Mallette, head of the Fédération Autonome de L'Enseignement (Autonomous Teaching Federation), which represents 34,000 teachers, announced plans for the walkout.

Teachers have refused to organize extra-curricular sports and cultural activities since the beginning of the school year. "We feel terrible about this but this is something we have to do to be heard," teacher Isabelle Daniels told CBC.

Parents have been participating in human chains around different schools to protest the cuts.

The teachers are part of a Common Front of more than 500,000 public workers, whose collective agreements

expired March 31.

The government proposes increasing teachers' workweek from 32 to 35 hours, enlarging class sizes and freezing wages for the first two years of a five-year contract. The proposal includes disciplinary action against teachers whose students' performance is deemed inadequate.

Members of the teachers unions will vote on further actions Sept. 22. The provincial labor movement has called an Oct. 3 rally in Montreal.

—Josette Hurtubise, member of the Syndicat de l'enseignement de Champlain, and Annette Kouri

Locked-out New Zealand meat workers protest union busting

WAIROA, New Zealand — Around 100 locked-out Meat Workers Union members demonstrated on the bridge in the center of this rural town Sept. 9, protesting the reopening — after a one-month seasonal closure — of the AFFCO meat processing plant under nonunion contracts. AFFCO is a major employer in the region.

Several dozen people, including children and teachers from a local school and unionists from AFFCO's Horotiu plant, joined the action.

The company has refused to negotiate with the union since the contract expired in 2013, instead offering jobs only to workers who sign "Individual Employment Agreements."

Union members at Wairoa — some 250 out of a workforce of 450 — refused to sign these contracts, which have already been imposed at the company's works at Rangiuru, Whanganui, and Feilding, and hang over workers at four other AFFCO plants.

The company has reopened the plant with nonunion workers. "What we want is a rollover of our collective," MWU Wairoa Shed Secretary Justin Kaimoana



Militant/Amanda Ulman

G2 Secure Staff and Eulen America airport workers in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, during Sept. 1 strike were joined by cab drivers, at left. Workers are demanding higher pay and benefits.

na told the *Militant*, referring to the contract. "We are fighting for our jobs, our seniority and the future of our kids."

"Some of the IEA conditions are unworkable," Kaimoana said, including requiring workers to work different shifts, extended work periods before a break and speedup.

In 2012 the company locked out a layer of the workforce at several plants. The union fought back with strikes. The dispute was settled when some Maori iwi (tribal) authorities threatened to stop supplying AFFCO with livestock from their farms. Maori comprise the majority of AFFCO's workforce.

"What happened in 2012 is starting again," said Kaimoana. "It will be another long battle."

Union membership fell in the years after the 2012 battle, said Peter Edwards, a shop steward. "We have been basically rebuilding the union."

"We are not going to be just walked over," said butcher Hilton Rohe, who has worked at AFFCO since 1969.

Two days later 150 locked-out workers went together to the Wairoa AFFCO plant to apply for jobs advertised in the local paper. "They only wanted to talk individual contracts," said Kaimoana by phone Sept. 14. The unionists left and rallied again on the bridge.

—Patrick Brown

Teamsters fight lockout at printing plant near Montreal

MIRABEL, Quebec — Members of Teamsters Local 555M have been picketing since Quebecor, a printing and

media company, locked out 44 press workers, mechanics, electricians and handlers at its plant in this town north of Montreal Sept. 1. The plant prints a number of newspapers, including Montreal French-language dailies *Le Devoir* and *Le Journal de Montréal*. The company, owned by Parti Quebecois leader Pierre Karl Péladeau, also locked out workers at this plant in 2006.

Negotiations began in March 2015. "We're ready to make compromises on the job front and severance pay, but management won't budge," said Denis Fournier, Local 555M representative, in a statement on the union website.

"The company wants to lay off whoever it wants without respecting seniority," Thérèse Moroni, a material handler, told the *Militant* Sept. 10 on the picket line. Quebecor laid off 15 workers in January and 35 more recently.

—Beverly Bernardo

Lac-Mégantic, Quebec

March for rail safety

Sun., Oct. 11, 1 p.m.

Assemble at Lac-Mégantic Sports Centre for march demanding no rail transit of hazardous goods until dangerous tracks are repaired.

Sponsored by Citizens' Coalition and Groups Committee for Rail Safety

For information: infosecrail154@gmail.com

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



October 5, 1990

In a vote of 14 to 1, with Cuba voting against, the United Nations Security Council took further steps September 25 to tighten its embargo against Iraq.

