

# Sales of books, 'Militant' at climate march boosts drive

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Some 40 *Militant* supporters joined the giant People's Climate March in New York City Sept. 21. They met people from around the country and found a thirst for discussions on how working people can defend ourselves and the planet from the capitalists' disregard for land and labor.

Jane Harris, a retired railroad worker from New Jersey, spoke with

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SWP LAUNCHES FUND DRIVE

See article, p. 4

Sign up 2,400 subscribers! Sept. 6 - Oct. 28			
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UNITED STATES			
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Brooklyn	200	85	43%
Houston	110	40	36%
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Nebraska	160	50	31%
Lincoln	10	6	60%
Omaha	150	44	29%
Philadelphia	115	33	29%
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Los Angeles	105	22	21%
Miami	105	20	19%
Twin Cities	150	26	17%
Total U.S.	1905	687	36%
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London	120	51	43%
Manchester	90	45	50%
UK Total	210	96	46%
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Calgary	50	14	28%
Montreal	60	23	38%
Canada Total	110	37	34%
NEW ZEALAND	70	17	24%
AUSTRALIA	70	12	17%
Total sold	861	36%	
Should be	686	29%	

# Washington bombs Syria, Kurds resist Islamic State

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Washington has widened its campaign of strikes in Islamic State-held territory from western Iraq into regions of Syria, including in populated areas. The reactionary Islamic State has imposed a reign of terror against toilers in a large swath of the predominantly Arab Sunni areas of Iraq and Syria. At the same time, it has threatened the imperialist interests of the U.S. propertied rulers and their allies.

On Sept. 22, U.S. warplanes, drones and aircraft carriers launched a barrage of bombs and cruise missiles against 14 Islamic State targets in four provinces of Syria, according to a statement issued by the U.S. Central Command. The salvo was almost as many bombs as were dropped in more than 190 strikes in Iraq since Aug. 8, reported the *New York Times*.

In addition to targeting Islamic

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Thousands march in Russia against Ukraine war

— Page 2

# Calif. protesters won't let cops 'sweep killing under the rug'



Residents of Half Moon Bay, Calif., march Sept. 6 to demand arrest of Sheriff's Deputy Menh Trieu for killing of 18-year-old Yanira Serrano. Leading march is Yanira's brother Tony Serrano.

BY ERIC SIMPSON

HALF MOON BAY, Calif. — "The killing of Yanira Serrano was a senseless and unwarranted act of police abuse," alleges a federal civil rights lawsuit announced Sept. 9 by Serrano's family at the spot where Sheriff's Deputy Menh Trieu gunned down the

18-year-old June 3.

Serrano suffered from schizophrenia, lead attorney Arnolando Casillas told the media.

"She was a sweet girl with a beautiful smile," said Yanira's mother Carmen Serrano. "The only reason we

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# Climate march poses need to defend nature and labor

## 300,000 take to streets in New York City



Largest ever protest against environmental destruction heads down Sixth Avenue in New York.

BY MAGGIE TROWE

NEW YORK — Three hundred thousand people from across the U.S., Canada and other countries around the world joined the People's Climate March here Sept. 21.

Participants drawn to the sizable social protest rallied against the increasing devastation of land and labor rooted in the natural workings of the capitalist system, the profit-driven course of bosses worldwide, lashed

by competition, to produce more and faster, regardless of the impact on workers and nature.

The march comes at a time of increased resistance and union organizing by workers frustrated with low

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# City workers in Quebec fight gov't attack on pensions, unions

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL — Tens of thousands of municipal workers and their supporters from towns and cities across Quebec filled the streets of downtown Montreal Sept. 20, marching to protest the drive by the Quebec provincial Liberal Party government to rip

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San Francisco taxi drivers join union for first time in 40 years

Golden Gate Bridge workers fight attack on health care

Health care workers in Britain resist wage cuts



# Pussy Riot members address ‘Festival of Dangerous Ideas’

BY LINDA HARRIS

SYDNEY, Australia — Prison camps in Russia are “like the detention centers in Australia,” said Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, one of the members of Pussy Riot who had been imprisoned in penal colonies for protesting against the regime of Russian President Vladimir Putin. She spoke to an audience of some 1,500 people at the “Festival of Dangerous Ideas” held in Sydney Opera House Aug. 31.

Before the festival, Tolokonnikova, joined by fellow Pussy Riot member Maria Alyokhina, met with Sydney activists protesting the Australian government’s policy of mandatory imprisonment of refugees who arrive by sea in remote detention centers.

Tolokonnikova said some people proposed they boycott the festival because

of a connection between some of the festival organizers and Transfield, the company that runs the detention centers. It is much more important for us to come and join those fighting here to close these centers, they both said.

During the Sochi Olympics held in Russia, Tolokonnikova said, “We were against people boycotting the Olympics. We needed their support in Sochi when we were whipped by the Cossacks during our [protest] performance.”

