

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Join defense of SWP exemption  
from disclosing campaign donors  
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 79/NO. 42 NOVEMBER 23, 2015

## Thank you for help in Socialist Workers Party sales, fund drive

The letter below is from Naomi Craine and John Studer, the directors of the Socialist Workers Party's Militant subscription drive and Party-Building Fund drive.

On behalf of the Socialist Workers Party, we thank all of you who participated in the party's fall drives, which succeeded in getting the SWP more broadly known in the working class, expanding the reach of the party's press and books and raising the funds needed to continue our work.

More than 2,200 people subscribed to the *Militant* over the two-month campaign, meeting the total of quotas adopted by SWP branches across the U.S. and the Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and

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### Socialist Workers Party drive for new readers!

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

Country	quota	sold	%
UNITED STATES			
Atlanta	160	166	104%
Chicago*	175	178	102%
Lincoln*	15	19	127%
Los Angeles	140	140	100%
Miami	120	88	73%
New York	380	395	104%
Oakland	180	184	102%
Philadelphia	120	125	104%
Seattle	125	127	102%
Twin Cities	65	73	112%
Washington, D.C.	110	112	102%
Other	110	80	
Total U.S.	1700	1687	99%
UNITED KINGDOM			
London	100	104	104%
Manchester	100	107	107%
Total U.K.	200	211	106%
CANADA			
Calgary	65	60	92%
Montreal	80	82	103%
Total Canada	145	142	98%
AUSTRALIA	75	79	105%
NEW ZEALAND	65	69	106%
PRISONERS*	20	21	105%
Total	2205	2209	96%
Should be	2300	2300	100%
*Raised quota			

## 'Lift the US blockade!' Cuban leaders say in NY, DC

BY NAOMI CRAINE

NEW YORK — "The U.S. government's decision to release Gerardo, Ramón and Antonio from prison and establish diplomatic relations with Cuba for the first time in 55 years was a tremendous victory," Kenia Serrano, president of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples, told a meeting of well over 200 people in Harlem here Nov. 4. "But we're still a long way from normal relations. We continue to demand the lifting of the U.S. blockade against Cuba, and compensation for the economic and human damage it has done.

"We call for the return of the illegally held territory at Guantánamo to Cuban sovereignty," she said, "and of course the closing of the prison" that Washington maintains at its naval base there against the wishes of the Cuban people.

Before there can be normal relations, Washington must "end the 'regime-change' programs directed against us," she noted. "It's incomprehensible that we have embassies and the declaration of a new beginning, and at the same time they have pub-

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## SWP campaign in Philadelphia: 'We won because we built the party'

BY CHRIS HOEPPNER

PHILADELPHIA — "The Socialist Workers Party campaign gave working people in Philadelphia a voice this year," Osborne Hart, SWP candidate for mayor here, told supporters at an election night victory social at his home Nov. 3. Hart ran along with John Staggs, Socialist Workers Party candidate for City Council at-large.

"We won this campaign because we built the party and found great interest in our class-struggle program from those who joined in actions for \$15 and a union, on the Steelworkers' picket line in Coatesville and Conshohocken against ArcelorMittal's take-away demands, against the cop beating and attempted frame-up of Tyree Carroll, in defense of the Americans with Disabilities Act and other struggles," Hart said.

"We've set an example for the party's 2016 campaign for president and state and city offices all across the country," Staggs said. "We campaigned for a government-funded public works program, to build schools, hospitals, child care centers, parks and other infrastructure workers need. And we explained that

## '\$15 and a union' protests mobilize in over 270 cities

Unions, opponents of cop brutality join actions



Militant/Dan Fein

Across the country workers rallied Nov. 10 to raise minimum wage to \$15 an hour, to organize unions, and for regular, full-time schedules. Above, one of several actions in Chicago.

BY MAGGIE TROWE

NEW YORK — Thousands of fast-food, airport, home health care, Walmart and other workers in more than 270 cities and towns across the country took part in a Nov. 10 national day of action for \$15 and a union. Hundreds of fast-food workers joined a one-day strike.

Union contingents dotted the protests, along with groups of activists with signs and T-shirts against police

brutality and killings. The turnout was larger than the national actions in April.

Several thousand joined actions here, including an early morning protest in Brooklyn, a midday gathering in Harlem and a late afternoon rally and march in downtown Manhattan that wound its way to Wall Street.

Rallies were held in Newark and Perth Amboy, New Jersey, as well.

Next week's *Militant* will have coverage from actions across the country.

"The next step is the union," Edward Dunham, 40, a McDonald's worker active for more than a year in the fight for \$15, told the *Militant* at the Brooklyn action. "We can't get anywhere dealing with the company as individuals. And we need a full workweek. This week they only gave me three days. I can't live on that!"

"I've been inspired by the 'Fight for \$15' movement," Gwen Carr, mother of Eric Garner, whose 2014 killing by a police chokehold in Staten Island spurred nationwide protests, wrote in an op-ed column in the *New York*

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## Turkish gov't makes election gains on brutal attacks on Kurds

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Following months of Washington-backed attacks against the Kurdish people, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Justice and Development Party (AKP) regained a majority in parliament Nov. 1. Monitors from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe called the vote "unfair" and "characterized by too much violence and fear."

The vote took place amidst government-imposed curfews in Kurdish areas, detentions of thousands and

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LA port drivers strike again: 'We're workers, not owners!'

Farmworkers push back union decertification in California



# Pakistan factory collapses as bosses ignore worker protests



Khalid Mahmood

Nov. 6 protest in Lahore, Pakistan, against deadly working conditions after polythene bag factory building collapsed Nov. 4, killing dozens of workers and injuring more than 100.

BY EMMA JOHNSON

Dozens of workers were killed and more than 100 injured when the plastic bag factory where they worked collapsed Nov. 4 in Lahore, Pakistan. Rajput Polymer bosses had ignored warnings and workers’ protests against cracked pillars and instability in the building’s structure. Local government agencies had turned a blind eye to violations of building regulations and labor laws.

“Three days before the collapse workers held a meeting inside the factory protesting cracks in the pillars. They were afraid for their safety,” Khalid Mahmood, director of the Labour Education Foundation in Lahore, told the *Militant* by phone Nov. 7. Cracks began to appear after an earthquake shook the area Oct. 26. “On the morning of Nov. 4 they again expressed their fears to the owner, but he dismissed them. In the afternoon

the building collapsed.”

Workers also told owner Rana Ashraf that during a test run of new machines the whole building shook. They had protested construction of a new floor on top of the three-story factory. Installation of the machines and floor were both illegal.

“As of now they have recovered 50 dead bodies and some workers are still missing. Another six were found today,” Mahmood said. “I visited the site the morning after the collapse. The whole building had come down in a huge pile of rubble. I talked to many workers and families outside who were anxiously waiting to get some news.”

The plant, located in the Sundar Industrial Estate 28 miles south of Lahore, employed 500 workers. The majority were young men age 20 to 25 brought in from rural areas to work for low wages in hazardous conditions without con-

## Victory over racist harassment at U of Missouri



University of Missouri President Tim Wolfe was forced to step down Nov. 9 as a result of widespread protests led by a Black rights group called ConcernedStudent1950 (named for the first year Black students were allowed to attend the school). The college’s football team and many students and faculty joined the protests. Wolfe had dragged his feet responding to incidents of racist harassment on campus. Only 7 percent of the more than 35,000 students are Black.

Payton Head, president of the Missouri Students Association, who is African-American, reported Sept. 12 that he had faced racist heckling. Students protested at the school’s October homecoming parade against Wolfe’s failure to respond.

National attention exploded when the school’s Black football players, backed by the coach and the entire team, above, refused to play until Wolfe left.