The resolution is the eighth passed by the UN body since the Iraqi regime invaded neighboring Kuwait August 2. Earlier resolutions condemned the invasion and demanded Iraqi troops immediately withdraw from Kuwaiti territory. Subsequent resolutions imposed a naval embargo on all trade with Iraq and approved the use of force to enforce the blockade. The most recent resolution extends the embargo to include air traffic with Iraq. It also provides for the imposition of trade sanctions on any country breaking the embargo.



October 4, 1965

More than 10,000 soft coal miners in West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Ohio have reportedly temporarily ended a 19-day wildcat strike in one of the most poverty stricken areas of the country.

Members of District 6 of the United Mine Workers began walking off the job Sept. 8 when six miners employed by the Hanna Coal Company's Ireland Mine near Moundsville, W. Va., were fired for participating an "unauthorized" walkout. Five of the discharged miners were union officers, including Local 1110 President Karl Kafton.

In addition to automating mines, coal operators have been engaged in a ruthless campaign to intensify workers' productivity while slashing union wages and working conditions.



October 5, 1940

SAN FRANCISCO — Vigorous protest against outlawing the Communist Party in California was voiced this week by the Socialist Workers Party, San Francisco Branch, in a telegram to Governor Olson.

Despite its profound political disagreement with the Communist Party, the SWP branded the move a direct blow against the labor movement as a whole.

Utilizing the war scare to strike at the currently least popular section of the labor movement, California's reactionary legislature made the first open move toward chaining labor to the war machine by approving a bill denying a place on the ballot to any party using the name "Communist."

Join solidarity actions with
Steelworkers fighting for a contract
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‘Cuban Revolution is a prime example’

Asia-Pacific solidarity conference in Vietnam discusses fight against US embargo

BY RON POULSEN
AND ANNALUCIA VERMUNT

HANOI, Vietnam — “Nine months ago, three of us were still locked up in federal prisons in the United States,” said Antonio Guerrero, addressing delegates at the opening of the Seventh Asia-Pacific Regional Conference of Solidarity with Cuba. Today, he said to big applause, he was here in Vietnam bringing greetings from all of the Cuban Five — now free and continuing the work they did during more than a decade and a half in prison: advancing and defending the Cuban Revolution.

Guerrero thanked those present for their efforts as part of the “jury of millions” that last December finally won the release of the three who remained in prison. The U.S. government tried “to break our physical well-being and moral integrity, but they were never able to achieve that in our more than 16 years of confinement,” he said. “We never wavered in our certainty that Fidel, Raúl and all our people together with the friends of Cuba around the world would tirelessly fight for our freedom.”

Guerrero’s participation marked the tone and deliberations of the Sept. 8-9 international gathering, which brought together some 220 delegates from 18 countries. The event, initiated by the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), was hosted by the Vietnam Union of Friendship Organizations, the umbrella group that includes the Vietnam-Cuba Friendship Association.

Besides Vietnam and Cuba, the largest delegations included those from India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Japan, Philippines, and the Republic of Korea. This year’s conference had more participation from East Asian countries than the previous such gathering, held in 2012 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Others came from Australia, Cambodia, China, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Laos, Malaysia, New Zealand and Nepal.

Conference organizers also welcomed solidarity delegations from outside the Asia-Pacific region, which this year came from South Africa and the United States.

International delegates remarked on how well-organized the conference was and on the hospitality offered by the Vietnamese hosts, from the professional translation at all sessions to the beauty of the evening cultural performances.

In her keynote address, ICAP President Kenia Serrano highlighted the victory won with the release of the Cuban Five and the establishment of U.S.-Cuba diplomatic relations for the first time in 54 years. These steps, she noted, are part of the U.S. government’s recognition that its decades-long attempt to isolate and economically strangle Cuba had failed to achieve its goal. She emphasized that talks on normalizing U.S.-Cuba relations will be “a long process” and do not mean Washington has changed its goal of overthrowing Cuba’s socialist revolution.

“The U.S. economic, commercial and financial blockade, which has caused more than \$100 billion in human, economic and moral damage to the Cuban people, remains intact,” Serrano said. Today, however, she emphasized, supporters of the Cuban Revolution can build on the victories to broaden the fight to demand that Washington lift its blockade and return the illegally occupied Cuban territory at Guantánamo.