The two activists also spoke out against the Russian government’s war against Ukraine and against Washington’s wars. If the U.S. was not involved in military aggression around the world, Tolokonnikova said, Putin would not be able to use this in attempting to justify his assault on Ukrainian sovereignty.

Tolokonnikova and Alyokhina spent nearly two years in prison in Russia. They were convicted on charges of “hooliganism motivated by religious hatred” after performing a “punk prayer” in Moscow’s Russian Orthodox Cathedral of Christ in 2012 condemning political repression by the Putin regime.

“Pussy Riot started in reaction to an authoritarian regime,” Alyokhina said, and is “continuing as an international movement.” When traveling to other countries they look into the conditions in the prisons and try to meet with those involved in different struggles, she said. “If any support is needed, we will always be super happy to offer all the help we can,” she said.

Since their release in December 2013 they have continued to speak out against the Putin regime in face of a rise in attacks on political rights



Pussy Riot members Nadezhda Tolokonnikova (left) and Maria Alyokhina at “Festival of Dangerous Ideas,” in Sydney, Australia.

## Thousands march in Russia against Ukraine war



More than 20,000 people took to the streets in Moscow (above) and 5,000 in St. Petersburg (inset) Sept. 21 to protest the Russian government’s military intervention in Ukraine. Marchers carried Ukrainian and Russian flags, pictures of Russian soldiers killed fighting in Ukraine, and signs reading, “I don’t want a war with Ukraine” and “[Russian President Vladimir] Putin, I’m sick of your lies.”

Smaller actions took place in Saratov, Perm, Petrozavodsk, Syktyvkar, Barnaul, Yekaterinburg and Novosibirsk, Siberia.

Solidarity actions were held in Kiev and Kharkiv, Ukraine; Paris; London; Vancouver, Canada; New York; San Francisco; Houston; and other cities.

Moscow claims it has no troops in Ukraine. The Putin government’s policy toward Ukraine has broad support in Russia, built on relentless propaganda in state-run media portraying “rebels” in the east of Ukraine defending Russian-speaking residents from slaughter by a fascist government in Kiev.

“This march is to show the people that there’s quite a number of people who are against the war and don’t think that most Ukrainians are fascists,” Mikhail Garder, 28, told the press at the march in Moscow. “The government knows that. The people don’t.”

— JOHN STUDER

in Russia. They formed Zona Prava, a human rights organization to fight for prisoners’ rights. Its application for legal status has been denied three times. “Our conclusion is that you should never trust the government,” Tolokonnikova said to applause. The second conclusion, she added, “is that if you resist you will get results.”

The drug laws are used politically in Russia, as they are in many other places, Tolokonnikova said. About half of all convictions in Russia are related to drug charges. Less than 1 percent of those who get charged are acquitted — “so few we don’t even know that word.”

Alyokhina described the brutal conditions in the penal colonies, with prisoners working 16 hours a day, seven days a week. Women produce police uniforms on ancient sewing machines, year after year. “Obviously this doesn’t make any-

one love the police system,” she said.

We and the other prisoners never lost our sense of humor, Alyokhina said. We all worked together one day to sew a set of clothes for a tiny, miniature Russian cop.

The Russian labor code does not apply to prisoners, and they have no access to legal representation or medical care. “These are things we are campaigning around now,” she said. “All these things are possible to change,” Tolokonnikova said.

Asked about attacks on gay rights in Russia, Tolokonnikova said that the regime scapegoats sections of the population in an effort to divide and weaken all those who oppose the conditions working people face there. Today gays are being blamed by the government for economic and social problems, like immigrant workers before them.

## THE MILITANT

### Back unions against attacks on land, labor

*Some recent union struggles involve workers fighting not only to defend their standard of living, job safety and dignity, but to oppose profit-driven ravages of the environment. An example is the fight of rail workers against cuts in crew size. Follow this struggle in the ‘Militant.’*



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Rail workers and supporters at Aug. 25 Iowa union meeting oppose one-man crew.

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# ‘Militant’ subscription drive

Continued from front page

a wide range of people and sold three subscriptions. “I met a group called Moms Clean Air Force,” she said. “They explained that since the expansion of the Panama Canal, bigger cargo ships are coming into the port of Newark and more trucks are driving through the surrounding working-class communities. This has led to a significant rise in asthma rates.”

Construction worker Rufus Britton, a member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 3, saw the photo of Malcolm X on the cover of *New International* no. 14 that Ellen Brickley was holding, and asked, “How can I get that book?” She showed him the article on Malcolm and another titled “The Stewardship of Nature Also Falls to the Working Class,” explaining, “The big question is how long will the capitalists be in power exploiting work-

ers and destroying the air, water and soil.” Britton bought the book and subscribed to the *Militant*, saying, “I’d like to get together and talk more about this soon.”