“You saw what we did here,” Jonathan Butler, a Black graduate student, told several hundred students and faculty on the Carnahan Quad after Wolfe resigned. Butler had launched a hunger strike Nov. 2 after a swastika was drawn in human feces in a dorm. “We chose to fight for our community. We chose to do what was right.” Butler and other Missouri students joined protests in Ferguson to demand cop Darren Wilson be indicted for killing Michael Brown last year.

— JOHN STUDER

tracts. Some were 14 to 16 years old.

Niaz, the company’s former general manager, had quit his job after arguing with Ashraf about building another floor on top of the roof, *Dawn* newspaper reported Nov. 6.

The Punjab Industrial Estate Development and Management Company and the Sundar Industrial Estate Management are the two government agencies responsible for managing the estate. A labor inspector used to visit the factory off and on, but “he would leave without any proper inspection,” Niaz told *Dawn*.

The bag plant workers got 200 (\$1.90) rupees a day, working 12-hour shifts six days a week. That’s less than half Pakistan’s minimum wage of 13,000 rupees a month (\$123). Nearly all the workers were hired by subcontractors without a contract. There was no union. Only 40 workers were registered with the government’s social security and old-age pension administrations, which may be

an obstacle to getting compensation for those injured and families of those who were killed.

“In the whole Sundar Estate, with hundreds of factories, there is not a single union,” Mahmood said. “Factory owners are killing workers by saving money that should be used to make workplaces safe. A union in this big factory could have raised the workers’ voice and saved lives.”

The Labour Foundation took part in a public protest Nov. 6 in Lahore against unsafe conditions at Rajput and throughout the area.

In September four workers were killed and 16 injured when the cane-and-mud roof of a garment factory collapsed in Lahore. Bosses had stored a number of chemical-filled drums on the roof. In 2012 some 255 workers were killed when a fire broke out in a garment factory in Karachi in one of the deadliest industrial disasters in Pakistani history.

## THE MILITANT

### ‘Militant’ fights frame-up of rail workers

*The ‘Militant’ tells the truth and builds support for the fight to stop the frame-up of two rail unionists who face life in prison for the deaths of 47 people in the 2013 train derailment and explosion in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec. The government and rail bosses should be in the dock.*



Reuters/Mathieu Belanger

Engineer Tom Harding, left, faces frame-up in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, rail explosion.

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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.



# Thank you for your help in SWP subscription, fund drives

Continued from front page  
the United Kingdom.

The 2015 Party-Building Fund went over the top, thanks to many new contributors, as well as longtime supporters of the party's work. Every branch exceeded its quota, raising a total of \$101,098.

Welcome to the many new readers of the *Militant*. We hope you will enjoy the paper, use it to strengthen labor and social struggles you are involved in and share it with co-workers, friends, political collaborators and neighbors.

We encourage you to take advantage of the special offers on books from Pathfinder Press to learn more about the party's program and revolutionary working-class politics (see ad below).

The Philadelphia Socialist Workers Party set an example for the coming 2016 presidential election and party

campaigns across the country, running Osborne Hart for mayor and John Staggs for City Council at-large. They and campaign supporters presented a revolutionary working-class program, including in public debates with the Democrats, Republicans and other capitalist candidates. They took the *Militant*, which championed the campaign, to working-class neighborhoods, labor picket lines and social protest actions across the city and beyond, surpassing their goals.

Another highlight of the drive was our experiences introducing the party and its program to working people in small towns and rural areas in different regions.

The Atlanta SWP organized teams to Seneca, South Carolina, where the family of Zachary Hammond has been fighting to get the cop who killed the 19 year old indicted. They also knocked on doors and won subscribers in Red Bank, South Carolina, where white supremacist Dylann Storm Roof lived before he carried out the political assassination of nine African-Americans in Charleston in June.

The receptivity they found to the party and its press gives the lie to the claim by many liberals that workers who are Caucasian are "white trash," becoming more reactionary, especially



Militant photos: above, Hilda Cuzco; inset, Eric Simpson  
Socialist Workers Party members campaigned during subscription drive to build national day of actions for \$15 an hour, full-time work and a union. Osborne Hart, second from right, who was SWP candidate for mayor in Philadelphia, marched at Nov. 10 action there. Inset, participants at Oakland, California, rally discuss *Militant* and books at SWP literature table.

in the rural South.

SWP members in Chicago and other cities effectively combined building solidarity with autoworkers and steelworkers resisting the bosses' concession demands and discussing the party's program with workers in towns across the Midwest.

Party members and collaborators, including new *Militant* readers, became more deeply involved across the country in workers' struggles and winning support for the Nov. 10 strikes and protests.

The campaigning doesn't stop with the end of the drive. Party members in Oakland, California, reported that during the Nov. 10 actions nine workers subscribed to the paper, 70 others got single copies and three people got *Malcolm X*, *Black Liberation*, and the *Road to Workers Power*.

The success in going over the \$100,000 fund goal enables the party to continue its international work with others in defense of the Cuban Revolution and to respond to new developments in the class struggle in the United States and beyond.

As we head into 2016, we invite all those who have begun to learn about the party over the course of the fall campaigns to join us in getting the SWP and its program more widely known — and building actions from the fights to raise the minimum wage and build unions, to protesting imperialism and its wars and telling the truth about the example of Cuba's socialist revolution. And, while doing so, join us in ongoing efforts to



expand the circulation of the *Militant* to fellow fighters. Contact one of the party units listed on page 8.

Naomi Craine

Naomi Craine  
SWP subscription drive director

John Studer

John Studer  
SWP Party-Building Fund director

## Recommended Reading

### Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?

by Mary-Alice Waters

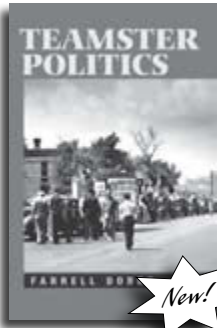
"To think that a socialist revolution in the U.S. is not possible, you would have to believe not only that the ruling families of the imperialist countries and their economic wizards have found a way to 'manage' capitalism. You would also have to close your eyes to the spreading imperialist wars, civil wars, and economic, financial, and social crises we are in the midst of." \$7



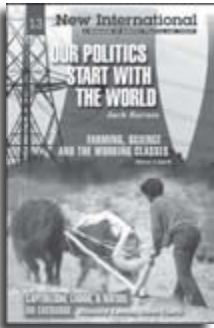
www.pathfinderpress.com

Party-Building Fund Final Results			
Area	Quota	Collected	%
Atlanta*	\$9,500	\$10,515	111%
Boston	\$3,250	\$3,324	102%
Chicago*	\$11,000	\$11,660	106%
Lincoln*	\$190	\$205	108%
Los Angeles	\$8,000	\$8,255	103%
Miami	\$3,000	\$3,117	104%
New York	\$20,000	\$20,275	101%
Oakland*	\$14,500	\$14,980	103%
Omaha*	\$1,400	\$2,091	149%
Philadelphia	\$3,200	\$4,150	130%
Seattle	\$8,300	\$8,361	101%
Twin Cities*	\$3,645	\$4,992	137%
Washington, DC	\$7,700	\$7,823	102%
Other	\$1,200	\$1,350	113%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$94,885</b>	<b>\$101,098</b>	<b>101%</b>
<b>Should Be</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>100%</b>
*Raised Goal			

## Special book offers for *Militant* subscribers



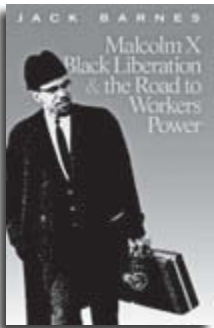
**Teamster Politics**  
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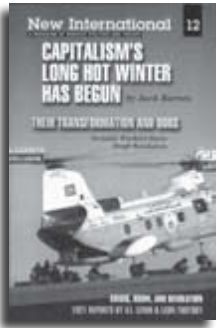
**Our Politics Start with the World**  
by Jack Barnes  
In New International no. 13  
\$7 with subscription  
(regular \$14)  
Also in Spanish, French, Swedish, Greek, Farsi, Arabic



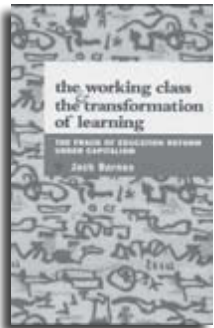
**U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War**  
by Jack Barnes  
In New International no. 11  
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## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

**CANADA**  
Calgary  
Demand Justice for Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women. Speaker: Michel Dugré, Communist League. Fri., Nov. 20, 7:30 p.m. 4909 17th Ave. SE, Unit 154. Tel.: (403) 457-9044.