Solidarity between Cuba, Vietnam

“Cuba will never forget that Vietnam was among the first countries that established diplomatic relations with the emerging Cuban Revolution [in 1959], when many nations did not believe in its durability,” Serrano said.

Vu Xuan Hong, a member of Vietnam’s National Assembly and president of the Vietnam Union of Friendship Organizations, also spoke. Describing the ties of solidarity between



Asia-Pacific conference in solidarity with Cuba drew 220 delegates from 18 countries. Inset, Cuban revolutionary Antonio Guerrero, who spent 16 years in U.S. prisons, addresses Hanoi meeting. From left, Masumi Matsumara, Japan; Chaleune Yipaoheu, Laos; Vu Xuan Hong, president, Vietnam Union of Friendship Organizations; Kenia Serrano, president, Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples.

the two countries and condemning the 55-year-long U.S. economic war against Cuba, Hong said, “Vietnam knows what a nation suffers as a result of war.”

Between 1945 and 1975, the imperialist powers — first Paris, then Washington, with help from the British, Australian, and New Zealand governments — waged a brutal war against the Vietnamese people, destroying large parts of the country’s cities, farmland, and forests. Vietnam’s 1975 victory in that war was a gigantic boost to working people and national liberation struggles worldwide.

Many Vietnamese, Hong said, will never forget the declaration by Fidel Castro, in the midst of the war, that “for Vietnam, Cuba is ready to shed its blood.”

The opening session was also addressed by Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan, member of the Politburo of the Vietnamese Communist Party, deputy chair of Vietnam’s National Assembly and president of the Vietnam-Cuba Friendship Association. At the close of the session, Serrano, who chaired the session, invited Mary-Alice Waters, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party in the U.S. and president of Pathfinder Press, to the podium to present Ngan and Hong with copies of *Absolved by Solidarity*, a book of prison paintings by Antonio Guerrero. That book and others by and about the Cuban Five and the revolution of which they are the international face were available to conference delegates as part of a broader display of Pathfinder books. A stunning exhibit of Guerrero’s paintings of butterflies and birds native to Cuba was also on display.

During the conference, delegates reported on experiences in building solidarity with Cuba in their countries. Many referred to the campaign their organizations had been part of to free the five Cuban revolutionaries, who were imprisoned on frame-up “conspiracy” charges stemming from

their work in defense of the Cuban Revolution.

Robert Corpuz, president of the Philippine-Cuban Friendship Society, said he graduated from medical school in Cuba in 2009. Coming from a family of modest means, “Cuba gave me an education I couldn’t afford in my own country.”

He pointed out that the Philippines and Cuba have many parallels in their history, including U.S. naval bases imposed on their territories, and explained that it took a massive struggle to force Washington to close the Subic Bay base in the Philippines in 1992.

“With the ever-deepening structural crisis of capitalism” in the Philippines and around the world, Corpuz said, “Cuba remains a prime example” for working people.

Rabindra Adhikari, coordinator of the Nepal Peace and Solidarity Council, cited the internationalist example of “Cuba’s volunteer medical team that was sent immediately after the earthquake” that ravaged that Himalayan nation in April, killing thousands and leaving hundreds of thousands homeless.

Mitsuhiko Tsuruta, president of the Japan-Cuba Friendship Association, reported that in August his organization and others had hosted a visit to Japan by Fernando González, another of the five Cuban heroes. Among the activities González participated in were the events in Hiroshima and Nagasaki marking the 70th anniversary of the U.S. nuclear holocaust unleashed against the populations of those cities.

Annalucia Vermunt, from Auckland, New Zealand, described the work of the Cuba Friendship Society and others in that country “to broaden the knowledge and understanding of the Cuban Revolution among working people and win more support.” Those activities, said Vermunt, who is a member of the Communist League, included a speaking tour by Serrano

For further reading

Absolved by Solidarity: 16 Watercolors for 16 Years of Unjust Imprisonment by Antonio Guerrero
\$15 Spanish/English edition

Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa’s Freedom and Our Own \$12 Also in Spanish

Out Now! A Participant’s Account of the Movement in the United States against the Vietnam War by Fred Halstead \$35

Supplement to ‘Militant’:

‘No battle waged by revolutionaries ends with what you once did’

Cuban 5 to students: The more selfless you are, the happier, freer men and women you will be

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for working people'

o of Cuba, for return of Guantánamo base

and exhibitions of Guerrero's prison paintings, most recently at the coal-mining museum in the town of Blackball.