“The Ebola article was the issue that grabbed people,” said James Harris, a *Militant* supporter from Washington, D.C. “I asked them, ‘What country has sent the most doctors to Africa to combat the spread of the virus?’ Most thought it was the U.S. When I told them it was Cuba, they got interested in reading the paper.”

At the sister climate march in Oakland, California, Betsey Stone reported, “many were drawn to a large poster of the satellite photo of ‘The Earth at Night,’ which is on the back cover of *New International* no. 13, and shows how the bosses in the imperialist countries, because they see no profit in it, have felt no need to extend electrification in large parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America.”

“I’m here because I care about the earth, but not just the environment, also the humans,” Angeline Marsland, a student at the College of San Mateo who got a subscription and copy of *New International* at the Oakland march, told *Militant* supporter Joel Britton. She said she was interested in coverage on the fight against the police killing of 18-year-old Yanira Serrano in Half Moon Bay.

Roberto Maldonado, a construction worker from



Militant/Patrick Brown

Annalucia Vermunt discusses Cuban Revolution with Tonga-born call-center worker Koli Fumaki on his doorstep in Auckland, New Zealand, Sept. 10. “You’ve got my attention,” Fumaki said when he saw the *Militant*. “I read about Fidel Castro’s life. It woke something within me.”

Martinez, California, and member of the Laborers Union, bought a subscription and *New International* no. 14, saying, “It’s big money, big business that’s running the whole world — that’s where the problems come from.” Ten copies of *New International* were sold at the Bay Area action, along with 22 subscriptions and more than 100 single copies of the *Militant*.

## Brooklyn Book Fair

The Brooklyn Book Fair took place the same day. Workers who staffed a Pathfinder bookstand, including Shirelynn George — who came to volunteer after marching with her union, Service Employees International Union Local 1199, in the climate march — and Tony Lane, sold

eight *New Internationals* and 18 other books as well as 20 subscriptions to the *Militant* and 50 single copies. Nine of Pathfinder’s titles are available at discounted prices with a subscription (See ad on this page).

“You’ve got my attention,” Koli Fumaki told *Militant* supporter Annalucia Vermunt in Auckland, New Zealand, Sept. 10, when she knocked on his door and showed him the paper. Fumaki, a call center worker of Tongan descent, said he has been reading about the Cuban Revolution. “I read *My Life*, the interview with Fidel Castro, and it woke something within me.” Fumaki signed up for a subscription.

*Militant* readers in London, Atlanta, Seattle and other cities joined worldwide actions protesting Moscow’s aggression against Ukraine, in solidarity with protests in Moscow and other Russian cities. (See photo-box on page 2.)

With about 400 subscriptions coming in last week, we have sold 861 subscriptions toward the international quota of 2,400. We are ahead of schedule and, given the growing working-class resistance, we can both increase the number of readers participating in the effort and go over the top.

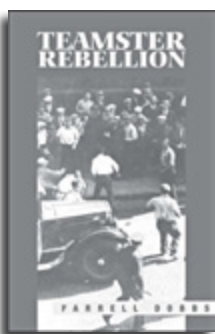
If you’d like to join in expanding the *Militant*’s circulation or want to let us know about opportunities in your area, get in touch with supporters of the paper listed on page 8.



Militant/Joanne Kuniansky

Tadesse Ayele, right, renews his *Militant* subscription in Sydney, Australia, Sept. 21 and purchases several Pathfinder books on special, including *Teamster Rebellion*.

## Special book offers for ‘Militant’ subscribers

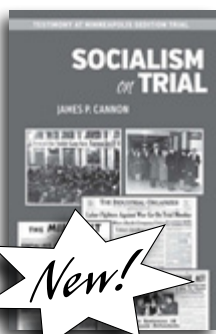


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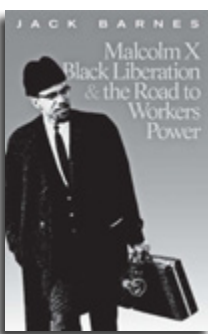
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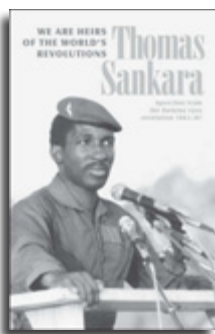
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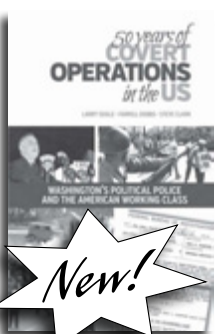
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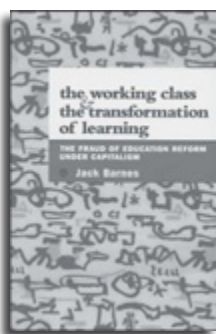
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# Backers of prisoners in Calif. mark year since hunger strike

BY BETSEY STONE

OAKLAND, Calif. — More than 70 people came together at Mosswood Park here Sept. 6 for a picnic to commemorate last year's statewide hunger strike by prisoners protesting solitary confinement and other abuses.

