

Strikers solid against Verizon union busting

Solidarity pickets held across U.S.



Marvin Jackson

Verizon strikers, right, shout at strikebreakers escorted by police at call center in Garden City, New York, May 5. Unionists are fighting bosses' plan to increase profits at workers' expense.

BY CANDACE WAGNER

GARDEN CITY, N.Y. — Some 200 strikers gathered at the Verizon call center here May 5 to protest managers and other strikebreakers who are crossing the picket lines of members of the Communications Workers of America and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. The expanded picket line was part of a national day of action to support 39,000 unionists on strike from Massachusetts to Virginia since April 13.

The unionists are fighting Verizon's attempts to close down or outsource call centers, increase health insurance payments, cap pensions after 30 years of service, increase the use of nonunion contractors and increase the distance workers can be sent on mandatory out-of-town work assignments for up to two months.

By 6:30 p.m. strikebreakers preparing to exit the facility were greeted by a loud chorus of chants and horns

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Demand end to nuclear weapons as Washington builds up arsenal

BY MAGGIE TROWE

This month Barack Obama will become the first sitting U.S. president to visit the Japanese city of Hiroshima since Washington unleashed the first atomic bomb there in 1945, and

doesn't plan to apologize. His visit comes as the U.S. government moves ahead with plans to strengthen its massive arsenal, highlighting that the possibility of a nuclear conflagration remains all too real. It is in the inter-

COMMENTARY

ests of working people in the U.S. to demand Washington unilaterally disarm this lethal stockpile.

Obama — who called for “a world without nuclear weapons” in Prague in April 2009, received the Nobel Peace Prize later that year and initiated four Nuclear Security Summits — is backing a 30-year program to spend up to \$1 trillion to “modernize” the U.S. nuclear arsenal and production facilities.

Speaking to the House Committee on Armed Forces in June 2015, Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Work and Admiral James Winnefeld, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of

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‘Workers in power would ensure miners jobs, safety’

Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, former coal miner and member of the United Mine Workers union, released the following statement May 11.

Socialist Workers Party campaign statement

Working people today face the smoldering reality of a deepening economic, political and moral crisis of the capitalist for-profit system. No one knows this more than U.S. coal miners. Tens of thousands of coal miners have been thrown out of work. In March 2016 there were 56,700 working miners, one-third the number working in April 1985.

Five major U.S. coal companies and

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Miners' anger at capitalist crisis marks W.Va primary

BY SETH GALINSKY

“We’re going to put a lot of coal miners and coal companies out of business,” Hillary Clinton said with a smile at a March 13 town hall meeting in West Virginia, referring to her promotion of “clean” energy, adding quickly “that we don’t want to forget those people.” The comment is still haunting her campaign.

Miners’ anger at Clinton’s dismissal of the crisis conditions they face, with some 400 of the state’s 500 mines shut down and 12,000 miners thrown out of work, erupted at a May 2 campaign roundtable in Williamson, West Virginia. “How could you say you are going to put a lot of coal miners out of jobs and then come in here and tell us how you’re going to be our friend?” asked Bo Copley, an

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Socialist Workers Party builds June Active Workers Conference



Militant/Lisa Potash

SWP vice-presidential candidate Osborne Hart, right, at Verizon solidarity rally in Atlanta. Party is campaigning across country, fighting for ballot status, winning new *Militant* readers.

BY MAGGIE TROWE

The three-day Socialist Workers Party-sponsored Active Workers Conference begins June 16 in Oberlin, Ohio, less than five weeks from now. Several hundred people from across the U.S. and around the world will hear reports on working-class struggles, the crisis of the dictatorship of capital, the continuing example of Cuba’s socialist revolution and prospects for building an internationalist, revolutionary proletarian party. They will attend classes, panel discussions, social events and a final summary meeting, as well as have time to meet other participants and share experiences.

“I’ve been taking part in activities

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Social disaster from Alberta wildfire product of capitalism

BY JOE YOUNG

EDMONTON, Alberta — A massive wild fire destroyed a major part of Fort McMurray, 270 miles north of here, and forced the emergency evacuation of the entire population of 88,000. Fire is a natural and regular occurrence in this region. But its devastating impact on tens of thousands of working people is a man-made disaster, the result of decisions by the

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—On the picket line, p. 5—

San Francisco college teachers win support in one-day strike

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Active Workers Conference

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with the Socialist Workers Party — campaigning door to door in New Jersey, joining in the protest of 34 Women for Oscar López, the Puerto Rican independence fighter, and marching across the Brooklyn Bridge with Verizon strikers,” Yasemin Aydinoglu, a nurse from Brooklyn, New York, said May 9. “I’ve gotten curious about how it fits together, and going to the conference will give me a broader perspective.”

“Reading newspapers is different for me now,” she said. “I used to assume articles in papers like the *New York Times* gave an accurate picture. But after I went to a rally of workers for \$15 an hour and a union at Foley Square, I read the *Times* article the next day that reported that Governor Cuomo promised a \$15 minimum wage, never mentioning the workers’ protests.”

The conference will culminate the SWP’s spring party-building activities. As we enter the last week of the six-week drive to win subscribers and financial supporters for the *Militant*, 1,233 subscriptions have come in toward the 1,550 international quota and \$66,646 toward the \$110,000 goal for the Militant Fighting Fund.

In Atlanta Keith Beaver said he

wanted to help win more readers to the *Militant*. He mailed in three subscriptions from relatives and friends. Then he invited party members to go door to door with him in his neighborhood in Decatur May 10. In two hours they sold six subscriptions and a copy of *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?* And got a \$5 contribution to the Militant Fighting Fund.

“We talked with members of the International Longshoremen’s Association outside their union halls in Miami and Ft. Lauderdale last week,” SWP Miami organizer Anthony Dutrow told the *Militant*. “Two dockworkers who are longtime readers renewed their subscriptions, and two others decided to try the introductory offer. We have seven subscriptions to go to make our quota.”

Party supporters in some areas are organizing to surpass their *Militant* fund quotas to help make the international drive a success. “We’ll go over our \$3,500 goal,” SWP Twin Cities organizer David Rosenfeld reports.

Socialist Workers Party members and supporters are campaigning for Alyson Kennedy and Osborne Hart, the SWP candidates for U.S. president and vice president, as well as statewide candidates. Efforts to put the presidential ticket on the ballot have succeeded in Colorado and are underway in Louisiana, New Jersey, Tennessee, Washington state and Minnesota (see ad on page 7).

SWP supporters have been campaigning door to door in more than two dozen cities and towns across New Jersey — from Wanaque in the northwest to Lyndhurst, Nutley and Newark to Paulsboro in the south, joining Verizon strikers’ picket lines wherever they see them. Nearly 1,200 people have signed to put the party on the ballot and the



Militant/Janice Lynn

Rachele Fruit, right, talks with Olga Ugalde and her daughter at their home in Douglasville, Georgia, May 5. SWP is expanding readership of *Militant* and winning contributions.

party plans to wrap up the drive, hold a statewide press conference and file the nominating petitions at the state capitol in Trenton later this month.

Hart visits farmers in Georgia

SWP vice-presidential candidate Osborne Hart, accompanied by Sam Manuel, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate in Georgia, and Susan LaMont from Atlanta, traveled to southern Georgia and the Florida panhandle May 5-7 to talk with farmers and workers, learn more about their struggles and discuss coming to the party conference.