Fighting U.S. economic war on Cuba

Conference delegates held working commissions on broadening the campaign to end the U.S. economic war against Cuba and using media to spread the truth about the example of the Cuban Revolution.

Chris Matlhako, general secretary of the Friends of Cuba Society in South Africa (FOCUS), reported back to the plenary from the commission on organizing actions against the U.S. embargo. He also described the recent speaking tour by the Cuban Five in South Africa, Namibia and Angola, noting that "we owe a huge debt to the Cubans who made it possible for us to break through" and bring down the apartheid

regime.

He was referring to the hundreds of thousands of Cuban volunteers in the 1970s and '80s who helped defeat military invasions of newly independent Angola by the white supremacist regime in South Africa. Among them were three of the Cuban Five — Gerardo Hernández, Fernando González, and René González.

Mary-Alice Waters reported on behalf of the commission that discussed how Cuba solidarity forces can use the wide range of media — from press and books to social media — as part of the broader work to involve more people in getting out the truth about the Cuban Revolution.

Waters cited a remark by Guerrero when he spoke with a group of students in Havana earlier this year. "No battle waged by revolutionaries ends with something you once did," he told the youth. "What matters is what you do each day." Waters suggested that should be the motto conference participants take with them as they return home.

Serrano pointed to a range of coming events as examples of actions that can be organized to oppose the U.S. embargo, from the Sept. 16-18 "Days of Action" in Washington, D.C., to events around the October vote on the U.S. embargo of Cuba at the United Nations General Assembly.

Dayrelis Ojeda, from the Havana-based Center for the Study of the Cuban Economy, gave a presentation on Cuba's economic situation and the measures the Cuban leadership is taking today to meet the challenges as they continue to strengthen the socialist foundations of the revolution.

In the discussion period, Serrano answered a question about foreign investment in Cuba. "We decide where and how foreign investments will be made," she said. "Investors in Cuba must abide by *our* labor laws," which are based on the working class holding state power.

Following the close of the conference, representatives of different national delegations were received by Truong Tan Sang, Vietnam's president. Responding to his welcome, Serrano told Sang, "Cuba will never forget that during the depths of the Special Period" in the 1990s when Cuba lost the bulk of its foreign trade after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Vietnamese leadership led "a campaign asking every household in Vietnam to donate a cup of rice for the Cuban people."

Sang expressed the strong support of the leadership of Vietnam's state and ruling Communist Party for the Cuban government's course of "updating its economic and social model," and saluted the establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States.

The conference concluded with the approval of a Hanoi Declaration, ratifying the participants' commitment to continue spreading the truth about the Cuban Revolution and to demand "the immediate lifting of the inhuman blockade" and "the return to the Cuban people of their territory of Guantánamo Naval Base" by the U.S. government.

The next Asia-Pacific conference in solidarity with Cuba is planned for 2017, with the host to be announced.

'Reset' with US allows Moscow to send troops to Syria

Continued from front page

ing region — is the cornerstone of U.S. imperialism's efforts to establish a new order in the Mideast, but from a much weaker position than when the now-disintegrating order was imposed after World Wars I and II.

Since early September, Russian President Vladimir Putin has been sending fighter jets, helicopters and tanks to Syria and building troop barracks at bases on the country's coast. Acting to keep the brutal regime of its longtime ally President Bashar al-Assad in power — though restricted to a narrow strip in western Syria — Moscow seeks more influence and control of the country and its Mediterranean ports and a stronger political hand in Mideast politics.

For several years Tehran has sent Revolutionary Guard Quds forces to help prop up Assad, and collaborates with Moscow on operations in Syria.

Alongside these moves, Moscow has consolidated its position in Ukraine, where it occupied and annexed the Crimean Peninsula last year and backed separatist forces that have seized sections of the eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk. Since Secretary of State John Kerry's congenial visit with Putin in May, it has become clear that Washington would accept Moscow's influence over its "near abroad" in Ukraine and the Baltics, in exchange for help to nail down the nuclear deal with Tehran.

Moscow has taken firmer political control over the separatist forces in Ukraine and seeks to maintain a frozen conflict there under the framework of the Minsk accord with Kiev. While Russian heavy weapons have not been with-

Socialist Workers Party candidate speaks at oil workers meeting: 'We need a labor party based on our unions'



Militant/Mitchel Rosenberg

NORWOOD, Pa. — Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Philadelphia, addressed members of Steelworkers Local 10-1 before their monthly business meeting here Sept. 17. Most are oil workers at the Philadelphia Energy Solutions refinery. Hart and John Staggs, SWP candidate for City Council at-large, were invited to talk more over pizza after the meeting.