The event, sponsored by the Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity Coalition, honored the hunger strikers who put a spotlight on the conditions faced by tens of thousands of workers behind bars held in some type of isolation across the U.S.

The most recent hunger strike, which took place from July 8 to Sept. 5 last year, was the third such action since July 2011. At its height it involved some 30,000 prisoners across the state. Some 100 determined inmates were still refusing food at the end of 60 days.

"The hunger strike won some things," Bertha Ramirez, whose son is in solitary confinement at Pelican Bay State Prison, told the *Militant*. She came with other members of California Families Against Solitary Confinement who drove up from Los Angeles.

Ramirez, who has to drive 14 hours to see her son, said visiting time was increased from one hour to three hours as a result of the protest and the solidarity it received.

"We have to keep fighting, to raise our voices higher" to extend the victory on visiting hours to other California prisons, she said.

Dolores Canales, a leader of California Families Against Solitary Confinement, spoke at the picnic, noting the recent victory of supporters of prisoners' rights in pushing back attempts by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to tighten censorship of literature prisoners can receive. Under proposed "Obscene Material Regulations" prison officials sought to ban a range of reading material, including publications that "indicate an association with groups that are oppositional to authority and society."

## Some abuses pushed back

According to Laura Magnani, a member of the prisoners' mediation team, Michael Stainer, CDCR Director of Adult Institutions, informed mediators that the censorship regulations were put on hold as a result of an outpouring of opposition to them. "It doesn't mean a similar proposal won't come around again," said Magnani, "but it shows we had an effect."

Under the pressure of three hunger strikes, state prison officials conducted a "review" and released nearly 70 per-

cent of those in solitary confinement to the general population. Prisoners at Pelican Bay, however, say that the Special Housing Unit cells have been filled with new inmates as fast as they were emptied.

Sitawa Nantambu Jamaa, a central leader of the hunger strike at Pelican Bay, reports that conditions in solitary units at Tehachapi State Prison, where he was transferred after the last hunger strike, are worse than they were at Pelican Bay.

A central demand of the hunger strikers was to end placement of prisoners in solitary for being "validated" as gang members. This was based on tattoos, possession of banned books or Aztec drawings, alleged association with gang members or the snitch system that puts inmates accused of gang affiliation in solitary until they finger others. Other demands included the right to phone calls, adequate food and warm clothing.

A strike anniversary statement by hunger strike leaders Todd Ashker,



Militant/Betsy Stone

Hunger strikes by California inmates have won support for fight against solitary confinement and other abuses in U.S. prisons. Above, family members and other supporters of prisoners' rights at picnic in Oakland, Calif., Sept. 6, marking one year since end of last hunger strike.

Sitawa Nantambu and Arturo Castellanos printed in the August *San Francisco Bay View* points out that California prison authorities continue to keep prisoners in long-term solitary, arbitrarily isolating prisoners based on their supposed associations, not

their behavior.

"The conditions of isolation remain torturous," the statement says. "Only by a strong growing movement of those of us inside and our supporters outside do we have any hope of making all the changes that we need."

## California protesters condemn police killing

Continued from front page

called 911 was because she wasn't taking her medicine. There was no need to shoot her."

Flowers were arranged in a circle around the site, which officials had repaved to cover bloodstains. The killing has shaken residents of Moonridge Housing Apartments, where Yanira Serrano lived. The complex was built for workers in local flower and mushroom greenhouses.

"I told them it wasn't an emergency," Yanira's older brother Tony added. "The DA, the officer and the government don't care about us. They don't care about the mentally ill. When they killed Yanira, they killed the entire family."

Trieu responded to the call before the paramedics arrived. Claiming Serrano threatened his life with a knife, Trieu killed Serrano with a single gunshot to the chest — 30 seconds after he arrived at the house.

The civil suit — filed after authorities refused to file criminal charges against officer Trieu — charges Trieu, the County of San Mateo and 10 employees of the San Mateo Sheriff's Office with violating constitutional protections guaranteed under the 14th and Fourth amendments. It states that the killing "was willful and done with deliberate disregard for the rights and safety of Yanira Serrano" and the

rights of family members.

According to the suit, Serrano was cutting up fruit with a paring knife and hobbled toward Trieu with the knife in her hand as he approached the house. "She was five feet, two inches tall and weighed 200 pounds," the suit pointed out. "She was born with a congenital defect of her left calf and foot. ... Because of her obese condition and her atrophied left foot/leg, she could not meaningfully run and limped badly."

On Aug. 18, San Mateo County District Attorney Stephen Wagstaffe declared the case closed. Ignoring calls to arrest and prosecute Trieu, Wagstaffe ruled that "Trieu's use of lethal force on June 3, 2014, which resulted in the unfortunate death of Yanira Serrano-Garcia, was justifiable under the provisions of Penal Code section 196." The report quotes Trieu saying, "I felt bad, but I felt relieved that I wasn't the one laying on the ground."