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



# Philadelphia SWP campaign

**Continued from front page**

and Staggs work at Walmart and are part of the movement for higher wages growing among lower-paid workers — now close to 50 percent of those with a job.

A number of people came who hadn't attended a SWP event. Before the social, Staggs went to a town hall meeting of the Philadelphia Coalition for Racial, Economic and Legal Justice. The coalition has organized protests against police brutality and killings. The first point on the agenda was an appeal by Popeyes worker Shymara Jones to attend the Nov. 10 action for \$15 and a union.

Ikea Coney, who has fought to bring to justice the cops who beat her son Darrin Manning and is active in the coalition, joined the socialist candidates at the social. Five teachers and staff from Germantown Friends School — co-workers of campaign supporter Ellen Berman — also came.

Staggs told how he had gone to Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, to participate in the 1,000-strong rally Oct. 11 demanding an end to the transport of hazardous cargo on rail tracks there until they are repaired and safe. In 2013 a 72-car oil train derailed and exploded, killing 47 people and destroying the center of the city.

"The protest also took up the defense of Tom Harding, the train's engineer, and dispatcher Richard Labrie who face frame-up charges for the disaster," Staggs said. "People there say the workers aren't responsible for what happened, and that the railroad's bosses and the government that let them operate with a one-man crew under unsafe conditions should be behind bars."

Rail safety is an issue of special interest in Philadelphia. In May an Amtrak train derailed here, killing eight and injuring dozens more. And some 50 volatile oil trains rumble through the city every week. The Philadelphia Energy Solutions refinery in South Philadelphia gets delivery of more than 200 tankers a day.

"We demand rail workers have control over safety conditions on the job," Staggs said. "And we fight for a crew of four on the trains to help each other and keep an eye on the train's operation."

The socialist candidates also spoke out against U.S. military intervention in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan. They point to Cuba as an example of how, through revolutionary struggle, workers and farmers transformed themselves and took political power, building a workers and farmers government.

## Building Nov. 10 actions

Since the election ended, Staggs, Hart and other campaigners for the SWP have continued to visit workers on their doorsteps to talk about the party and to build working-class protests, like the Nov. 10 rally.

Staggs and SWP member Janet Post visited with Elizabeth Wilcox and her daughter Lisa in the Port Richmond section of Philadelphia Nov. 9 to discuss the rally. Post had met them campaigning the week before.

Elizabeth Wilcox, now retired, worked at McDonald's for 30 years. Lisa Wilcox works at Dunkin' Donuts and, because of the low pay, just got a second job at Pizza Hut.

"I worked at different McDonald's, many of them franchised to local boss-

es," Elizabeth Wilcox said. "This setup lets the local people set the wages, and they try and keep it as low as they can."

The election was marked by low participation. "Voter turnout was just 25.62 percent for all the races on the ballot, and even lower, 23.7 percent, in the mayor's race," the *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported the day after the vote.

Most workers didn't see any serious proposals that would help them coming from Democratic, Republican or independent pro-capitalist candidates. So they stayed home.

"It's the flip side of why workers are attracted to big meetings for Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders in the presidential races," Hart said. "Their experiences with the powers that be tell them something radically different is needed."

"It's one of the reasons people respond to the Socialist Workers Party," he said.

There was so little interest in the elections that the owners of the *Philadelphia Citizen* online newspaper tried to get people out by cynically offering a \$10,000 reward for one voter picked at random.

## Do 2015 election results show workers moving to the right?

BY SETH GALINSKY

Are workers who are Caucasian becoming more conservative? Do the off-year elections show a rightward shift in U.S. politics? Or are working people beginning to look for alternatives to crisis-ridden capitalism, including by showing interest in the 2015 Socialist Workers Party election campaigns?

"From Coast to Coast, Conservatives Score Huge Victories in Off-Year Elections," read the headline of a Nov. 4 article in the *Washington Post*. This was typical of others in several liberal and conservative publications that claim

## COMMENTARY

this year's mid-term election marked a big shift.

Those articles point to the defeat of Houston's Equal Rights Ordinance and to a few races where Republicans defeated Democratic Party candidates — mostly ignoring other races where Democrats defeated Republicans — to make their case. In fact nationwide there was little change in the number of Democrats or Republicans who won office in this round.

It's worth looking at the vote on the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance — which would have extended nondiscrimination laws to gay and transgender people — to see how far off this analysis is. The ordinance went down to a crushing defeat with 61 percent voting no.

But the vote had nothing to do with alleged reactionary views of workers or a retreat in the overwhelming sentiment against prejudice and unequal treatment based on an individual's gender or sexual orientation. Instead, the liberal and petty-bourgeois radical supporters of "political correctness" sank the proposed law by including in the initial version of the bill a clause — later deleted — that said no business open to the public could deny a transgender person entry to a restroom consistent with their self-proclaimed gender identity.

Conservative opponents of the law took advantage of this to attack the bill, including by printing signs proclaiming



Militant/Janet Post

Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Philadelphia, right, and John Staggs for City Council at-large, next to Hart, speaking at Nov. 3 election night celebration.

While Jim Kenney, the Democratic candidate, received the most votes in the elections, Hart and Staggs got 1,214 and 2,949 respectively.

"We got more media coverage than in years previously because working people are searching for answers to the political and moral crisis of the capitalist system," Hart told the *Militant*.

Staggs is speaking Nov. 11 on "To-

"No Men in Women's Restrooms" that were prominent in working-class and other neighborhoods around the city.

The defeat of the bill was aided by the Nov. 2 decision of the U.S. Department of Education that a transgender student in Illinois had the right to use female restrooms and locker rooms.

"I got three daughters," Houston city worker Todd Ward told the *New York Times*. "There's not an equal right for me to go into a women's bathroom. That's common sense."

Several articles in the *Wall Street Journal*, including one Nov. 6 headlined "Has the World Lost Faith in Capitalism?" get a little closer to what's happening in U.S. politics today.

To the consternation of the *Journal*, a "survey found that 55% of Americans think the 'rich get richer' and the 'poor get poorer' under capitalism. Sixty-five percent agree that most big businesses have 'dodged taxes, damaged the environment or bought special favors from politicians.'"

The article reports on a poll in seven countries — the U.S., Thailand, India, Indonesia, Brazil, the U.K. and Germany — that also shows that people in the U.S. are "gloomiest about the future. It is new-world America, where only 14% of those surveyed think that life will be better for their children, and 52% disagree."

The liberal capitalist *Post* comes at the question from a different angle. A Nov. 4 article by Harold Meyerson cites a recent study by Princeton economists Angus Deaton and Anne Case that reports the number of deaths by suicide, alcohol use and drug use "among working-class whites ages 45 to 54 has risen precipitously since 1999 — so precipitously that their overall death rate ... increased by 22 percent."

The *Post* blames the rise on the "disintegration of the working-class white family." The paper notes that "the share of blue-collar jobs in the U.S. economy declined from 28 percent in 1970 to 17 percent in 2010," while downplaying the depression conditions that millions of workers in the U.S. are facing.

"This helped fuel a racial and nativ-

day in PhillyLabor," a weekly radio program hosted by Joe Dougherty Jr., head of PhillyLabor.com; Pat Eiding, president of the Philadelphia AFL-CIO; and radio personality Joe Krause. He will be discussing the Nov. 10 actions.