"We are both Walmart workers fighting for \$15 an hour and a union," Hart said. "The Democrats and Republicans have no solution to the economic crisis caused by the capitalist class. Workers need a labor party based on the unions to fight in our interests."

"Our campaign has picketed with Steelworkers locked out by Allegheny Technologies Inc. and those resisting steep concession demands from bosses at U.S. Steel and ArcelorMittal," he said. "And we have joined other unionists in protests against cop brutality and for the historic victory in bringing down the Confederate battle flag over the state Capitol in South Carolina."

"I like that they're Walmart workers involved in trying to change things," Local 10-1 member Jim Perry said afterward. "I'm glad they are on the ballot. I've told people for years it's not a wasted vote when you vote for a third party in your interests."

— MITCHEL ROSENBERG

drawn and the border remains under Moscow's control, fighting has mostly stopped in recent weeks. Separatist commanders who opposed this course have been assassinated, and a government shake-up in Donetsk put Denis Pushilin in charge. He's seen as more subservient to Putin's shifts and goals.

Seeking a new, long-term relationship in the region, Washington offered to exchange Tehran's promise to limit production of materials that could be used for nuclear weapons for a pledge the U.S. and its allies would commit to end sanctions against Iran.

While bemoaning the brutality of the Assad regime, Obama's focus in the Mideast has been to fight against the reactionary Islamic State in Syria and Iraq without U.S. "boots on the ground." The effort has centered on targeted bombing.

For years Washington refused to arm or finance resistance to Assad, claiming such support might end up in the hands of "terrorists." With Islamic State stepping into the vacuum created by the slaughter of tens of thousands who took to the streets against Assad in 2011, Washington now says it wants to train local fighters, but its efforts have failed.

Gen. Lloyd Austin III, chief of U.S. Central Command, admitted to Congress Sept. 16 that "only four or five" Syrian opposition fighter trainees have entered combat against Islamic State from a \$500 million program launched last December that was supposed to put 5,400 combatants in the field.

These U.S.-trained fighters — if they ever enter combat — are required to agree not to attack Assad's forces, only IS, according to the *Wall Street Journal*.

The most effective force combating Islamic State has been the Kurdish People's Protection Units in Syria (YPG). The 30 million Kurds living in Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria have long demanded a homeland and an end to centuries of national oppression. In making gains against Assad and IS, the YPG now controls about two-thirds of Syria's 560-mile border with Turkey.

While Washington has praised these advances, the U.S. and European rulers along with the governments of Russia, Syria, Iran, Iraq and Turkey are dead set against the Kurds' national aspirations.

In Iraq, promised government offensives have failed. Part of Washington's deal with Tehran is to give it sway over the majority Shia areas on Iraq's border.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, with U.S. complicity, has used what was billed as an Islamic State-free "safe zone" in Syria by Turkey's border to block Kurdish advances and has focused air attacks on Kurdish fighters.

Washington's strategic shift to Iran and Russia, in search of some stability for its interests and investments, means downgrading its reliance on relations with Israel and Saudi Arabia.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu opposed the Iran deal, although many of Israel's generals accept it as a realistic step to lower the likelihood of a nuclear assault from Iran. Netanyahu met with Putin in Moscow Sept. 21, saying his concern was to "prevent misunderstandings" between Israeli and Russian troops. Tel Aviv has carried out airstrikes in Syrian territory targeting weapons being transported to the Iranian-backed Hezbollah forces in Lebanon.

1917 Russian Revolution opened road forward for toilers

The History of the Russian Revolution by Leon Trotsky, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month in September, is an account of the world's first socialist revolution by one of its central leaders. The excerpt below from the chapter "Shifts in the Masses" describes changes in the consciousness of the working class in Russia after the overthrow of the czar in February 1917. This first revolution brought to power what Trotsky calls the Compromise parties, including the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, who turned power over to the liberal bourgeoisie. Under the leadership of V.I. Lenin, the Bolsheviks charted a course that led the working class to power in October of the same year. Reprinted by permission of Pathfinder Press.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY LEON TROTSKY

The proletariat was the chief motive force of the revolution. At the same time the revolution was giving shape to the proletariat. And the proletariat was badly in need of this.