About 100 people turned out for a march down Main Street Sept. 6 organized by the Serrano family in response to the report. The protest was the latest in a series of vigils and marches since Serrano was killed.

"I know firsthand what the family is going through," protester Dolores Piper told the *Militant*. "I am here to give

strength to the fight to stop these police killings." A South San Francisco cop killed Piper's nephew Derrick Gaines in 2012. He was 15 years old.

Matt Chang was at the front of the march. The police killed his brother Errol Chang, a paranoid schizophrenic, during a psychotic episode March 18. The local SWAT team parked an armored personnel carrier outside the Chang home in Pacifica, a few miles up the road from Half Moon Bay. Cops threw flash grenades into the house where Errol Chang had barricaded himself. Witnesses said he attempted to surrender with his hands up before police shot him multiple times.

"Police are trying to sweep it under a rug," Matt Chang told the *Militant*. "Yanira's killing happened so short a time after what happened to my brother. I try to come down to help."

Tony Serrano has spoken before the Half Moon Bay City Council demanding the arrest and prosecution of Trieu and calling for a resolution making June 3 an official day in honor of her memory and the mentally ill. Serrano's memorial service drew hundreds to Our Lady of the Pillar Catholic Church, as did her funeral in a small town in Jalisco, Mexico, where she was buried beside her grandfather.

## SWP launches Party-Building Fund

BY TED LEONARD

The Socialist Workers Party launched its annual fall Party-Building Fund Sept. 13 with a goal of raising \$100,000 by Nov. 11. Readers of the *Militant* are invited to contribute.

Contributions will help the party respond to growing labor resistance and broader social struggles — two mutually reinforcing responses to the worldwide crisis of capitalism, its impact on the lives of the working class and its allies, and the moral and ethical questions it poses. These developments open up new opportunities to converge in action with workers, youth and others who can be won to the party's revo-

lutionary working-class course.

The *Militant* will feature a weekly column on the progress of the fund. The SWP's finances depend on contributions from working people and the party's annual fund drive is a central part of its budget.

A chart tracking quotas and collections from each area will be printed next week. Contributions can be sent to the SWP branch nearest you or to the SWP National Office at 306 W. 37th St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Ted Leonard is director of the 2014 SWP Party-Building Fund.

"Better sex offenders programs, better substance abuse programs, better job training programs for prisoners — these reforms are all designed to do the same thing as gangs in the prison yard and corruption in the cell blocks. Everything is organized to turn cons against one another, to reinforce the worst, dog-eat-dog values of bourgeois society, to differentiate the incarcerated. The fight of the working class is the opposite."

— Jack Barnes from *Capitalism's World Disorder*

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# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

## San Francisco taxi drivers join union for first time in 40 years

SAN FRANCISCO — Taxi drivers here voted to join the San Francisco Taxi Workers Alliance Sept. 9, the first time cab drivers have unionized in 40 years.

Several hundred cab drivers gathered at the Plumbers and Steamfitters hall for the meeting. Some 150 signed up for the union. Bhairavi Desai, president of National Taxi Workers Alliance, and San Francisco Labor Council President Tim Paulson addressed the meeting.

Competition from Lyft and Uber, web-based companies that invite individuals with cars to seek riders through the “ride-share” and “car-hail” website, is undercutting licensed taxi drivers and driving down all drivers’ livelihoods.

“My cousin works for Lyft,” cab driver Tevye Nieto told the *Militant* outside the meeting. “He just had to replace the transmission in his own car. That’s a lot of money. When you drive for Lyft you have to pay insurance and maintain your own car.”

Taxi drivers in other U.S. cities and in other countries are fighting rate-busting by Uber and similar companies. In London, Paris, Berlin and Madrid thousands of drivers took part in strikes, marches or “go-slows” June 11.

— Eric Simpson

## Golden Gate Bridge workers take on attack on health care

SAN FRANCISCO — Fifty workers organized by the 13-union Golden Gate Bridge Labor Coalition held a spirited one-day unfair labor practice strike and picket at the south end of the bridge here Sept. 16. There are some 450 workers in the coalition, including bus mechanics, ferry captains, deckhands, electricians, laborers, and iron workers.

The Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District bosses are demanding an increase in health care premiums that amounts to 2 percent of wages, which would wipe out most of the 3 percent wage raise they offered.

Coalition co-chair Alex Tonisson, a staff member of International Federation of Professional Technical Engineers Local 21, told the *Militant* that management is demanding a fourth concessionary contract in a row, while the district has increased revenue by laying off toll collectors and hiking tolls as ridership has increased.

“During negotiations in 2012 we came to an agreement with the district on retiree health care,” Art Gonzalez, a business representative for Auto Machinists Local 1414, told KQED news. “The district has decided not to honor that agreement, and last week we filed an unfair labor practice charge with the Public Employee Relations Board.”