The party will be joining family members and others protesting at the frame-up trial of Tyree Carroll next week.

ist backlash that has driven much of the white working class (particularly in the South) into Republican ranks," the *Post* asserts. In the eyes of the *Post*, these so-called uneducated, alcoholic, drug-saddled workers are the principal reason behind Donald Trump's success in the presidential race so far.

## Interest in Socialist Workers Party

Socialist Workers Party candidates for mayor and City Council in Philadelphia and for port commissioner in Seattle have found that workers who are Caucasian — just like the rest of the working class — are being battered by the capitalist economic crisis, including high unemployment and the slashing of wages and benefits over the last several decades. Workers — whatever their ethnicity — looking for radical solutions are often attracted to Trump and other candidates who profess to tell it like it is or who rail against "crony capitalism."

Backers of the Socialist Workers Party have won a hearing at several Trump rallies from working people when they explain the problem is not "crony" capitalism, but capitalism period. Workers at those rallies were open to considering the working-class alternative to the Democrats and Republicans, including the SWP's opposition to Trump's program of deporting immigrant workers. Workers need to join together in a common struggle, no matter where they were born, to fight for raising the minimum wage and for organizing the unorganized into unions, the SWP candidates say, on the road to building a revolutionary movement capable of taking power out of the hands of the capitalist class.

Going door to door in working-class neighborhoods, communist workers have gotten a good response to their Marxist explanation of the capitalist crisis; the need for working people to organize independently of the capitalist parties and to fight for a labor party based on the unions; and the importance of solidarity with the struggles of working people and the oppressed around the world.

# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

MAGGIE TROWE, EDITOR

## Help the *Militant* cover labor struggles across the country!

This column is dedicated to giving voice to those engaged in battle and building solidarity today — including workers fighting for \$15 and a union; locked-out ATI Steelworkers; auto, steel and Verizon workers whose contracts have expired. I invite those involved in workers' battles 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

### L.A. port drivers strike again: 'We're workers, not owners!'

LOS ANGELES — Truck drivers at the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach launched their eighth strike in the last two years demanding port trucking companies classify them as employees rather than independent contractors. This would give them the right to join the Teamsters union and be paid by the hour instead of the load. The median gross annual wage for independent contractors is just under \$29,000, compared with \$39,520 for truck drivers paid hourly.

The five-day strike was initiated Oct. 26 by drivers at Pac 9 Transportation and XPO Logistics.

"This is the third strike at XPO," driver Manuel Gonzales told the *Militant*. "The other two times I stayed home and didn't work. This time I'm on the picket line. I want them to see me. They cheat us on the miles they pay us. We pay for everything. Now is a good time to try for the union."

Over the next few days drivers at Intermodal Bridge Transport, warehouse workers at California Cartage and drivers at Gold Point Transportation joined the strike. On Oct. 30, the last day of the strike, a press conference was held outside Los Angeles City Hall to announce the next steps in the fight. "I would like this wage theft and misclassification stopped," said XPO driver Isabel Samayoa. "I want to get what I think we are all entitled to."

After winning 113 wage theft claims for \$12 million, drivers have filed with the California Division of Labor Standards Enforcement 14 new

claims against the bosses totaling \$3.5 million, with 550 claims still pending.

A delegation presented more than 27,000 signatures supporting the drivers to Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti. Drivers also attended a meeting of the Los Angeles City Council to support a resolution calling on trucking bosses to "comply with federal and state employment and labor laws and provide them with the same wage and benefits protections afforded to all employees in our city." The resolution passed.

— Bill Arth

### California Cartage warehouse workers carry out second strike

LOS ANGELES — Warehouse workers carried out their second strike this fall against California Cartage, a massive warehouse at the Port of Los Angeles, Oct. 28-30, with more participation than in their Sept. 22-24 walkout. The strike coincided with that of port truck drivers here at Los Angeles/Long Beach, the largest port complex in the U.S.

About 500 people work in the Cal Cartage warehouse during busy times. The company brags on its web page that it is "non-union."

The warehouse workers demand an end to wage theft, low wages, unsafe conditions and irregular schedules. Like many workers around the country they are demanding \$15 an hour. They are also suing the company for millions of dollars of unpaid wages and overtime. The workers are supported by the Teamsters union and the Warehouse Worker Resource Center.

Teamsters Union International President James Hoffa joined a rally of drivers and warehouse workers in Long Beach Oct. 27.

"These port terminals are making a



Militant/Deborah Liatos

California Cartage warehouse workers join picket line of port truckers on strike at the docks in Long Beach Oct. 29. Warehouse workers were on their own three-day walkout.

killing," said Steve Hatch, a Cal Cartage lumper (loader and unloader), warehouseman and forklift driver, who makes \$9 an hour. Hatch knew about the first strike, but didn't participate. "As I became more informed then I decided it was really worthwhile."

"I got involved because I was tired of struggling to provide for my son and wife," said Anthony Vallecillo, who, like most Cal Cartage workers, was hired through a staffing agency.

— Deborah Liatos

### Farmworkers push back union decertification in California

FRESNO, Calif. — Amid ongoing protests by United Farm Workers members, Agricultural Labor Relations Board Judge Mark Soble ruled Sept. 17 that Gerawan Farming Inc. and the California Fresh Fruit Association illegally assisted and funded a 2013 campaign to decertify the UFW.

"We need to continue the struggle, organize protests and pickets at the company offices," Juan Juarez, 50, a UFW veteran who has worked at Gerawan since 2007, told the *Militant*. "The wage increases and better conditions are a result of fighting for a union."

Gerawan Farming, the largest tree fruit grower in California, employs some 5,000 farmworkers near here.

Gerawan workers voted for the UFW in 1990, but the company refused to negotiate a contract.

State law permits mediators to impose union contracts when growers refuse to sign. The growers' challenge to the law is before the state Supreme Court.

In 2013, Gerawan refused to implement the labor board-imposed union contract. Instead, according to the recent ruling that dismissed the decertification petition, the California Fresh Fruit Association and its president gave \$20,000 to Gerawan employee Silvia Lopez "to support the decertification effort." The decision says the company gave Lopez a "virtual sabbatical" to work only eight hours a week while she organized collection of signatures for decertification. Bosses "allowed her to physically block the company entrances" to collect 1,000 signatures during work hours, with the aid of some crew bosses.

"Those against the union have no worries on the job," said longtime UFW member Augustín García. "I was suspended two times this year for wearing my union hat or T-shirt." Now the company claims they have no work for him.

Under pressure from the union, Gerawan has raised base wages from \$8 to \$11 an hour since 2011.

Gerawan has been hiring many workers through contractors who are paid less with no benefits. "We are fighting for contract workers to be paid the same and be covered by the union contract," García said.

— Ellen Haywood  
and Gerardo Sánchez

### Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay

by Leon Trotsky

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

—From preface by Farrell Dobbs. \$16

### Labor's Giant Step

by Art Preis

The rise of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in the early 1930s transformed the labor movement in the United States and left an indelible imprint on the subsequent

course and development of the trade unions. Art Preis, an active participant, tells the story. \$30

pathfinderpress.com

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



November 23, 1990

Announcing new deployments to the Middle East November 8 that will double U.S. troop, tank, warship, and aircraft strength in the region, U.S. President George Bush said that the forces will give them "an adequate offensive military option" to invade Iraq.

He praised British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's earlier statement in London in the House of Commons that either Iraqi President Saddam Hussein "gets out of Kuwait soon, or we and our allies will remove him by force, and he will go down to defeat with all its consequences."

Some 30 countries led by governments in Washington, London, and Paris, have already amassed 500,000 troops and extensive fire-power in and around Saudi Arabia.



November 22, 1965

Henry Austan, a leader of the Deacons for Defense and Justice, gave an interview to *The Militant* while in New York on Nov. 13.