We have observed the decisive rôle of the Petrograd workers in the February days. The most militant positions were occupied by the Bolsheviks. Immediately after the overturn,



Women workers strike in Petrograd, February 1917, protesting food shortages and poor living conditions in midst of World War I, as revolution that swept Czar Nicholas II from power began.

however, the Bolsheviks retired into the background. The Compromise parties advanced to the front of the political stage. They turned over the power to the liberal bourgeoisie. Patriotism was the countersign of this bloc. Its assault was so strong that at least one half of the leaders of the Bolshevik Party capitulated to it. With Lenin's arrival the course of the party changed abruptly, and thereafter its influence grew swiftly. ...

A revolution teaches and teaches fast. In that lies its strength. Every week brings something new to the masses. Every two months creates an epoch. At the end of February, the insurrection. At the end of April, a demonstration of the armed workers and soldiers in Petrograd. At the beginning of July, a new assault, far broader in scope and under more resolute slogans. At the end of August, [Gen.] Kornilov's attempt at an overthrow beaten off by the masses. At the end of October, conquest of power by the Bolsheviks. Under these events, so striking in their rhythm, molecular processes were taking place, welding the heterogeneous parts of the working class into one political whole. In this again the chief rôle was played by the strike.

Frightened by the lightning of revolution striking in the midst of their bacchanalia of war profits, the industrialists made concessions in the first weeks to the workers. The Petrograd factory owners even agreed, with qualifications and exceptions, to the eight-hour day. But that did not quiet things, since the standard of living continually sank. ...

The mood in the workers' districts was becoming more and more nervous and tense. What depressed them most of all was the absence of prospects. The masses are capable of enduring the heaviest deprivations when they understand what for, but the new régime was more and more revealing itself to them as a mere camouflage of the old relations against which they had revolted in February. This they would not endure.

The strikes were especially stormy among the more backward and exploited groups of workers. Laundry workers, dyers, coopers, trade and industrial clerks, structural workers, bronze workers, unskilled workers, shoemakers, paper-box makers, sausage makers, furniture workers, were striking, layer after layer, throughout the month of June. The metalworkers were beginning, on the contrary,

to play a restraining rôle. To the advanced workers it was becoming more and more clear that individual economic strikes in the conditions of war, breakdown and inflation could not bring a serious improvement, that there must be some change in the very foundations. The lockout not only made the workers favorable to the demand for the control of industry, but even pushed them toward the thought of the necessity of taking the factories into the hands of the state. ...

The growth of strikes, and of the class struggle in general, almost automatically raised the influence of the Bolsheviks. In all cases where it was a question of life-interests the workers became convinced that the Bolsheviks had no ulterior motives, that they were concealing nothing, and that you could rely on them. In the hours of conflict all

the workers tended toward the Bolsheviks, the non-party workers, the Social Revolutionaries, the Mensheviks.

This is explained by the fact that the factory and shop committees, waging a struggle for the life of their factories against the sabotage of the administration and the proprietors, went over to the Bolsheviks much sooner than the Soviet. At a conference of the factory and shop committees of Petrograd and its environs at the beginning of June, the Bolshevik resolution won 335 out of 421 votes. This fact went by utterly unnoticed in the big newspapers. Nevertheless it meant that in the fundamental questions of economic life the Petrograd proletariat, not yet having broken with the Compromisers, had nevertheless as a fact gone over to the Bolsheviks.

At the June conference of trade unions it became known that in Petrograd there were over 50 unions with no less than 250,000 members. The metal workers' union numbered about 100,000 workers; its membership had doubled in the course of the one month of May. The influence of the Bolsheviks in the union had grown still more swiftly.

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September

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Fight frame-up of Quebec rail workers!

All workers and unions — in the U.S., Canada and beyond — have a stake in the fight to defeat the efforts of the Canadian government and rail bosses to frame up Tom Harding and Richard Labrie for the 2013 disaster that killed 47 people in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec.

For decades rail bosses have boosted profits by attacking the jobs and working conditions of workers operating trains, maintaining tracks and in all aspects of rail transportation. They’ve slashed crew sizes from five to two, and in some cases, like the Lac-Mégantic run, to a single person. On-call operation, 12-hour shifts, ubiquitous fatigue, excessively long and heavy trains, and a culture of “blame the worker” whenever anything goes wrong are what rail workers face today.