“They need to take us seriously,” Tonisson said. “The strike is showing that we are ready to go out, to fight for what’s right.”

— Jeff Powers

## Atlanta musicians fight union-busting lockout

ATLANTA — Musicians from the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra have been picketing outside the Woodruff Arts Center here since being locked out by management when their union

contract expired Sept. 6. They were locked out in 2012 as well.

“Two years ago we accepted concessions,” Bruce Kenney, who plays the French horn and has been with the orchestra for 30 years, told the *Militant* Sept. 9. “We took a 15 percent pay cut then and a 10-week furlough. It’s not right that they’re doing this again.”

Paul Murphy, president of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Players Association — the negotiating committee of Atlanta Federation of Musicians Local 148-462 — said the small pay raise offered by management doesn’t cover the increase in the cost of health care. “This amounts to a 6 percent cut in our take-home pay,” the viola player said.

“Their offer is not acceptable. We’d be taking home \$18,000 less a year than we made in 2012,” cellist Daniel Laufer said.

Kenney said Black and Caucasian musicians were in separate unions until the rise of the civil rights movement in the 1950s and ’60s. That’s why their local number is hyphenated.

The musicians are also fighting management’s demand to eliminate positions. The orchestra was reduced from 95 to 88 musicians two years ago and with attrition is down to 78.

“To me, it’s not so much about pay,” said violinist David Dillard. “They want to bust our union.”

Some symphony season ticket holders and friends of the musicians are walking the picket line as well. The



Militant/Eric Simpson

Unionists picket Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco during one-day strike Sept. 16 against demands by management to raise health premiums and lay off workers.

orchestra’s 2014-15 season is scheduled to begin Sept. 25.

— Janice Lynn

## Health workers at Care UK in Britain protest wage cuts

DONCASTER, England — Some 50 health care workers at the Care UK center here have carried out the latest in a series of strike actions protesting deep wage cuts. “I’ve been out from the start and I’ll be here ‘til the end,” Dennis James told the *Militant* Sept. 4 on the picket line.

Care UK took over the center, which cares for people with learning disabilities, from the National Health Service last September. The bosses slashed pre-

mium pay for night work and for work on weekends and holidays.

“I’ve lost around £5,500 (\$9,036) a year. Some people have lost up to 35 percent of what they earned before,” said Dave Honeybone, lead steward and a care worker for 24 years.

Unison organizes some 150 members at Care UK out of 240 employees. More than 100 workers carried out the first strike action in February. Since then, some workers quit, disgusted by the wage cuts and management’s intransigence. Some of the 100 new workers hired at lower pay joined the latest action.

“We’ve lost so much,” Theresa Rollinson said at the Sept. 13 rally. “We don’t want to leave our service users. We want to be appreciated and see that reflected in our pay.”

Strikers have traveled around the country to broaden support, joining labor actions, political protests and picketing the London headquarters of Care UK and its parent company Bridgepoint Capital.

“We weren’t political before,” said Rollinson. “We’ve been thrown into a situation that’s become political.” More strikes are planned to coincide with an Oct. 14 local government strike and the Oct. 18 “Britain Needs a Pay Rise” demonstration called by the Trades Union Congress in London.

— Caroline Bellamy



Militant/Caroline Bellamy

Rally by workers at Care UK in Doncaster, England, Sept. 13 protesting cuts in premium pay for night and weekend work and holidays as well as lower pay for new workers.

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



October 6, 1989

As Exxon abruptly ended its Alaska oil spill cleanup Sept. 15, state officials charged that as much as seven million gallons of crude oil continue to foul the area of Prince William Sound.

More than 300 miles of treated shoreline remains saturated with muck, as much as three feet deep.

After the *Exxon Valdez* crashed onto a reef last March, spilling 11 million gallons of oil, Exxon said cleanup crews would remain until the 1,300 miles of polluted shoreline were clean. In calling off the operation, it refused to commit itself to returning in the spring.

Instead, the company declared the area “environmentally stable” and split.

So far 33,000 dead sea birds and 980 sea otters have been found.



October 5, 1964

The leading organization of the independent African nations last week pointed the finger of blame for the situation in the Congo directly at the U.S. To make clear to the world that Africans do not support Moise Tshombe, Washington’s and Brussels’ reactionary Congolese puppet, or the war he is waging with white mercenaries against his own people, the Organization of African Unity is sending its African Reconciliation Commission to the U.S. Its mission is to tell President Johnson to stop sending military personnel and supplies to the Congo.

Washington was thrown into a fury and the State Department, dispensing with usual diplomatic courtesies, announced that the African delegates would not be received.