The Deacons were first organized in Jonesboro, a small town in northern Louisiana, on July 10, 1964. Civil rights activity had begun there, and the Klan was using terror tactics against the movement. The Klan rode through the black community shooting into houses; they dragged people from their homes and threatened them. One night a 25-car Klan caravan drove through led by a police car.

That was too much. Ernest Thomas and two others called together a group of ten veterans of the Korean war and World War II. They organized the Deacons for Defense and Justice.



November 23, 1940

DOWNEY, Calif., Nov. 17 — 3,200 production workers of Vultee Aircraft Inc. have struck the first major blow at the sub-human conditions in the aircraft industries.

Mass picket lines have had the huge Vultee plant shut tight since 5 A.M. Thursday, when the company declined further consideration of wage increases from the present 50 cent hourly minimum. The union committee of Amalgamated Aviation Local 683, United Auto Workers-CIO, had conducted futile negotiations for nine weeks.

This is the first strike in any major aircraft plant working on government war orders. Vultee has a back-log of \$84,000,000 in orders for planes for both the U.S. and Great Britain.



# Join defense of SWP exemption from disclosing campaign donors

BY JOHN STUDER

In December 2016 the Socialist Workers Party will apply for an extension of its 41-year exemption from having to report to the Federal Election Commission the names and personal information about contributors to the party's election campaigns. The exemption was last renewed by the FEC in a 4-1 vote in April 2013.

"The party is asking for help from *Militant* readers, supporters of Socialist Workers Party candidates and other defenders of political rights to win further exemption next year," Steve Clark, chair of the Socialist Workers National Campaign Committee, told the *Militant* Nov. 8. "Send us reports on any harassment, threats or attacks against SWP candidates, SWP campaign supporters or against yourself."

For the 2013 FEC hearing attorneys Michael Krinsky and Lindsey Frank, from the firm of Rabinowitz, Boudin, Standard, Krinsky & Lieberman, filed over 70 affidavits documenting firings, police spying and harassment, and right-wing threats and attacks from across the country over the previous six years.

"Reports like these are key to documenting that while there's great receptivity to and interest in the SWP and its election campaigns, the party and those who join with it in political activity continue to face ongoing attacks by government officials, cops, bosses and rightist goons," Clark said.

The party has fought against filing contributors' names since the anti-working-class "disclosure" laws were adopted in the 1970s. In 1974 the party won exemption after a hard-fought legal battle, and has won extension in five FEC hearings since.

These victories are the fruit of decades of the party's participation in the struggles of working people and its battle-tested ability to respond to attacks by the rulers and their political police.

"It is a victory not only for the SWP," Clark told the press after the 2013 decision, "but for the right of workers and our organizations to engage in political action free from government, employer and right-wing interference."

"Independent working-class political action — independent of the Democratic, Republican and other capitalist parties — is a pressing necessity in face of escalating attacks by the bosses and their government and political parties," he said. "They are trying to solve the crisis of their exploitative system by attacking our wages, our job conditions, our political rights and our very dignity as human beings. SWP election campaigns set an example for workers and our unions of what needs to be done."

Since 1919 the SWP and its forerunners have been part of the struggles of working people, farmers and the oppressed. It strives to build a communist political party capable of following the examples of Lenin's Bolshevik Party in Russia in 1917 and the July 26 Movement in Cuba in 1959, leading workers and farmers to take political power out of the hands of the capitalist rulers and form their own government.

That's why the SWP has been and remains a target for the propertied rul-

ers and other opponents of the working class.

The reports of ongoing harassment the SWP is asking workers to write up and send in build on the extensive evidence accumulated during the party's 16-year political and legal campaign against Washington's spying and disruption. In 1973, following revelations of government spying and harassment against participants in the fight to overturn Jim Crow segregation and to end U.S. imperialism's war against the people of Vietnam, the SWP sued the FBI and other government spy agencies for decades of attacks against the party.

Represented by renowned political rights attorney Leonard Boudin, the party forced the FBI to turn over more than 8 million documents recording the spies' activities, as well as on the FBI Cointelpro Program, which targeted the SWP and others for disruption. Records of wiretaps and at least 204 black-bag burglaries of party offices was forced out, as well as redacted copies of files from hundreds of government informers.

This massive record of government spying and attacks on the party not only helped win the ruling against the FBI, they also laid the basis for the party to win its exemption from FEC disclosure requirements.

Affidavits in 2013 documented how bosses fired Lisa Potash from two jobs when they found out she was the SWP's candidate for mayor in Atlanta in 2009. Frank Forrestal wrote up how he was

## '\$15 and a union' protests mobilize in over 270 cities

Continued from front page

*Daily News* Nov. 10. "Black Lives Matter and the 'Fight for \$15' are the most important civil rights movements of our time," Carr wrote. She spoke at the Harlem rally.

Thousands gathered in downtown Chicago. Hundreds of O'Hare airport workers delivered petitions demanding \$15 an hour to the mayor's office before joining the rally. "Prospect Airport Service doesn't respect me," baggage handler Radomir Katic told participants. "I get no health care and I've never gotten a raise."

Earlier in the day protesters marched from a South Side McDonald's to a nearby police station demanding the firing of police officer Dante Servin for the 2012 killing of 22-year-old Rekia Boyd.

"We work, we sweat. Put \$15 in our check!" chanted some 225 workers on the steps of Atlanta City Hall. A contingent from Birmingham and Selma, Alabama, joined them.

"Everything is rising — food, rent, gas — except for our pay," Kentucky Fried Chicken worker Derrell Odom, 37, said.

"These protests are our only hope, mobilizing workers, winning support," said Israel Montes, 56, who was recently fired by McDonald's. "The employers don't care. We need to care for each other."

**'We need a union at Walmart'**

More than 100 people rallied at Philadelphia City Hall. "Without question



Militant photos

Above, press conference at Socialist Workers campaign headquarters in Hazleton, Pa., after Sept. 11, 2004, fire-bombing. Inset, damage to hall. Key to SWP winning Federal Election Commission exemption from filing names of contributors was documenting such attacks and threats.

accosted while petitioning for party candidates in Omaha, Nebraska, by a thug who started calling friends to beat him up. The New York SWP headquarters received phone threats that party leaders would be "shot on sight," and Philadelphia cops told Osborne Hart, who was running for mayor, that they would get him put on the government's "no-fly" list, other declarations reported.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, the party's lawyers noted, the FBI and other federal, state and local cop agencies have stepped up spying and harassment in the name of the "fight against terrorism."

**FEC officials push back**

"Maybe some people don't like seeing a newspaper like the *Militant* in demonstrations outside their office," said Commissioner Steven Walther at

the FEC's 2009 hearing on the SWP, but today socialism is more "mainstream."

But, as the affidavits in 2013 showed, that doesn't mean harassment and attacks on the party have stopped.

In both 2009 and 2013 some FEC officials made efforts to limit or eliminate the SWP's exemption, but failed because, in the context of the deepening capitalist economic crisis, the fight waged by the party drew broad interest and support.

This marked the first successful pushback against growing attacks by the bosses and their political representatives. Since then the movement for \$15 and a union and against cop brutality and killings — struggles that have successfully forced concessions — have followed suit.

"Help the party prepare for the fight we expect next year," Clark said.

we need a union at Walmart," Marcus Heath-Jones, a maintenance worker, told the *Militant*.

In the suburb of North Wales, Services Employees International Union Local 32BJ members protested outside the headquarters of Teva Pharmaceutical Industries. The contract for some 1,400 janitors, who earn an average of \$12.35 an hour at Teva and other offices and manufacturing plants in the area, expires Dec. 15.

More than 150 protested at the Virginia state Capitol in Richmond. The action included members of the United Food and Commercial Workers fighting supermarket chain Kroger's attempt to close union-organized stores and open nonunion ones, as well as members of the Communications Workers of America fighting Verizon's contract concession demands. Events took place across the state.