These conditions made the disaster in Lac-Mégantic — and many since, including the derailment of seven tank cars loaded with ethanol in South Dakota Sept. 19 — inevitable. And they will continue to happen until we win workers control over safety on the job.

Conditions like these are all too familiar for oil and construction workers, nurses, truckers and others facing boss speedup and assaults on schedules and safety.

Workers in Lac-Mégantic are fighting to win safety on the rails. They have called a march along the tracks

Oct. 11 to demand the city get an injunction against trains carrying hazardous cargo until the notoriously decrepit tracks are fixed. And they tell anyone who will listen that the government and the railroad owners should be on trial, not Harding and Labrie.

This is an important class battle. Lumber mill and paper plant bosses in Quebec and Maine depend on these tracks. And the \$72 billion Fortress Investment Group that now owns the railroad depends on profits from volatile oil traffic to keep it going.

Government authorities — beholden to the bosses for whom they rule and who authorized the railroad to run oil trains with a one-person crew — are determined to pin the blame on Harding and Labrie and let themselves and profit-hungry rail owners off the hook.

Join the fight to defend Harding and Labrie! Tell your co-workers and your union. Send contributions and letters of support to their union, the Steelworkers, 565 boulevard Crémazie Est, bureau 5100, Montreal, Quebec H2M 2V8, or to the Tom Harding Defense Fund, First Niagara Bank, 25 McClellan Drive, Nassau, NY 12123. If you can, make your way to Lac-Mégantic Oct. 11 to join the march for rail safety.

An injury to one is an injury to all!

Chicago conference: ‘Fight for rail safety!’

Continued from front page

Railroad Workers United, which sponsored the conference. The gathering was endorsed by 17 other groups and unions, including Frack Free Illinois, Rising Tide, the Southeast Environmental Taskforce and the Socialist Workers Party. Rail workers, other unionists and members of environmental and community groups attended the meeting at the United Electrical Workers hall.

The conference was the third organized by Railroad Workers United on rail safety since the 2013 derailment and explosion of a 72-car train hauling crude oil killed 47 people in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec. Tom Harding, the engineer, was the only crew member on the train under a special deal the Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway made with the Canadian government. Harding and dispatcher Richard Labrie, both members of the United Steelworkers union, have been smeared in the press and face frame-up charges in the disaster that could put them behind bars for life.

Panelists described how rail workers are “on call” 24 hours a day, never knowing when they’ll have to go out. They’re subject to 12-hour workdays, inadequate rest and mind-numbing fatigue, driving trains of 100 cars or more weighing over 18,000 tons on tracks that are poorly maintained and inspected less often.

Thomas Walsh, attorney for Harding, attended the conference from Canada and spoke. “The bottom line for the rail carriers is profits, not safety,” Walsh said. Because he was a one-man crew, Harding was directed to park his train on a hill above Lac-Mégantic before going to sleep after working 12 hours. A fire broke out on the engine and firemen shut it down, inadvertently

allowing the air brakes to bleed out.

“You’ve all heard here about the conditions these workers face, this was a disaster waiting to happen,” Walsh said. “The one-person crew definitely played a role in what happened in Lac-Mégantic.”

Railroad bosses are eliminating workers in all the crafts to boost profits. “Van drivers used to be railroad employees, members of the railroad clerks union,” Phil Dederer, an organizer of UE Local 1177, whose members drive railroad crews to and from the trains, told the *Militant*. “The rail companies cut them out and subcontracted the work. Pay was slashed and conditions got much worse. Recently we signed contracts for 600 van drivers in California and 200 in Chicago and northwest Indiana.”

Workshops addressed how rail workers and environmental activists could work together to learn more about the movement of trains carrying volatile oil, build coalitions, educate others on the danger the trains pose and organize protest actions. Chicago is the largest rail center in the U.S.

The conference concluded with participants gathering in smaller groups to discuss how they could build alliances between rail workers, other unionists and community groups for action on rail safety.

Twenty participants joined a discussion on how to publicize the defense campaign for Harding and Labrie and build an Oct. 11 demonstration in Lac-Mégantic demanding the Canadian government bar the Central Maine and Quebec Railway from hauling hazardous waste in the area unless it makes its tracks safer.

Some decided to work together to put together a solidarity action in Chicago Oct. 11.

Special forces coup comes apart in Burkina Faso

BY MICHEL PRAIRIE

A coup led by a small, specialized military unit and some civilian supporters of former President Blaise Compaoré in the West African country of Burkina Faso came apart after one week as the previous government was restored. The coup was met with sustained nationwide protests involving thousands and received no backing from imperialist powers, regional governments, the rest of the military or other bourgeois forces.