Willie Head, a farmer in Pavo, Georgia, who had toured Cuba farms with Manuel in 2015, showed them around his farm.

“I saw again how Cuba farmers, with the help of the Revolution, are able to keep their farm equipment going and overcome all kinds of obstacles so they can help feed the Cuban people,” Head said. “People around here are starved for political awareness. I don’t see how we can continue to exist if we aren’t political.”

Head showed them his new irrigation system, which he installed himself after waging a fight to get a grant from the government.

Hart told Head he agreed that following the revolutionary road Cuban toilers have taken is the only way workers and working farmers can survive.

To join the Socialist Workers Party in campaigning for socialism or find out more about the conference, contact the nearest party branch listed on page 8.

— CALENDAR —

GREECE

Athens
Panel Presentation of the New Greek Translation of *Teamster Rebellion* by Farrell Dobbs. Sun., May 29, 7 p.m. Diethnes Vima, Solonos 142, 3rd Fl., Kanningos Sq. Sponsored by Diethnes Vima publishing house. Tel.: (210) 88-33-002.

Spring subscription drive			
April 2 - May 17 (week 5)			
Country	Quota	Sold	%
UNITED STATES			
Lincoln*	17	19	112%
Seattle	100	92	92%
Oakland	110	94	85%
Miami	50	42	84%
Atlanta	100	80	80%
New York	220	175	80%
Philadelphia	90	71	79%
Chicago	125	95	76%
Twin Cities	80	56	70%
Washington	115	73	63%
Los Angeles	200	117	59%
Total U.S.	1207	914	76%
UNITED KINGDOM			
Manchester	60	64	107%
London	75	66	88%
Total U.K.	135	130	96%
CANADA			
Calgary	45	39	87%
Montreal	55	45	82%
Total Canada	100	84	84%
AUSTRALIA	60	47	78%
NEW ZEALAND	50	41	82%
PRISONERS	15	17	113%
Total	1567	1233	80%
Should be	1550	1292	83%
*Raised goal			

SPECIAL BOOK OFFERS

FOR MILITANT SUBSCRIBERS

THE CUBAN FIVE talk about their lives within the US working class

NEW

"It's the poor who face the savagery of the US 'justice' system"

The Cuban Five Talk About Their Lives Within the US Working Class

"It's the poor who face the savagery of the US 'justice' system"

GERARDO HERNÁNDEZ, RAMÓN LABANINO, ANTONIO GUERRERO, RENÉ GONZÁLEZ, FERNANDO GONZÁLEZ

Five Cuban revolutionaries, framed up by the U.S. government, spent up to 16 years as part of the U.S. working class behind bars. In this 2015 interview they talk about U.S. capitalist society and its "justice" system, and about the future of the Cuban Revolution. **\$10** (regular \$15) Also in Spanish

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

JACK BARNES

\$15 (regular \$20) Also in French, Spanish

Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?

MARY-ALICE WATERS

\$4 (regular \$7) Also in French, Spanish

Teamster Politics

FARRELL DOBBS

\$14 (regular \$19) Also in Spanish

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution

JACK BARNES

\$7 (regular \$10) Also in French, Spanish

Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution

VILMA ESPÍN, ASELA DE LOS SANTOS, YOLANDA FERRER

\$15 (regular \$20) Also in Spanish

50 Years of Covert Operations in the US

Washington's Political Police and the American Working Class

LARRY SEIGLE, STEVE CLARK, FARRELL DOBBS

\$8 (regular \$12) Also in Spanish

IF YOU SUBSCRIBE OR RENEW, THESE SPECIAL OFFERS ARE FOR YOU.

CONTACT THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY OR COMMUNIST LEAGUE BRANCHES LISTED ON PAGE 8.

Militant Fighting Fund			
April 2- May 17 (week 5)			
Country	Quota	Paid	%
UNITED STATES			
Lincoln*	\$240	\$241	100%
Oakland	\$14,500	\$9,875	68%
Seattle	\$7,500	\$5,095	68%
Chicago	\$11,500	\$6,736	59%
Atlanta	\$10,000	\$5,825	58%
Twin Cities	\$3,500	\$1,955	56%
Miami	\$3,000	\$1,650	55%
Philadelphia	\$3,200	\$1,620	51%
New York	\$21,000	\$10,335	49%
Los Angeles	\$8,600	\$3,895	45%
Washington	\$7,700	\$3,259	42%
U.S. Total	\$90,740	\$50,486	56%
CANADA			
Montreal	\$4,000	\$4,500	113%
Calgary	\$3,200	\$3,109	97%
Canada Total	\$7,200	\$7,609	106%
NEW ZEALAND			
	\$4,000	\$3,402	85%
UNITED KINGDOM			
London	\$2,000	\$2,120	106%
Manchester	\$700	\$329	47%
U.K. Total	\$2,700	\$2,449	91%
AUSTRALIA	\$1,100	\$1,110	101%
FRANCE	\$450	\$390	87%
Other	\$1,200	\$1,200	
Total	\$107,390	\$66,646	61%
Should be	\$110,000	\$91,667	83%
*Raised goal			

Strikers solid against Verizon

Continued from front page

from the strikers. Motorists driving by increased the volume by honking in support.

At 7 p.m. police on horseback pushed back the strikers to clear the driveway of the building. As scabs walked past, strikers on both sides chanted, “Who are we? CWA!”

After the hundreds of replacement workers exited to the parking lot, this worker correspondent spoke with three call center workers who asked that their names not be used because of management harassment. They said Verizon forces them to work overtime and hasn’t hired for years. They said some unionists have crossed the picket line, but the company sends them to different locations to decrease the likelihood they will be recognized by pickets.

More than 1,000 strikers and supporters rallied at the Verizon Corporate Office in Lower Manhattan the same day, including members of the Hotel Trades Council, janitors and building workers in SEIU 32BJ, the New York State Nurses Association, subway and bus workers in Transport Workers Union Local 100, postal workers and the United Food and Commercial Workers. They marched through the financial district, getting cheers from workers on construction sites and office workers on their lunch breaks or waving from windows above.

‘Stronger than in 2011’

“I think we’re in for a long haul,” Michele Fuchs, a customer representative, told the *Militant* at that rally. “But we’re stronger than in the 2011 strike. Other workers are more supportive this time because of how bad things are for so many people.”

“Verizon has only hired a small percentage of nonunion contractors to do technician jobs, but they want to increase that,” said Carmine Provenzano, a central office technician at the building where the rally took place.

Verizon corporate spokesperson Ray McConville told the *Militant* May 10 that the company doesn’t plan to increase its number of contractors. He de-

clined to say how many were employed before the strike. The number of union workers covered under the contract has fallen by 6,000 just since the 2011 strike.

Some 40 unionists rallied near the Verizon Wireless store in Roseville, Minnesota, May 5, including members of the CWA; the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; postal workers, nurses, students and a few Walmart workers.

In Atlanta, an action included members of the CWA and IBEW, painters and Teamsters unions and fast-food workers active in the fight for \$15 an hour.

Unsafe working conditions

On the picket line in Moorestown, New Jersey, April 27, strikers described why they were on strike.