The fight is spreading and forcing some concessions. In New York City fast-food workers' wages will rise to \$15 by 2018 in yearly increments beginning at the end of this year. In the rest of the state it will take until 2021. Incremental increases to \$15 an hour have been won in Seattle, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo spoke at the downtown rally and announced he would raise the minimum wage for all state employees to \$15 by mid-2021.

Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto also announced a graduated increase to \$15 for

city employees on the day of the actions.

The growing movement has broad appeal, given that bosses in response to pressures from the contracting capitalist economy are attacking jobs and wages all over the country.

The editors of the major New York bourgeois papers chose either to run nothing about the impressive actions here or limited their coverage to reporting on Cuomo's announcement.

Mike Galati in Richmond, Virginia; Alyson Kennedy in Chicago; Janice Lynn in Atlanta; and Janet Post in Philadelphia contributed to this article.

**Stop Verizon's corporate greed!**

**November 19 rallies**

**organized by**  
**Communications Workers of America**

**International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers**

Manhattan, Bronx, Staten Island

Fishkill, Oneonta, and Lake Grove, New York

Mansfield, Mass.

**For more info on protests in your area:**  
**standuptoverizon.com/nov19**



# ‘Lift the US blockade!’

Continued from front page

licly allocated \$20 million in the 2016 budget to undermine, subvert and try to divide us.”

“Cuba Speaks for Itself” is the theme of a two-week tour in the U.S. by Serrano and Leima Martínez, a representative of the institute’s North American division. Their visit, which includes events in New York, New Jersey, Washington, D.C., and the San Francisco Bay Area, is an opportunity for hundreds of workers, students and others to learn more about the Cuban Revolution and the fight to end Washington’s economic and political war to overturn it.

“The Cuban Revolution was not made in a laboratory. It was made by men and women involved in struggle,” Serrano said. “We are very much aware of things that need to be changed in Cuba; mistakes have been made. But we will decide. We are updating Cuban socialism for more socialism. We’re not restoring capitalism.”

At the New York meeting, chaired by Gail Walker, executive director of IFCO/Pastors for Peace, and Malcolm Sacks from the Venceremos Brigade, Serrano and Martínez thanked the many organizations and individuals who were part of the international campaign to win the freedom of the Cuban Five. The Five Cuban revolutionaries — Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando Guerrero and René González — were imprisoned by Washington in 1998 for their work protecting Cuba from violent attacks by enemies of the revolution based in the U.S. The Barack Obama administration freed the last three of the Five on Dec. 17, 2014, as part of a broader shift in Washington’s tactics aimed at defeating the revolution. Embassies were opened in Washington and Havana earlier this year.

As the U.S. and Cuban governments “discuss steps toward normalizing relations, Cuba’s principles aren’t on the table,” Serrano told the audiences she addressed. “We continue to stand in solidarity with all those fighting imperialism in today’s world. We defend Puerto Rico and its right to independence. We stand with Venezuela against all forms of U.S. aggression.”

## ‘Proud to be in Harlem’

The New York-New Jersey leg of the tour was organized collaboratively by IFCO, the Venceremos Brigade, the July 26 Coalition, the Center for Cuban Studies and others. The Nov. 4 citywide meeting was held at the Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz Memorial and Educational Center, the former Audubon

Ballroom where Malcolm X often spoke and where he was assassinated in 1965. Earlier that day, Serrano and Martínez spoke with some 50 young people and others at the former Hotel Theresa in Harlem, as well as to students at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

“We’re proud to be here,” Serrano said at the citywide meeting. “Fifty-five years ago it was the people of Harlem who welcomed our comrades to their community.”

After downtown hotels in 1960 refused to house the Cuban delegation to the United Nations led by Fidel Castro, Malcolm X invited them to stay at the Hotel Theresa. To laughter and applause, Serrano recalled the slogan, “With hotel or without hotel, you have to listen to Fidel.”

For decades the U.S. rulers arrogantly said, “As long as the Castros are in power we can’t have relations with Cuba,” she noted. “And here we are, in Harlem, with visas!” This was the first time Washington has granted a visa to the president of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples.

The fact that “the victories of the last year have been won with Raúl and Fidel at the helm, still guiding the struggle, should not be underestimated,” she said.

The event opened with performances from the Universal Zulu Nation and True School Hip Hop Music, and ended with the presentation of a painting by artist Zulu King Slone, who had worked on the canvas at the front of the room throughout the evening.

Responding to a question about the lies and misinformation that appear so regularly in the U.S. media, Serrano noted that the big-business press “says we’re afraid of the Internet, that we don’t want the social media to enter Cuba. That is a total lie. We’re extending it more and more. But in terms of accessibility we’re in a bad situation.”

She pointed out that Cuba is surrounded by Internet cables that it cannot use because of the U.S. embargo.

“Our priority is the social use of Internet,” she said, throughout the medical and educational systems. The government is investing in “expanding WiFi hot spots and access to the Internet in schools and communities. Our goal is by 2018 we will have the Internet in every classroom — and we are not assuming that the blockade will be lifted by 2018.”

In response to a question about Santería and African religious practices, Serrano said, “Cuba is a secular country; there’s no state religion. There is



Militant photos by Mike Shur

“We stand in solidarity with all those fighting imperialism in today’s world,” said Kenia Serrano, president of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples, at Nov. 4 public meeting in New York, above. Inset, from left, Cuban speakers Leima Martínez and Serrano.



complete freedom of religious practice. Sunni and Shia, Catholic and Protestant, Santería and Jewish — all live and worship side by side, without conflict.”

Serrano and Martínez spoke the next day to some 50 people at Essex County College in Newark, New Jersey, many of them nursing students. Martínez described Cuba’s Latin American School of Medicine, which offers scholarships to youth from around the world, on condition they return and practice medicine in working-class communities. She works with the North American students there. “The first day in the program you are interacting with patients,” she said. “You learn to treat them with respect.”

One participant asked what will be the impact of expanded U.S. investment in Cuba.

“People can’t just come to Cuba with a suitcase of dollars and invest in whatever they want,” Serrano said. “We decide the priorities. We decide if we need it or not.”

That evening the ICAP leaders attended a reception at the Cuban Art Space hosted by the Center for Cuban Studies. Discussion ranged from Cuba’s policies toward expanded tourism to efforts by Cuban artists to involve young workers in artistic and educational activity, opportunities made possible by the socialist revolution.

## Meeting in Washington, D.C.

Serrano and Martínez’s visit to Washington coincided with a two-day meeting of the National Network on Cuba, where representatives of more than 30 solidarity groups from across the country met to discuss work to end the U.S. travel ban and all other pieces of Washington’s economic war on the people of Cuba.

Over 200 people turned out Nov. 7 at the University of District of the Columbia David A. Clarke School of Law to hear Serrano and Martínez. The meeting was sponsored by the D.C. Metro Coalition in Solidarity with the Cuban Revolution and the NNOC.

Elementary school students from the Maryland International Day School opened the event with a performance that included music, dancing and the poetry of Cuban national hero José Martí.

Katherine Broderick, dean of the law school, welcomed the Cuban guests, saying she was proud theirs is the first law school in the U.S. to start an exchange program with the University of Havana law school. UDC Black Law Students

Association Vice President Shakira Hansley and Elizabeth Limones, president of the UDC Latino Law Students Association, also brought greetings.

Kamau Benjamin and Omari Musa from the local coalition co-chaired, along with Banbose Shango of the NNOC.

Musa read from a message of solidarity from Regina Stinson, a leader of Wives of Steel in western Pennsylvania, which organizes solidarity with 2,200 United Steelworkers members who have been locked out by Allegheny Technologies Inc. since Aug. 15.

“Education is key to getting the word out about Cuba and the situation in regards to the embargo,” Stinson said. “I look forward to learning more about this situation and being a voice in this fight as well!”