On Sept. 16 members of the Presidential Security Regiment stormed a meeting of the Council of Ministers and arrested interim President Michel Kafando and interim Prime Minister Isaac Zida. The next morning regiment leaders announced they had dissolved the interim government put in place last year following huge mobilizations across the country that toppled Compaoré. He seized power in a 1987 coup that killed President Thomas Sankara, central leader

of the 1983-87 popular democratic revolution in the country.

Leaders of the country’s regular army told the regiment to disarm and stand down as troops began to march on Ouagadougou, the capital.

On Sept. 23 coup leader Gen. Gilbert Diendere signed a deal brokered by leaders of the Economic Community of West African States. The Kafando government is restored; Diendere stands down, but is guaranteed amnesty along with his soldiers and their families; and the army withdraws from the capital.

Burkina Faso is among the poorest nations in the world. Gains made by the Sankara-led revolution were reversed by Compaoré’s regime in order to attract foreign capitalist investments in gold mining and cotton production. Over 27 years in power, it became one of imperialism’s strongest allies in the region.

It is unclear whether presidential and legislative elections that were scheduled for Oct. 11 will occur.

Depression grows

Continued from front page

the U.S. is not the result of government policy, nor can any policy reverse it. The crisis is rooted in a decades-long trend of declining profits and a slow-down in capitalist production, trade and employment.

In response to the 2008-2009 economic downturn, the steepest since the Great Depression of the 1930s, the government implemented “stimulus” measures in hopes of getting production going again. In addition to dropping interest rates to nearly zero, the Federal Reserve began a six-year “quantitative easing” money-printing scheme to pump funds into the financial system.

But with declining profit margins, the great majority of bosses won’t invest in hiring workers and expanding productive capacity, no matter how cheap the money is. Instead, they speculate in paper “assets,” from bonds to derivatives to hedge funds and stocks — the prices of which have risen to record levels.

It took five years for industrial production to reach the output level it had prior to 2008. And the bosses achieved this with 2 million fewer workers through speedup and intensified work, resulting in deteriorating safety conditions. According to the Labor Department, workplace fatalities last year were more than 4,700, the highest reported level in six years.

U.S. industrial production continues to stagnate. In August factory activity fell to its lowest level since May 2013, as capacity utilization fell to 77.6 percent from 78 percent.

While the official unemployment rate dropped from 10 percent in October 2009 to 5.1 percent in August — an argument presented by some for raising interest rates — these figures don’t accurately reflect the millions who can’t get full-time jobs and millions more that government statisticians consider too discouraged to be part of the workforce.

Amid the capitalist upturn, many workers have seen their wages decline, according to a new report by the National Employment Law Project. The steepest drops are for workers in health care, food services and retail stores, which comprise many of the newly created jobs. Between 2009 and 2014, real wages fell 8.9 percent for restaurant cooks and 6.2 percent for home health aides.

The economic crisis and the way it falls on the backs of the working class, along with the capitalists’ inability to find any way out, raises moral and political questions for a growing number of workers about the capitalists’ capacity to rule.

One of the reasons the Federal Reserve gave for not raising interest rates was concern for “developments abroad.” The capitalist crisis is more worldwide in scope than at any time in history.

Pundits touted China’s economic growth as a way out of the crisis, but today slowing production and trade there — a normal part of the development of capitalism, especially in time of crisis — is having a ripple effect worldwide. Chinese authorities project the lowest economic growth this year in more than two decades.

Japan’s exports to China fell 10.8 percent in the first half of this year. In South Korea, where one-quarter of exports go to China, shipments declined by 8.8 percent in August. The South Korean-based Daewoo Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering Co. announced Sept. 1 it would cut its operations by one-third.

The value of Brazil’s exports to China fell 19 percent in the first seven months of the year. Beijing is Brazil’s biggest trading partner, buying large amounts of iron ore, soybeans and other commodities. Over the past year some 900,000 jobs were eliminated in Brazil. For those still working, real wages dropped by as much as 5 percent in May, reported Bloomberg News.

Correction

The article “Framed-Up Rail Workers Win Support in Quebec Town” in the Sept. 21 issue misidentified two individuals. Aline Savard is the owner of Passion Chocolat; Françoise Roy is a server at the cafe.