“They send us out after dark, we can be out until midnight,” Virgil Chooch, an outdoor technician for 10 years, told the *Militant*. “That can be very dangerous.” They are often sent solo and rarely get two consecutive days off, he said, so “our bodies never recover.”

IBEW Local 827 shop steward Donald Bean told of a co-worker who “lost half his hand in an electrical accident” on the job. “Verizon is trying to blame him for the accident. They always, always try to blame us.”

The Lenola Road truck garage where Bean works now has 41 workers. Verizon hasn’t hired anyone in 10 years, he



Militant/Jacquie Henderson

Some 39,000 Verizon workers on strike from Massachusetts to Virginia have been getting solidarity from unionists in other regions. Above, May 5 support action in Roseville, Minnesota.

said, and now forces the outdoor line techs to do payroll, take orders and other office work.

Verizon cut off health care benefits for strikers May 1. Strikers have begun receiving weekly payments from a \$440 million union strike fund.

Verizon striker Barb Wangler spoke to members of IBEW Local 236 in Albany, New York, May 3, Ray Parsons, a member of that local, told the *Militant*. Local 236 voted to donate \$5,000 to the IBEW Unity Fund, and it was reported that three other IBEW locals in upstate New York had contributed an additional

\$8,000. Wangler invited the unionists to join picket lines in the area, and some did the next day.

The CWA and IBEW have set up a Verizon Striking Families Solidarity Fund. Contributions may be sent to Verizon Striking Families Solidarity Fund, c/o CWA, 501 3rd Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20001 or go online to standup-to-verizon.com.

Susan LaMont in Atlanta, Janet Post in Philadelphia, Jacquie Henderson in Minneapolis and Maggie Trowe in New York contributed to this article.

Rail workers respond to frame-up in Quebec disaster

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL — Efforts of rail workers and others are exposing more than ever how the rail bosses’ cost-cutting, profit-raising policies, approved by Ottawa, were to blame for the July 2013 explosion of an oil train in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec. This opens more opportunities to push back against the government frame-up of two rail workers for the disaster, which killed 47 people and destroyed the downtown core.

One policy at the now defunct Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway — ordering workers not to use automatic air brakes when parking a train — was revealed by reporter Grant Robertson in the *Globe and Mail* March 7.

The Railway Association of Canada, an organization of rail bosses, immediately contested Robertson’s article. In an open letter to the *Globe*, RAC President Michael Bourque stated that automatic air brakes are not reliable and should never be used as a back-up system to secure a train. He repeated the claim, pushed by the rail bosses and government from the beginning, that the disaster was the fault of the engineer for not setting enough hand brakes.

The engineer, Thomas Harding, was the only crew member for that train because of a special dispensation from the federal government to the MMA bosses. He had to secure the train by himself at the end of a 12-hour shift.

Harding and train controller Richard Labrie, both members of United Steelworkers Local 1976, have been framed up by Ottawa on 47 counts of criminal negligence which could bring life in prison if convicted. Low-level former MMA official Jean Demaitre faces the same charges. June 7 is the date of their next court hearing in Lac-Mégantic.

The *Globe* received numerous letters from railroad workers who strongly disagreed with Bourque.

Ed Michael, an engineer who ran freight trains for 42 years before retiring in 2012, wrote that parking a train without using the automatic air brake as a backup is “unequivocally negligent.”

Employees of the eight largest North American railways signed a letter by locomotive engineer Ron Kaminkow, general secretary of Rail Workers United, Robertson reported. The policy the Railway Association was defending “is foolhardy and can only court disasters like the one at Lac-Mégantic,” they wrote.

Robertson wrote April 28 that after being told of these criticisms, Bourque withdrew his letter to the *Globe*.

‘Gov’t not responsible for disaster’

The *Globe* also reported May 2 that Ottawa shielded itself from lawsuits from victims and creditors in relation to the Lac-Mégantic disaster by quietly paying \$75 million in “out-of-court settlements.” Transport Minister Marc Garneau reiterated that government officials “don’t acknowledge that we had any responsibility” for the disaster.

This callous declaration followed an April 26 visit by Garneau to Lac-Mégantic where on behalf of the Liberal government he rejected a number of demands put forward by the Citizens’ and Groups Coalition for Rail Safety, disappointing a packed audience at a town hall meeting in the Sports Centre.

A March 14 letter from the Coalition to Garneau had called for the establishment of an “independent investigation” into the causes of the disaster. “Who,” the letter asked, “was the individual in Transport Canada who approved the MMA request for a one-person train crew in order to save money on one salary and why was this person not charged with criminal negligence?”

On April 28 Garneau stated that for

reasons of national security, rail companies would not be required to divulge information on dangerous cargo 24 hours before they enter a community, a demand raised by the Canadian Federation of Municipalities.

Labor support against frame-up

The defense of Harding and Labrie is gaining support in the labor movement.

Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Local Division 482 in Washington, D.C., adopted a resolution of solidarity at its April 14 meeting. “All railroad workers — and indeed all workers in North America — have a stake in the fight to defeat the efforts of the railroad carriers and the Canadian government to frame up” Harding and Labrie, wrote Division 482 President Peter Sullivan in a letter to members of USW Local 1976 in Quebec.

Harding and Labrie, he continued, “are being scapegoated for the negligent and dangerous practices of the MMA railway and the government’s failure to properly regulate the safety of the railroad... We demand that all charges against them be dropped and we urge all railroad workers and concerned citizens to support the defense efforts. An injury to one is an injury to all!”

Send solidarity messages for the Harding and Labrie defense to their union, USW 1976 / Section locale 1976, 2360 De Lasalle, Suite 202, Montreal, QC H1V 2L1. Email: info@1976usw.ca. Send copies to: Thomas Walsh, 165 Rue Wellington N. Suite 310, Sherbrooke, QC Canada J1H 5B9. Email: thomaspwalsh@hotmail.com. Send contributions in Canada to Syndicat des Métallistes, 565, boulevard Crémazie Est, bureau 5100, Montreal, QC H2M 2V8. In the U.S. send checks to Tom Harding Defense Fund, First Niagara Bank, 25 McClellan Drive, Nassau, NY 12123.

—**MILITANT
LABOR
FORUMS**—

NEW YORK
New York
The Crisis of Capitalism and Its Two-Party System and the Fight for Independent Working-Class Political Action. Fri., May 20, Dinner, 6:45 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 227 W 29th St., 6th Fl. Tel.: (646) 964-4793.

CANADA
Calgary
Fort McMurray Wildfire Devastation: Social Disaster Rooted in Capitalism. Speaker: Katy LeRougetel, Communist League. Fri., May 20, 7:30 p.m. *Dragon City Mall, 328 Centre St. SE, Unit 246. Tel.: (403) 457-9044.*

Montreal
Fort McMurray Wildfire Devastation: Social Disaster Rooted in Capitalism. Speaker: Annette Kouri, Communist League. Fri., May 20, 7:30 p.m. *7107 St. Denis, Suite 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.*

UNITED KINGDOM
Manchester
The Rising Class Struggle in China. Speaker: Representative of the Communist League. Sat., May 21, 6:30 p.m. Donation: £2.50. *Room 301, 26-28 Hilton House, Hilton St. Tel.: (161) 478-2496.*

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

MAGGIE TROWE, EDITOR

Help the *Militant* cover labor struggles around the world!