Gail Walker explained the fight being waged against an IRS investigation of IFCO and a decision that, unless reversed, would revoke IFCO’s tax-exempt status. IFCO is currently organizing its 27th annual caravan transporting aid to Cuba.

During the discussion period law student Alexander Vasquez asked, “What measures will the Cuban government take to prevent a return to capitalism and the kind of inequalities that exist here in this country?”

“The economic guidelines adopted by the Cuban people after extensive public debate include as one of the first provisions that we won’t allow the accumulation of capital in a few hands,” Serrano replied. “We say you can work hard and have more income, but you can’t exploit other people. And those who earn more will pay more taxes,” she added to applause.

## Cuban Revolution’s internationalism

Unstinting internationalism has been a hallmark of the Cuban Revolution from the beginning. “Many people know what Cuba did in Angola,” said Paul Pumphrey of the Friends of the Congo. “Cuban volunteers in Angola helped defeat repeated invasions by apartheid South Africa’s military forces between 1975 and 1991.

“Fewer know that long before that Cuba came to the defense of freedom fighters in the Congo after the murder of Patrice Lumumba,” he said. Lumumba was the leader of the independence struggle there in 1961.

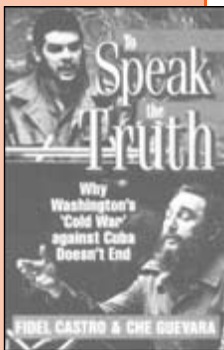
“Thank you for the work that Cuba

Continued on page 9

## For further reading

### To Speak the Truth

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by Vilma Espín, Acela de los Santos, Yolanda Ferrer \$20



### Cuba and the Coming American Revolution

by Jack Barnes \$10

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# 1943 miners' strikes set example for fight for Black rights

Fighting Racism in World War II, a collection of articles, pamphlets, letters and resolutions from the press of the Socialist Workers Party during the second imperialist world war, is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for November. "Lessons of Miners' Strikes," the selection below, is from the May 22, 1943, Militant. The United Mine Workers carried out a series of strikes that year, defying the War Labor Board and President Franklin Roosevelt. The miners won a raise from \$7 to \$8.50 per day, the first break in the wartime wage

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

freeze. With over half a million members, the UMW was one of the biggest unions in the country, and this was the largest single strike in U.S. history up to that time. Author Albert Parker urges Walter White, secretary of the NAACP, and A. Philip Randolph, president of Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, both leaders of the March on Washington movement, to follow the miners' example and refuse to subordinate the struggle for Black rights to Washington's imperialist war. Copyright © 1980 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



May 8, 1943, Militant reports on fight by miners refusing to subordinate their interests to rulers' war drive during World War II. Inset, 1942 rally in New York demanding equal rights for Blacks.

BY ALBERT PARKER

The delegates to the coming conferences of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and of the March on Washington movement can learn a good deal from the current mine struggle.

The government, the coal operators, the press, and the radio threw everything they had at the miners. They threatened them, they coaxed them, they appealed to their patriotism, they exerted every form of pressure they had at their disposal. But they did not shake the miners.

If the miners win, it will be because they asserted their independence of the government and followed a policy based on their own needs. If they had listened to all the false arguments of the administration and the press and the labor fakers and the Stalinist betrayers, if they had succumbed to the demands for "national unity" with themselves at the bottom and the coal operators on top, if they had let themselves be talked out of the use of their strongest weapons — then surely they would have gained nothing.

This is of decisive importance to every Negro fighting to achieve equal-

ity and to every organization working to abolish Jim Crow. For the enemies faced by the miners in their fight are substantially the same forces standing in the way of Negro advancement. In peacetime these forces are always exerting pressure against the labor movement and the Negro people; in wartime they exert a hundred times as much pressure, and intervene more openly in the affairs of labor and Negro organizations, hoping to dominate them and stifle all militant struggles.

It isn't that Roosevelt calls Walter White or A. Philip Randolph to the White House and tells them that they can't do this or that (although he did virtually that in the case of the proposed march on Washington that was scheduled to take place in July 1941). The administrative intervention into the affairs of Negro organizations is usually a lot more subtle than that. It exerts its pressure less directly, but just as effectively.

"We must have national unity in time of war," says the administration. And while it is saying it, Negroes are being segregated in the armed forces; the Fair Employment Practices Committee is deprived of whatever little effectiveness

it ever had; Negroes are being lynched and terrorized in the South, discriminated against in jobs and in housing.

What is this "national unity"? Well, if you abide by what is going on and don't do anything to change things, that's national unity. And if you denounce these things and speak with determination against them and appear to be serious about ending the second-class citizenship status of Negroes, then you are threatening national unity and you are accused of stimulating race antagonism and inciting race riots and helping the Axis and betraying your own brothers in the armed forces, and the capitalist press will call you all kinds of nasty names. (If the capitalist press forgets to call you a few names, the Stalinists will step in and supply them.)

As a result you may lose your job if you are a worker, and you may lose whatever "friends" you have in Washington if you are a leader. All of this exerts tremendous compulsion on the Negro leaders who don't want to lose influence with what they call the "humanitarian" administration in Washington. And so although Roosevelt doesn't tell these leaders what to do and even does not object to petitions and occasional demonstrations which help to blow off a little steam, there are certain things that will be frowned on and disliked in the White House, and, in nine cases out of ten, the labor and Negro leaders just don't do them.

The delegates to the NAACP and MOWM conferences will have to make up their minds. Either they will continue to permit their organizations and leaders to be subservient to the administration — or else they will assert their independence, as the miners did, and break the grip of Roosevelt's domination over their organizations and policies and activities. Either they will work out a program based on the needs of the Negro struggle and go ahead on the road to equality — or else they will permit their organizations to continue to function in such a way that Roosevelt and his southern Democratic supporters will be satisfied.

The lesson to be learned from the miners' struggle and from the state of the Negro organizations today is that the basic requirement for a successful struggle against discrimination and segregation in wartime is a policy independent of the administration's desires and unspoken dictates.

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# Turkish gov’t elections, attacks on Kurds

Continued from front page

media censorship. Because of the government’s assaults on the Kurds, many of the AKP’s new votes came at the expense of other Turkish nationalist parties.

Meanwhile, Moscow has moved fighter planes and troops into Syria and begun large-scale bombing runs, overwhelmingly targeting forces seeking to overthrow the regime of dictator Bashar al-Assad.

The Kurds — some 30 million people living in Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey — have been fighting against national oppression and for a homeland for more than a century against imperialist domination by Paris, London and Washington and local capitalists’ rule.

Preliminary results indicated the AKP got more than 49 percent of the vote, up from 41 percent in elections in June, securing 317 seats in the 550-seat parliament. The Kurdish-based People’s Democratic Party (HDP), which got over 10 percent of the vote in June, winning seats in parliament for the first time, did so again. In this election its vote totals dropped from 13 to 10.5 percent, making it the third largest party in the legislature.

“The HDP could not run an effective election because of repression from the AKP government,” Harun Ercan, international relations adviser with the HDP in Diyarbakir, Turkey, told the *Militant* by phone Nov. 9. “They bombed and made it unbearable for people in Kurdish cities.”

Turkish special operations forces “were present by polling stations, intimidating some into not voting,” Ercan said. In the week leading up to the elections, Turkish authorities seized two newspapers and two TV channels critical of Erdogan’s regime.

HDP is preparing to challenge election results in six cities — Adana, Mersin, Dersim, Antalya, Erzurum and Ardahan — where they lost by a narrow margin.

The results leave Erdogan short of the 330 seats needed to call a referendum to approve constitutional changes to strengthen presidential executive power.

Following AKP’s electoral victory, Turkey’s president vowed to step up military attacks against the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) “until all its members surrender or are eliminated.” He rejected returning to negotiations with the group, branded terrorist by both Ankara and Washington.