October 6, 1939

KANSAS CITY, Kansas — The AFL Teamsters and the CIO Packing House Workers Organizing Committee joined forces today in a 100% tie-up of the Cudahy Packing Company’s plant here. Over 1,000 workers were out, with a strong picket line, manned mainly by CIO members, blocking any attempts to reopen.

The strike was called when the Company refused to deal with the Teamsters for 18 truck drivers. The Packing House Workers pulled out in sympathy, to force recognition and to secure the reinstatements of 12 men discharged for union activity.

According to E.G. Williamson, chairman of the CIO Local, his Union has been trying to settle the question of bargaining rights through an NLRB election for some time without success.



# Defense of land, labor falls to working class

The following is an excerpt from a statement adopted by the 2007 convention of the Socialist Workers Party. It is published in issue no. 14 of *New International*, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory, under the title “The Stewardship of Nature Also Falls to the Working Class: In Defense of Land and Labor.”

Despite efforts to persuade us otherwise by the employing class and the government and political parties of the bourgeoisie (to whom the union officialdom tethers itself), job safety, consumer protection, and environmental protection are inextricably tied together. The fight in the mines, factories, fields, and other workplaces to protect life and limb of the working classes and broader public is the germ of struggles for workers control of industry and for independent working-class political action. It is the germ of advances in labor solidarity leading the way toward a workers and farmers government and a giant leap in human solidarity.

The bosses try to convince us that we should not be in favor of rigorous regulation and enforcement of consumer and environmental protections because they decrease the “competitiveness” of “our” industries and “our” companies and cost workers jobs. The bourgeois figures and professionals who lead established consumer and environmental groups reinforce the prejudice that these are “middle-class” issues by placing much of the blame for abuses on the working class—both what we do on the job, and what we buy at the gas pump or cash register. But the bourgeois politics of NIMBY — “not in my backyard” — channels the wastes of industrial and agricultural production into the skies, streams, rivers, and soil where workers, farmers, Blacks, immigrants, and other exploited and oppressed layers of the productive population live.

Our fight for safety on the job is inseparable from social and political struggles by vanguard workers and the union movement to combat the exploiters’ contamination of the food we eat, shoddy and dangerous manufacture of goods we need, and fouling of the earth, waters, and skies. Through organizing to impose workers control over the industries where we create wealth expropriated from us by the ruling capitalist families, we can fight not only for our unions to exercise veto power over safety, health, and the pace of work on the job. We can simultaneously demand that employers open their books, so working people can lift the veil from the “business secrets” behind which capital covers up its profiteering and its outrages against labor and nature.

“If we translate everything commonly thought of as an environmental issue into how to advance the protection of the working class, and how the working class can extend that protection to all,” to recall the guideline cited earlier, “then we can hardly ever go wrong.”<sup>1</sup> ...

Nearly a century and a half ago, Marx wrote in *Capital* — a book he

prepared as a handbook for revolutionary-minded workers — that in the future, from “the standpoint of a higher socioeconomic formation, the private property of particular individuals in the earth will appear just as absurd as the private property of one man in other men. Even an entire society, a nation, or all simultaneously existing societies taken together, are not the owners of the earth. They are simply its possessors, its beneficiaries, and have to bequeath it in an improved state to succeeding generations.”<sup>2</sup>

But labor cannot “bequeath” the earth “in an improved state to succeeding generations” so long as the capitalists hold state power, own and control the means of production, and allot society’s human and natural resources on the basis of a cutthroat rivalry to maximize profits. Under those conditions, labor’s *conflict* with nature will increasingly, and at some point catastrophically, prevail over its capacity to symbiotically transform nature. Just as the proletariat is the only social force that can stop imperialism’s inexorable march toward fascism and war, the stewardship of nature *also* falls to the working class.

It took a massive revolutionary war in the United States to overcome the bloody resistance of the slavocracy, and a post-Civil War revolutionary social movement of reconstruction to eradicate the system of “private property of one man in other men.” And it will take

## 300,000 take to streets in NY climate march

Continued from front page

wages, speedup and deteriorating safety on the job. The march reinforces this working-class resistance, as the labor fightback reinforces social protest.

The march comes on the heels of a rebellion of Burlington Northern rail workers who voted down the bosses’ move to reduce train crews to one person, increasing the likelihood of derailments and toxic spills like the one in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, last year.

It takes place on the heels of large protests against police killings of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and Eric Garner in Staten Island, New York.

It comes as an Ebola virus epidemic ravages the most underdeveloped countries in Africa, where large sections of the working class lack electricity and sanitation. At the same time, millions are being drawn into the working class — in China, India, Africa and throughout the semicolonial world — and are reaching for allies as they fight for modern conditions and confront the destructive functioning of capitalist production.

Unlike in many previous environmental actions, sizable union contingents joined the march.

“The nurses’ union stands for patients’ safety and adequate staffing. We want to save lives,” said Lilia Marquez, 55, a nurse at Bellevue Hospital marching with the New York State Nurses Association. Their banner read, “Caring for our patients and our planet.”