This column gives a voice to those engaged in battle and building solidarity today — including striking Verizon workers, Steelworkers opposing concessions, construction workers demanding safe conditions and workers fighting for \$15 and a union. 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

San Francisco college teachers win support in one-day strike

SAN FRANCISCO — Members of the American Federation of Teachers Local 2121 at City College of San Francisco carried out a one-day strike April 27 demanding higher wages. While the cost of living has skyrocketed here, teachers' pay is currently 3.5 percent below 2007 levels, Local President Tim Killikelly told CBS News.

Since 2012 the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges has called into question the community college's compliance with educational standards. The school administration was replaced with a

"special trustee with extraordinary powers" in 2013, and the commission announced it would take away the college's accreditation, effectively closing it. A judge blocked that move, but the crisis has taken a major toll.

"The Accrediting Commission told the administration they shouldn't give faculty any raise above COLA [cost of living]. It should not be influencing negotiations," Wendy Kaufmyn, an engineering instructor on the union negotiating team, told the *Militant* on the picket line. Other unions helped strengthen the picket lines, including the Teamsters, United Food and Commercial Workers, the Service Employ-



Militant/Eric Simpson

Rally in downtown San Francisco April 27 supporting one-day strike by American Federation of Teachers members at City College of San Francisco against cuts and for pay increase.

ees International Union and the California Nurses Association.

School administrators plan to cut the number of classes by 26 percent over the next six years. "We want to keep City College open, accessible and af-

fordable for all," Kaufmyn said.

The college chancellor called off classes and locked facilities the day of the strike. Picket signs were hung across the steps leading up to the main building.

"I'm out here for the teachers, as a student and as an immigrant," said Esther Wu, 21, at a midday rally downtown. "I started English classes here when I came to the U.S. two years ago. That's very important for newcomers. But the administration wants to cut those classes." The English as a Second Language faculty put out a flyer in Chinese, Arabic, Russian and Vietnamese explaining the issues in the strike.

Zhenye Pan, who works at the San Francisco Soup Company with Wu, was on the picket line. He is a member of the college Associated Students Council, which helped organize to bring students to the picket lines. Wu is part of the fight for \$15 an hour. "If they increase wages, they need to keep the hours the same," Pan told the *Militant*. "They've cut me down to two days a week from three" since the San Francisco minimum wage rose to \$12.25 a year ago.

Enrollment has declined since the "accreditation crisis" raised doubts about the college's future, and classes have been cut. "The crisis has scared students away," Kaufmyn said.

— Eric Simpson

Court ruling on prison censorship undercuts rights

BY LEA SHERMAN

The Oct. 11, 2010, issue of *Newsweek* was never delivered to Joseph Murchison, a long-time subscriber. It didn't get lost in the mail. It wasn't misaddressed.

Officials at Missouri's South Central Correctional Center censored that issue on the grounds that it "promotes violence, disorder, or the violation of state or federal law including inflammatory material." They cited an article titled "Hiding Behind the Web," which described attacks by drug cartels against the Mexican government and military, and the accompanying photos.

Murchison, representing himself, sued in federal district court, saying this was a violation of his First Amendment rights. During this time his cell was searched and some of his belongings, including legal materials, were confiscated.

Murchison was placed in administrative segregation. To better prepare for the court hearing, he requested a postponement, which was denied.

On April 1, 2013, the district court ruled that censoring the *Newsweek* issue did not violate Murchison's First Amendment rights. Murchison appealed. A three-judge panel of the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed the lower court's decision on March 11, 2015, stating that "courts must be deferential to the prison officials' views of what may be inflammatory."

Although the *Newsweek* article did

not advocate violence or the breaking of any laws, the court said prison officials could arbitrarily decide to censor materials they judge "reinforces socially irresponsible behavior inside prisons."

When Murchison pointed out there were other materials with similar content in the prison library, the appeals court said this shows that he is able to exercise his First Amendment rights, since there is no blanket ban on the magazine and "Murchison has alternative means to exercise his rights."

Emily Scheer, public relations director for *Newsweek*, told the *Militant* the magazine had no comment on the case.

"The court decision upholding the censorship of *Newsweek* continues a shameful tradition of courts abdicating their role to protect the constitutional rights of all citizens, even prisoners and publishers, and continues the infantilization of prisoners," Paul Wright, editor of *Prison Legal News*, told the *Militant*.

Prison Legal News is a monthly journal that covers matters related to prison-

ers' rights and conditions. It reported on Murchison's case in its April 2016 issue.

"Always take censorship seriously, appeal if you can," Alex Friedmann, the paper's managing editor, said in a phone interview. "If you don't challenge, no one in prison will get their publications." More than two-thirds of *Prison Legal News'* 9,000 subscribers are behind bars, and the publication has waged numerous challenges to efforts by prison officials to censor it, he said.

In recent years the *Militant* has successfully pushed back attempts by both state and federal prison authorities to block subscribers from receiving issues. "We defend workers' rights, in and out of prison, against efforts by the rulers' politicians, courts and jailers to chip away at constitutional protections won in struggle," said *Militant* editor John Studer, condemning the court's ruling. "This is an attack on the right of prisoners to read what they want, to discuss politics and to resist prison abuses."

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



May 24, 1991

BRAMPTON, Ontario — Two hundred members of Local 252 of the Canadian Auto Workers union occupied the Caterpillar of Canada plant here for six days. The action followed the company's decision to close the plant July 12 and move the production lines to its U.S. plant in Raleigh, North Carolina, by the end of the year. The occupation ended April 30 after Caterpillar officials agreed to hold discussions with union representatives.

"Originally 40 of us sat in after working our shift," Ron Ottaway, a stores controller who has worked at Caterpillar for 12 years, said. "The local set up a picket line near the door to ask workers coming if they would support us... We asked everyone to join us and we got a 100 percent response."



May 23, 1966

Premier Ky's blitzkrieg attack on Danang May 15 ends any pretense that the U.S. puppet will allow the south Vietnamese to elect a Buddhist-dominated government in the proposed elections — if these elections are to be held at all. Danang is the largest city in the overwhelmingly Buddhist northern region of south Vietnam.

It was there that the civilian movement was launched which almost toppled the Ky regime last month.

What worried Washington about these elections, however, was not so much the fact that they would bring in a new government, as the strong probability that any genuinely representative government would seek an end to the war through negotiations with the National Liberation Front.



May 24, 1941

Roosevelt and Churchill suffered a serious diplomatic reverse when the Vichy government [of France] moved towards closer "collaboration" with Hitler. The real extent of the collaboration has not yet been revealed. It can be assumed, however, that Hitler's pressure has succeeded in completely tying Vichy to his "new order."

An immediate result of the agreement was the granting of permission for Nazi planes to land in Syria on the way to help the Iraq government fighting against British armies. The British did not hesitate to bomb the Syrian airfields and the probability of a real struggle between French and British forces is becoming ever more serious.

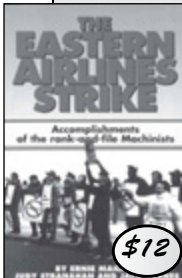
The Eastern Airlines Strike

Accomplishments of the Rank-and-File Machinists

By Ernie Mailhot, Jack Barnes, Judy Stranahan

The story of the 686-day strike in which a rank-and-file resistance by Machinists prevented Eastern's union-busting onslaught from becoming the road to a profitable nonunion airline.