Turkish warplanes increased airstrikes targeting PKK camps in northern Iraq and Kurdish areas in southeastern Turkey, where clashes with the military killed at least 20 Nov. 5.

The PKK announced it is ending a unilateral cease-fire it had declared a month before the election, calling instead for intensifying the fight for local autonomy.

Ankara’s decades-long oppression and brutal assaults against Kurds led the PKK to launch a 30-year-long guerrilla war for Kurdish rights until a cease-fire was agreed to in 2013. But the PKK also has a record of Stalinist thuggery which has weakened the Kurdish struggle, opening the door to new attacks by Turkey’s rulers.

In July, reactionary Islamic State forces carried out a suicide bombing in Surac, Turkey, that killed 33

Kurdish youth who were meeting to plan efforts to help rebuild Kobani, successfully defended by Kurdish fighters from IS assault across the nearby border in Syria.

In response, the PKK assassinated two Turkish police in southeastern Ceylanpinar, saying they were involved in “collaboration with the Daesh gangs,” using an Arabic term for Islamic State.

Many Kurds and other opponents of the Erdogan regime believe that Ankara secretly aids IS against Kurdish fighters in Syria.

“Although Islamic State has been held responsible for this attack,” the HDP said after the killing of the youth, “Turkey’s AKP government, by resisting the taking of effective measures to prevent Islamic State and other reactionary forces, bears the real responsibility.”

On July 24 Turkish fighter jets conducted their first-ever attack on Islamic State in Syria. At the same time they began a much larger and sustained campaign bombing camps of the PKK in northern Iraq and attacks against Kurds across Turkey.

A few weeks before the election, bombs, allegedly placed by Islamic State, killed more than 100 people at an Ankara rally opposing government attacks on Kurds.

## Kurds’ gains in Syria alarm Ankara

The Turkish rulers are alarmed by gains made by the Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG) in Syria, which has been the most effective ground force beating back Islamic State, and also attracting Syrian Arab and other allies. With victories in Kobani and Tal Abyad and further advances in Hasakah province, Kurds now control two-thirds of the 560-mile-long border with Turkey. Erdogan has threatened attacks against the YPG, which has close ties with the PKK, if Washington provides military supplies to the YPG.

“As of now, we are not providing weapons or ammunition to the YPG,” said Col. Steve Warren, a spokesman for the U.S. commander based in Baghdad. “The ammunition that we’ve provided in our one airdrop executed, was for the Syrian-Arab coalition,” a new force Washington is trying to cobble together. However, the YPG comprises the leading fighters in the recently formed Syrian Democratic Forces that is organizing to press the fight against Islamic State in Raqqa, the group’s de facto capital, and in Hasakah province.

The armed conflict in Syria began when Assad attacked growing protests against his dictatorial rule in March 2011. Since then 250,000 have been killed and more than 11 million displaced. Syrian authorities, backed by Moscow, Tehran and Hezbollah, have used shrapnel-filled barrel bombs, starvation sieges and other brutalities against civilians and opposition forces.

Washington is seeking to strike a political deal with Moscow and Tehran in which all parties would focus their fire against Islamic State and Assad would remain in power during an unspecified political transition period.

# ‘Lift the blockade!’ Cuban leaders say

Continued from page 7

does in Africa, specifically your recent work around Ebola in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea,” said Sylvie Bello, of the immigrant advocacy organization Cameroon-American Council, to applause. Cuba sent the largest contingent of volunteer doctors and health care workers of any country to combat the epidemic.

A photographic display — “Cuba and Africa (1961-2015): Repaying Our Debt to Humanity” — prepared by Pathfinder Press was part of the public meetings in both Washington and New York.

The tour has given an indication of openings to-

day to win new forces to learn from and defend the Cuban Revolution. “I liked the part about how in Cuba having money doesn’t give you the right to exploit other people,” Isaish Beamon told the *Militant* after the Washington meeting. “The meeting broadened my politics.” Beamon is a fired Walmart worker and organizer for Making Change at Walmart.

Cynthia Murray, a founder of OUR Walmart, which fights for higher pay, better conditions and full-time hours at the giant retailer where she works, also attended. Before the meeting she gave Serrano a bright green “OUR Walmart” T-shirt and bracelet that said “RESPECT.”

Shaking Serrano’s hand after the meeting, James Nobles, a sanitation worker who drove to the meeting from Tobyhanna, Pennsylvania, told her, “I know Cuba will keep fighting, but I want you to know, we’ve got your back.”

*Arlene Rubinstein in Washington, D.C., contributed to this article.*

# Gov’t says ‘recovery’ as layoffs high, wages low

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Both Wall Street and Washington are crowing over government reports of new hiring, nearly “normal” official unemployment and a small uptick in wages, while workers in the U.S. continue to suffer from the twin ravages of a new contraction in manufacturing within ongoing grinding depression conditions. “U.S. Hiring Surges,” wrote the *Wall Street Journal* after the Labor Department released October employment data reporting nonfarm payrolls rose by a seasonally adjusted 271,000 jobs.

Average hourly wages of private-sector workers increased by nine cents, a 2.5 percent rise, the Labor Department said, up from the 2 percent average of the last six years.

The reality of life for working people, however, is in sharp contrast to the government’s doctored statistics. In 1994 then-President William Clinton simply erased millions of jobless workers by adjusting unemployment figures to discount “discouraged” workers having the hardest time finding a job.

“The collapse in oil prices has so far claimed more than 200,000 jobs worldwide,” reported *Forbes* Oct. 22. Some 5,000 coal miners have lost their jobs in the last four years in West Virginia and Kentucky. Kraft Heinz announced Nov. 4 it would close seven factories and lay off some 2,600 workers. The same day container shipping giant Maersk said it would cut 4,000 of its 23,000 land-based staff. New orders for U.S. factories fell for the second straight month in September.

Conditions are worse for workers who are Black, Latino, Asian and female. Women workers are paid less for equal work in all industries and at every level, according to a Nov. 5 report released by PayScale Inc. The unemployment rate for workers who are Black is almost double that of workers who are Caucasian. In Ohio and Illinois — central industrial states — it’s 3.3 times higher.

The labor force participation rate — the portion of the working-age population that is employed — remained at 62.4 percent, a 38-year low. “This disappearance of several million workers — as labor force dropouts they are not factored into the jobless rate — has meant continued labor market weakness,” wrote *New York Times* reporter Steven Greenhouse in an Oct. 31 article titled “The Mystery of the Vanishing Pay Raise.”

In the 2008 financial crash and sharp contraction of capitalist production and trade that ensued, a portion of the working class was pushed out of employment and hasn’t found jobs in the “recovery” that followed.

The capitalist crisis is tightening worldwide. From a slowdown in China to economic implosion in Brazil and other so-called emerging markets to steep declines in steel, coal, oil and other basic industries in the U.S.

“Amid the global economic turmoil and seesawing markets, millions of Americans have one overriding question: When will my pay increase arrive?” wrote Greenhouse. “The nation’s unemployment rate has fallen substantially since the end of the Great Recession ... but wages haven’t accelerated upward, as many had expected.”

Most bosses have stymied wage increases, cut jobs and pushed more work on the backs of fewer workers, gutting safety on the job.

Another part of the picture, Greenhouse said, is the increasing replacement of full-time jobs with “temps, subcontractors, part-timers and on-call workers.”

“Labor unions have lost considerable muscle,” he noted, but among lowest-paid workers something new is happening. “Notwithstanding the overall decline in worker leverage, labor efforts like the Fight for 15 and Our Walmart have succeeded in pushing employers to lift some wages,” Greenhouse wrote.

## Correction

The article “Student Protests Push Back Tuition Hikes in SAfrica” in the Nov. 16 *Militant* misspelled the name of one of the students interviewed. Her name is Inga Mbewana.

## ‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

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