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The stakes in UK debate on Jew-hatred in Labour Party

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON — A rise of Jew-hatred as the capitalist crisis deepens, combined with years of the left’s repetition of anti-Semitic slander — often under the guise of supporting the Palestinian struggle — is fueling turmoil in the British Labour Party.

Ken Livingstone — a member of the party’s executive and former London mayor — was suspended from Labour April 28 for “bringing the party into disrepute” through anti-Semitic remarks. Also suspended is Labour MP Naz Shah. Some 50 Labour members have

COMMENTARY

been disciplined, according to press reports.

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn declared that his party opposes “tolerating anti-Semitism in any form.” He has set up an investigation, but claims there is no crisis. Len McCluskey, leader of the Unite trade union, agreed, attacking what he called a “cynical attempt to manipulate anti-Semitism for political aims.” Left-wing papers, including *Morning Star*, *Socialist Worker* and *Socialist*, have joined the denial chorus.

“Ever since Jeremy Corbyn got elected,” Livingstone said April 28, “the media whip up all these issues, which are side-issues.”

Corbyn’s political opponents, both inside the Labour Party and in other bourgeois parties, are taking this opportunity to go after him. And Jew-hatred within the ruling class in Britain is not confined to the Labour Party.

But anti-Semitism is no “side issue.” And Labour’s turmoil is not the product of a smear campaign, but of its toleration *over years* of anti-Semitic slanders and the promotion of open Jew-haters, along with demonization of Israel and campaigns for Israel’s destruction.

Shah shared a Facebook posting in 2014 that read, “Solution for Israel-Palestine Conflict — Relocate Israel into United States.” The posting stated the “transportation cost” would be less than three years’ worth of Washington’s support for Israeli defense spending.

Shah was a victim of a “well-orchestrated campaign by the Israel lobby,” Livingstone claimed. While saying the Facebook post was “over the top,” he added that “a real anti-Semite doesn’t just hate the Jews in Israel, they hate their Jewish neighbors” in London.

‘Jewish money’ slander

Last October, Labour MP Gerald Kaufman said that “Jewish money, Jewish donations” were responsible for the UK government’s Israel policy. And prominent left Labour MP Tam Dalyell claimed in 2003 that the UK’s leading role in the Iraq war was due to the influence of a “Jewish cabal” over the government.

The association of Jews and money and alleged Jewish conspiracies are the stock-in-trade slander of anti-Semites.

The anti-Israel Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign reinforces that lie today — regardless of the intentions of those who participate in it — through its protests targeting stores whose own-

ers are Jewish, allegedly for their support of Israel. To cover their anti-Semitism they often say “Zionist” and “Zio” when what they really mean is “Jew.”

Labour Party leaders like Corbyn have often embraced leaders of Hamas, who claim to speak in the name of the Palestinian people. The Hamas government of Gaza calls for the destruction of Israel, a stance echoed by much of the left.

“Anyone who has a knife, a club, a weapon, or a car, yet does not use it to run over a Jew or a settler, and does not use it to kill dozens of Zionists, does not belong to Palestine,” declared Hamas spokesperson Fawzi Barhoum in August 2014.

Anti-Semitism under the pretext of support to the Palestinian struggle undermines the Palestinian fight for national rights, including the fight for a viable and contiguous Palestine.

‘Anti-Zionist’: code for anti-Jew

Livingstone says he is not anti-Semitic but “anti-Zionist.” He told the BBC anti-Zionism is not anti-Semitic because Hitler “was supporting Zionism ... before he went mad and ended up killing 6 million Jews.”

The Holocaust was not the result of Hitler going mad, but of calculated moves to scapegoat the Jews for the crisis of capitalism and to destroy the workers movement in Germany.

Equating “Zionists” with Nazis has been a feature of Livingstone’s politics. When mayor of London he told a Jewish reporter that he was acting like a “concentration camp guard.” When he was

Ban on Crimea Tatar council is ‘declaration of war’

BY ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

On April 26, the Supreme Court of Crimea banned the Mejlis, the elected council of the Crimean Tatar people, following a similar action by the Russian Justice Ministry the previous week. It affects every aspect of the Mejlis functioning: holding meetings and protests, publishing its views in the press and using bank accounts.

The move is the most serious in an escalating offensive to intimidate and silence the Tatars’ opposition to Moscow’s occupation of Crimea and their fight for political rights. It is “a declaration of war against the Crimean Tatars,” said Mustafa Dzhemilev, a historic leader of the fight for national rights and former head of the Mejlis.

The Tatars, a Turkic people who were among Crimea’s earliest inhabitants, today comprise some 12 percent of the peninsula’s population. May 18 will be the 72nd anniversary of the deportation of the entire Crimean Tatar population on orders of then Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin, who slandered them en masse as agents of Adolf Hitler during World War II. Almost half of the population of 200,000 died in the forced journey to Uzbekistan and other parts of the Soviet Union in 1944. Tatars began to return to Crimea in large numbers in the 1990s.

Tatars overwhelmingly supported a united, sovereign Ukraine and opposed the March 2014 military takeover of Crimea by thousands of Russian troops

Teamsters expand strikes against US Foods



Protecting Sysco & US Foods Workers Facebook

Teamsters struck the US Foods warehouse in Corona, California, above, on May 2, accusing the second-largest U.S. institutional food provider of violating their labor rights. They extended their picket lines to 10 other US Foods locations in southern California and Phoenix, Arizona, which were honored by fellow Teamsters. More than 800 workers are not working because of the dispute. Nearly 200 Teamsters also struck US Foods in Severn, Maryland, April 27, where the company plans to close its facility in June. They’ve sent pickets to shut down the company in Cleveland and Buffalo, New York.

— MAGGIE TROWE

leader of the Greater London Council in 1981 and editor of *Labour Herald*, the publication carried a cartoon depicting Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin as a Nazi.

Jew hatred is a product of capitalism in decay. Its ultimate purpose is to divert workers from a united militant struggle by promoting the poisonous lie that the problem is not capitalism, but evil Jewish capitalists. And it goes hand in hand with fascism,

which proclaims that the solution is not internationalism and workers taking power and replacing the dictatorship of capital through revolutionary struggle, but “national socialism,” the polar opposite of the course fought for by communists since the time of Marx and Engels.

As the worldwide capitalist crisis deepens, Jew-hatred will continue to erupt. Class-conscious workers must oppose it everywhere it rears its head.

after the ouster of pro-Moscow Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich by popular protests. Under agreements dating back to the days of the Soviet Union, Moscow already had some 26,000 soldiers based in Crimea. A referendum for “independence” at gunpoint was used to justify the annexation of the peninsula by Moscow.

The big majority of Crimean Tatars refused to participate in the referendum. Moscow responded by barring Dzhemilev from his homeland. Met by 5,000 Tartars who came to greet him, Dzhemilev attempted to enter Crimea in May 2014 and was blocked by riot police. Two years later, no one has seen the document excluding him from Crimea, and the case against him remains a state secret.

The latest criminalization of the Mejlis is based on the Russian Law On Countering Extremist Activity. Natalya Poklonskaya, the Crimean prosecutor appointed by Russia, argued before the court that the Mejlis is supported by international terrorist organizations and aims to destroy Russia’s territorial integrity.

Last October Ruslan Balbek, deputy prime minister of Crimea, claimed that Dzhemilev was recruiting fighters for Islamic State in order to “later use their military experience for subversive activities in Crimea.” Dzhemilev, who has backed nonviolent resistance to Moscow for decades, said the slander “could

not be further from the truth.”

The banning comes on top of police sieges of Crimean Tartar neighborhoods and raids on mosques, schools and homes. Frame-up charges, beatings and disappearances have become common.

Along with Dzhemilev, Mejlis leader Refat Chubarov is banned from Crimea for five years. It’s current leader, Akhtem Chiigoz, is imprisoned on frame-up charges of having organized “mass disturbances” in 2014, referring to the thousands who came out to meet Dzhemilev.

“There can be no understating how serious this move is,” wrote Halya Coynash of the Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group about the banning of the Mejlis. “Nobody is in any doubt of the real reason for this move, namely the implacable opposition of the Mejlis to Russian occupation.”

Russian officials, as part of justifying the banning of the Mejlis, point to a blockade of commercial traffic into Crimea from Ukraine initiated by Dzhemilev and other Tatar leaders last fall protesting the Russian annexation of the peninsula that attracted participation from the Right Sector and other rightist forces. The blockade petered out after unknown forces blew up electrical pylons that supplied power to Crimea. These actions gave Moscow a handle and set back the Crimean Tatars’ struggle.

Miners' anger at capitalist crisis marks West Virginia vote

Continued from front page
unemployed mine foreman.

"What I was saying is the way things are going now, they will continue to lose jobs. It didn't mean that we were going to do it," Clinton told him. "I have been talking about helping coal country for a very long time, ... and I did put out a plan last summer."

Clinton's disdain for workers who face grinding depression conditions — typical of politicians in both the Democratic and Republican parties — is part of what's fueling the support for the Donald Trump campaign, and to a lesser extent Bernie Sanders, and tearing at the fabric of the two historic bosses' parties.

"Working people are fed up with politics and business as usual," Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president and a former coal miner, told the *Militant*. "The problem is capitalism, which is in the deepest crisis since the 1930s," she said. "Trump, Sanders, Clinton and all the rest talk about 'we' and 'us' and 'ours' as if the bosses and workers are all in this together. But there is no we. There is a working class and a capitalist class. We have more in common with workers from around the world than with the bosses here at home."

A few days after the Clinton roundtable, 13,000 people, including working and unemployed coal miners, high school students and others filled the Charleston Civic Center to hear Trump.

Trump has won workers' interest by blasting "establishment" politicians of all parties and putting himself forward as a plain talker and successful deal-maker who would bring jobs back to the U.S. According to the *Charleston Gazette*, "the only thing more common than the red 'Make America Great Again' caps that Trump has popularized were the hard hats worn by coal miners." Signs saying "Trump Digs Coal" were scattered through the crowd.

Friend of coal miners?

Trump portrayed himself as the friend of coal miners. When he put on a miner's hard hat, the crowd went wild.

He was presented with the hat by the coal bosses' West Virginia Coal Association. And he didn't say a word about the methane explosions, collapsed roofs and thousands of miners who are once again getting black lung from coal dust as a result of the coal bosses' profit drive, disregard for safety and antiunion moves.

But the billionaire real estate capitalist wins a hearing because he puts his finger on some of the real problems millions of workers face.



Photos: above, AP/Steve Helber; inset, Militant/George Chalmers
Coal miners, above, at May 5 rally for presidential candidate Donald Trump in Charleston, West Virginia. Inset, march of 3,000 miners April 1 in Waynesburg, Pennsylvania, protesting coal bosses' attempts to gut retirees' pensions and benefits. Miners are looking for way forward as bosses lay off thousands, attack miners' union, increase exploitation and make working conditions more dangerous.

Persistent high unemployment and a decline in real wages are just the tip of the iceberg of the social crisis that is spreading across Appalachia and the rest of the country. Workers in rural areas and small towns that have been devastated by mine, mill and factory closings are among the hardest hit. For the first time in decades, life expectancy in the U.S. is in decline. A report in 2015 said that West Virginia had the highest drug overdose death rate in the U.S.

These stark facts have spawned a series of articles in the *Washington Post* and other papers that blame the workers themselves for their growing addiction to opioid drugs and heroin, alcoholism and increased suicide rates. An April 8 *Post* feature was headlined, "'We Don't Know Why It Came to This.' As white women between 25 and 55 die at spiking rates, a close look at one tragedy."

Living conditions are worse for most workers who are Black. But gains made since the mass working-class struggle for Black rights overthrew Jim Crow segregation in the 1960s and '70s have meant infant mortality, homicide and mortality rates have been declining over the last decade for African Americans. As a result, according to the May 8 *New York Times*, the gap between Black and white life expectancy was seven years in 1990, but had shrunk to 3.4 years by 2014.

Self-serving rationalizations for the economic crisis are less convincing to many working people than ever. A May 1 *New York Times* magazine article by the paper's financial correspondent Andrew Ross Sorkin on President Barack Obama's "economic legacy" notes that "few Americans seem to be celebrating" what Obama claims is the best managed "large economy on Earth in modern history."

Obama blames Republican bad-mouthing of his "accomplishments" and the ignorance of working people for the lack of enthusiasm for his legacy. But Sorkin admits that average annual household income in the U.S. is \$4,000 less than it was in 2001.

Fear of working class

The news media is awash with articles attacking Trump and reporting on the turmoil in the Republican Party. But the real target is not his program or lack thereof, which, as former opponent Ted Cruz put it, is really just "New York values." It's not a radical departure from normal bourgeois politics. The attacks reflect the fear that sections of the ruling class — Democrat and Republican, conservative and liberal alike — have of the hundreds of thousands of working people who show up at his rallies, embracing his denunciation of Washington and the politicians who carry on business as usual as the economic and social crisis deepens. This is especially true of workers the pundits view as "white trash."

"The dangerous nihilism of Trump voters" was the headline on a May 4 opinion piece by Charles Lane in the *Washington Post*. You can blame the Republican establishment "for taking Trump too lightly," Lane says. "But there hasn't been nearly enough blaming of the people most responsible for The Donald's rise: his voters."

The liberal *New York Daily News* projected a similar fear of workers in its May 4 featured editorial page cartoon. It depicts Trump supporters as zombies wearing "Make America Great Again" T-shirts.

More than any other candidate Trump

speaks about the "working class." He says his record as a successful businessman shows he can negotiate hard, push American nationalism and create jobs. And he skewers politics as usual.

"Does he get angry? Yes," Bill Johnson, a cook and veteran told the *London Financial Times* at Trump's May 8 rally in Charleston. "Does he say silly things? Yes. But he's a human being. He says what he feels."

Trump recently backed off his opposition to raising the minimum wage, while promising that the jobs he creates will pay "much, much more" than that.

'The stress of poverty'

Meanwhile Sanders, who won the Democratic primary in West Virginia May 10, continues to be a thorn in Clinton's quest to be the chief executive officer of U.S. imperialism, increasing turmoil in the Democratic Party with his call to build a "movement" that would continue beyond the elections. In Kimball, West Virginia, Sanders spoke at a local food bank May 5.

"When you don't have any money you're fighting for survival every day," Sanders said. He said the increased death and addiction rates in West Virginia are caused by the "stress of poverty."

"What is strange about what goes on in America is that we are the wealthiest country in the history of the world," Sanders said. Like Trump he blamed bad trade deals for high unemployment and said he would create jobs.

"The SWP joins workers in fighting against the employers' attacks on our jobs, wages, working conditions and deteriorating social conditions," SWP presidential candidate Kennedy said. "We urge the unions to lead a fight for a massive government-funded public works program to put people to work at union wages, rebuilding crumbling infrastructure, hospitals, child care centers, schools, parks and other things workers need."

"No matter who is elected president, the capitalist crisis will continue," she said. "The capitalist economy can't be regulated or 'managed.' The working class must organize by the millions to overthrow the rule of the bosses and replace it with a workers and farmers government to control our own destiny."

Further reading:

The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions

by Jack Barnes



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‘Imperialism is the greatest wolf that ever existed’

How Far We Slaves Have Come! by Nelson Mandela and Fidel Castro is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for May. It contains the speeches of Mandela, who had been released the year before from a South African prison after 28 years, and Cuban President Castro to a rally of tens of thousands on July 26, 1991, marking the 38th anniversary of the opening of the Cuban revolution. Mandela paid tribute to the unparalleled contribution of over 400,000 Cuban internationalist volunteers, whose aid to Angola defeated repeated invasions by the South African apartheid regime. This helped pave the way for Mandela's freedom and the dismantling of the racist apartheid system. The excerpt is from Castro's speech "We will never return to the slave barracks." Copyright © 1991 Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY FIDEL CASTRO

All the Latin American capitals are surrounded by slums full of destitute people, and often the number of people who live in shantytowns and favelas in the capital cities is greater than the number who live in normal conditions. All the Latin American capitals are surrounded by slums, without a single exception.

Who is responsible for this? Is capitalism removed from this problem?



Militant/Mary-Alice Waters

Fidel Castro and Nelson Mandela at July 26, 1991, rally in Matanzas, Cuba. U.S. imperialism "has enormous political influence," Castro said. "But economically it is weaker than ever."

Are colonialism and neocolonialism removed from it? Is U.S. imperialism removed from this problem? How can they come along now with the formula that what is needed is more capitalism to develop these countries? ...

The United States used to be the center of capitalism, the richest, the most competitive of all countries. Following World War II it enjoyed complete hegemony. And now it has lost these positions. In many important industries such as automobiles, chemicals, electronics, steel, and others it has lost the position it once had, which has been taken up by competitors.

In the years following the war, the rate of return on invested capital was as high as 24 percent. For capitalism, the rate of return on investment is very important, because this is the money available to continue investing and developing. In the 1950s the rate of return was 24 percent, and now it is about a third of that, about 8 percent. ...

So if Latin America is going to integrate into the U.S. economy, it is going to integrate into the economy of a financially ruined country and it is going to get the worst end of the deal, because what Latin America exports to the United States is principally fuel and raw materials. Sixty percent of what it exports is fuel and raw materials, and less than 30 percent is manufactured products. This is ideal for imperialism:

to buy fuel and raw materials cheaply and sell manufactured products at very high prices; and Latin America needs to enter into world trade with manufactured products. These are the kinds of problems and challenges that face the Latin American countries; they are very serious.

You must forgive me if I have gone on about this, because I wanted to give you some idea of the realities in this world.

The famous Uruguay Round — which you must have heard mentioned many times — is not advancing. It consists of a series of negotiations and formulas that have been elaborated to try to promote world trade. And every day there is more protectionism in Europe, more protectionism in Japan and the United States. These protectionist measures are exercised only partially through tariffs. There are many other forms of protectionism: sometimes by establishing impossible requirements for obtaining approval for a product that a Third World country wants to export, sometimes through setting quotas that cannot be exceeded. And apart from all these calamities, the economy of Latin America is threatened by the three great economic blocs and their tendencies to create closed preserves in the economic field. So the peoples of our hemisphere have a very harsh future ahead of them, and that is why it seemed to us an important and historic first step that we

gathered together on our own initiative.

We should not create illusions; we should not raise false hopes. This is a very long and difficult process. But the world does not face a very flourishing situation economically. The United States is suffering from the problems I mentioned and more of them; imperialism should not sing victory songs. Militarily the United States is more powerful than ever, and politically it has enormous influence; but economically it is weaker than ever and has very serious problems. ...

We are internationalists, we are not narrow nationalists or chauvinists. We have shed our blood in other parts of the world, such as in Latin America and Africa. As Mandela recalled, for each person who went on internationalist missions, there were ten who volunteered to go. Is there a more noble people, a people more willing to express their solidarity, a more revolutionary people? The blood of the Angolans was our blood, the blood of the Namibians is our blood, and the blood of the South Africans is our blood! Humanity's blood is our blood! [Applause]

Our ideas go beyond chauvinism or narrow nationalism. Our ideas extend beyond all borders. We live in the world that was given to us and we are fighting for a better world. Our minds, our intelligence, and our hearts are prepared for a much better world, for a superior world, for a world such as that desired by Marx and Engels, where men act as brothers to each other rather than preying on each other like wolves.

Capitalism is the greatest creator of wolves in human history, and imperialism has not only been the greatest creator of wolves but also the greatest wolf that has ever existed.

We who come from way back, who were conquered, who were exploited, and who were enslaved throughout history, what marvelous ideas we can defend today; what just ideas we can uphold! And we can think in Latin American and even world terms.

How far we slaves have come! [Applause]

But now internationalism means defending and preserving the Cuban revolution; that is our greatest internationalist duty. [Applause] Because when there is a flag like ours, which represents ideas as just as ours, then to defend this trench, this bastion of socialism, is the greatest service we can offer to humanity.

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May

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The Militant May 23, 2016

Workers power would ensure jobs, safety

Continued from front page

some 50 smaller bosses have declared bankruptcy. They use government bankruptcy courts to tear up United Mine Workers contracts and gut pensions and health care for retired miners. Today the overwhelming majority of working coal miners are in nonunion mines. Deaths, injuries and black lung disease are increasing.

Donald Trump, Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton, the remaining bourgeois presidential candidates, say the only way workers get jobs and see their lives improve is when the bosses make big profits. They tell us that's how it works under capitalism, and that "we" Americans are all in it together, taking on "them" in the rest of the world.

This is a lie aimed at making us subservient to the boss class and their government.

I was part of the first wave of women who obtained jobs in the underground coal mines in the 1970s and '80s. Together with our union brothers we fought to improve conditions in the mines. In the 1960s and '70s coal miners carried out a revolution in our union and joined family members and other workers in coal country to wage powerful battles that won black lung benefits, medical clinics and the right to secret ballot votes on union contracts.

We won the right to union-organized safety committees in the mines and to shut down production when we found unsafe conditions. While the coal bosses have fought relentlessly to erode those gains, and over decades our union has gotten weaker, our labor and social battle is an example of what can be accomplished when we rely on our

own strength and solidarity.

Over the past year, defending life and limb was central to the overwhelming rejection of the one-man crew by rail workers at Burlington Northern, the strike by oil workers at refineries across the country and the determination of Steelworkers to battle against a lockout by ATI bosses.

In 2003, I was part of a fight to unionize the Co-Op mine near Huntington, Utah. My coworkers there, mostly immigrants from Mexico, were at the forefront of the fight for union representation, safe work conditions and better wages. Working people can't let the bosses divide us in our fight for dignity and union power. It is our class against the bosses' class, not "our" country against the workers of the world.

Under the capitalist system that puts profits before human needs, the inherent dangers in mining, the environmental consequences from uncontrolled burning of coal, and the energy needs of millions worldwide will never be solved.

The working class must end forever the rule of the bosses. Taking political power in our own hands, coal miners and other workers can organize to ensure no worker has to die on the job. We can take control of the stewardship of labor and the environment, and organize access to energy and electricity, equalizing workers' conditions worldwide.

Under capitalism any transition to cleaner energy production means throwing thousands of miners out of work. The working class in power would ensure that every miner is guaranteed a socially useful job and rewarding place in the process of organizing such a transition.

Alberta fire: capitalist-made social disaster

Continued from front page

bosses and government that put profits ahead of human life.

Estimated losses are 9 billion Canadian dollars (about US\$6.9 billion), with 2,400 homes and other structures destroyed. As of May 9 the fire was still burning outside the city.

Fort McMurray is the main town in Alberta's oil sands region. Its population has grown rapidly since the late 1990s alongside the boom in oil production. Despite being surrounded by forest, neither the state nor local governments had made adequate preparations for protecting the city from fire.

The fire began to threaten the city on May 1. Authorities abruptly declared a mandatory evacuation the afternoon of May 3. Highway 63, the one route through town, rapidly became gridlocked. After flames jumped the road, some people were directed north and the bulk toward the south.

"It took almost 18 hours to get out," Carra-Danielle Gaba told the *Militant* at the Northlands Expo Centre where hundreds of evacuees are being housed in Edmonton. Gaba works in administration in an oil

camp and has a small child. "We ran out of gas twice. In all the small communities, people had jerry cans, handing us food, diapers and toys. There was no proper communication on how serious the situation was."

"The cars were cooking in the middle of hell," said Brad Pollard, who works in transit. "There is only one way in and out." For years there has been discussion about the need to build a second highway, but no action.

Workers in the Fort McMurray area had already been heavily hit by the downturn in the oil industry. Unemployment in Alberta has risen to 7.2 percent from 5.6 percent a year ago, largely because layoffs in the oil patch. In Fort McMurray the official rate was 9.8 percent before the fire. Oil companies expect to further cut production by 1 million barrels a day in the wake of the fire.

Alberta Forestry Minister Oneil Carlier said May 4 that he didn't think recent cuts by the provincial government, roughly CA\$15 million from fire prevention and fire fighting, had any impact on the disaster.

Some evacuees and others have raised the need for firebreaks to make it more difficult for forest fires to enter the town. "The place was a fire trap. I could hop off my balcony into the brush," said Louis Barham, an education assistant who has lived six years in Fort McMurray.

"They should surround the town with cut trees — 50 meters," said Oye Beavogui, who builds scaffolding for an oil company.

Some workers are discussing rebuilding the town. Gaba told the *Militant*, "People want to rebuild. Groups are trying to get crews together."

"There are many workers who could work on clean-up and rebuilding. Unions should fight for the government to organize a massive project at union rates of pay," said Katy LeRougetel, Communist League member, talking with a group of evacuees at the Northlands Centre.

Monica Coombs, who is originally from Newfoundland, proudly replied that she is a member of both Labourers' Union Local 92 and International Union of Operating Engineers Local 955. Her husband, Winston Welsh, a trucker, said, "It's not, 'We want to come back.' We *are* coming back to help rebuild Fort Mac — our home."

End nuclear weapons

Continued from front page

Staff, outlined steps "to ensure that, as the President has directed, the United States will retain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear force for as long as nuclear weapons exist."

When combined with sustaining the current arsenal as new systems are built, the plan "will roughly double spending on nuclear weapons," a December 2015 Arms Control Association report stated.

Thousands of warheads at ready

Washington has some 7,100 nuclear warheads, while Moscow holds 7,700, together totaling 90 percent of the world's 16,000 nukes. Seven other governments — France, China, United Kingdom, Pakistan, India, Israel and north Korea — have the rest. Despite taking some of the weapons out of active use, Washington still deploys at ready around 1,500 nuclear warheads on several hundred bombers and missiles, giving it the capacity to destroy human life on earth many times over.

Washington has some 200 B61 nuclear bombs deployed in five NATO member countries — the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Italy and Turkey.

Part of the administration's plan is to upgrade a version of the B61 bomb, giving it a sliding scale to produce a large or small explosion.

While touted as a way to reduce the danger of nuclear war, the "dial-down" nuke makes it more likely. "What going smaller does is to make the weapon more thinkable," Gen. James Cartwright, retired vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and a former nuclear strategy advisor to Obama, told the *New York Times* in January.

Moscow is also updating its nuclear arsenal, scrapping many old silo-based missiles while building a new generation of long-range nuclear bombers, truck-mounted ballistic missiles and nuclear-armed submarines. Russian President Vladimir Putin boycotted the most recent Nuclear Security Summit in Washington March 31-April 1.

For decades the Socialist Workers Party has called on Washington to get rid of its nuclear weapons and joined fights to ban nuclear testing. While defending the degenerated workers state in the Soviet Union against imperialist attack, the party explained that "the Kremlin, by participating in this mindless race, is dealing terrible blows against the defense of the Soviet Union," as SWP leader Joseph Hansen put it in 1977. And the party backs the call by Cuba's revolutionary leadership for a worldwide ban on nuclear weapons.

Castro: 'We don't need nukes'

"We have never considered the idea of fabricating nuclear weapons, because we don't need them," Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro said in a 2005 speech, as Washington and its allies ratcheted up their sanctions and military threats against the government of Iran over its nuclear program.

"What sense would it make producing a nuclear weapon in the face of an enemy who has thousands of nuclear weapons? It would mean joining the game of nuclear confrontation," he said. "We possess a weapon as powerful as nuclear ones and it is the magnitude of the justice we are fighting for. Our nuclear weapon is the invincible power of moral weapons."

Washington's bellicose course in shoring up and expanding its nuclear arsenal will continue to provoke an arms race. It's likely that more countries will seek to produce weapons. In a letter to Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro last December, Castro noted, "Security does not exist today for anyone. There are nine states which possess nuclear weapons." Castro noted it was Washington that dropped two bombs on Japanese cities at the end of World War II, with devastating effects. And he urged the governments of China and Russia to "make the greatest effort to avoid a war and contribute to the peaceful development of Venezuela, Latin America, Asia and Africa."

In his remarks during the closing of the 7th Congress of the Cuban Communist Party last month, Castro said "the greatest danger hanging over the earth today derives from the destructive power of modern weaponry which could undermine the peace of the planet and make human life on earth's surface impossible."

The Stewardship of Nature Also Falls to the Working Class: In Defense of Land and Labor

*Statement of the Socialist Workers Party
in New International no. 14*



"Human hardship from natural occurrences, including calamitous 'acts of god,' falls in starkly different ways on different social classes under capitalism. The effects are ruinous for working people in city and countryside, striking with exceptional ferocity against the toilers of the oppressed nations of Africa, the Middle East, Asia, the Pacific, Latin America, and the Caribbean."

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