Other labor organizations par-



Above, rail workers and families in Alliance, Neb., protest in July against rail bosses’ push to reduce train crews to one person. Inset, burning tank cars loaded with crude oil, many with inadequate shielding, on train that derailed in 2013, leading to 47 deaths in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec.



a socialist revolution to overturn the destructive social order that dominates this country and the earth today — a social order that will be defended by the ruling capitalist families ultimately

utilizing the most brutal methods at their command. It is this revolutionary working-class program and strategy that the communist movement puts into practice.

ticipating included United Food and Commercial Workers; Communications Workers of America; Service Employees International Union locals 32BJ and 1199, representing building maintenance and health care workers; and the Canadian Labour Congress.

Climate marches took place in Oakland, California; Los Angeles; Seattle; Miami; Omaha and Lincoln, Nebraska; and other cities in the U.S. and worldwide.

### What road forward?

Proposals on what to do ranged widely. Some saw the problem as a social question and advanced a working-class course toward defending wages, fighting for workers control of conditions on the job, and championing the struggles of workers against exploitation and environmental destruction. Others expressed unscientific, catastrophist, anti-labor perspectives, condemning industrialization and blaming workers in industries like nuclear power, rail transport of crude oil and coal mining for the way the bosses’ productive process disregards safety and fouls things up.

An international delegation organized by the Global Coalition on Migration marched in New York. “Those displaced by climate catastrophes are disproportionately farmers/rural populations, the working class, indigenous peoples, and communities of color,” a statement by the group said.

Many demonstrators came from high schools and college campuses. Mac Lubold, 17, came with 50 students from Concord High School in

Concord, New Hampshire. “A friend of ours heard about the march and organized a bus,” he told the *Militant*.

A contingent from Far Rockaway, Queens, and other neighborhoods ravaged by Hurricane Sandy in 2012, marched, as did contingents from Louisiana and Mississippi, states hit hard by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, where effects of the storm are still being felt.

The destruction caused by those storms was a social disaster, arising from the U.S. rulers’ rents system, condemning those able to pay the least to the most vulnerable areas, their refusal to evacuate residents and their paltry aid to victims of the disasters.

Some marchers blamed methods of energy extraction and transport, such as fracking and pipelines, or technology itself, for damage to the environment.

Some of their signs read, “Keep the Oil in the Soil” and “Don’t Frack with U.S.” Some called for a return to an imagined idyllic primitive past.

Many participants were drawn to the idea that capitalism’s despoliation of land and labor is a social and class question, and the road forward lies along the revolutionary line of march of the working class. Participants in the marches in New York, San Francisco, and Lincoln, Nebraska, bought 116 subscriptions to the *Militant*, and 48 copies of *New International* no. 13 and 14, featuring the articles “Our Politics Start with the World” and “The Stewardship of Nature Also Falls to the Working Class: In Defense of Land and Labor.”

1. Jack Barnes, *Capitalism’s World Disorder*, p. 301.

2. Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 3 (1894), (London: Penguin, 1981), p. 911.



# ‘Cuba’s response is part of our solidarity with Africa’

Cuban leader addresses UN Council on Ebola outbreak

The *Militant* reprints below remarks by Abelardo Moreno, Cuba’s vice minister of Foreign Relations, at a Sept. 18 emergency session of the United Nations Security Council on the Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

The week before, the Cuban government announced it was sending 165 volunteer doctors and nurses to Sierra Leone to combat Ebola. That is more than any other country in the world and will double the number of foreign health care workers directly treating victims of the deadly disease.

The Cuban volunteers are part of the Henry Reeve International Contingent, formed in Cuba in September 2005 by 1,586 doctors and other health care workers who volunteered to travel to Louisiana to provide needed medical care immediately after Hurricane Katrina hit the area. The U.S. government never responded to the offer. The contingent is named after Brooklyn-born Reeve, who was a combatant in Cuba’s war of independence against Spain that began in 1868.

At the Security Council meeting, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced the formation of the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response. The meeting heard reports from Dr. David Nabarro, Senior U.N. System Coordinator for Ebola; Dr. Margaret Chan, director-general of the World Health Organization; and Jackson K.P. Niamah of the France-based Doctors Without Borders, via video-conference from Monrovia, Liberia. Samantha Powers, U.S. ambassador to the U.N., is chair of the Security Council in September.

Ban told the council that a 20-fold increase in assistance is needed to combat the disease. The translation of Moreno’s remarks is by the *Militant*.



Madam President:

Allow me firstly, to thank the Sec-

retary-General, Dr. Nabarro, Dr. Chan and Mr. Niamah for the information they have provided, I can assure you that it is extremely useful and necessary to us.

Madam President:

The seriousness of the situation created by the Ebola epidemic plaguing some West and Central African countries creates the need to confront it energetically and with the cooperation of all countries.

In this spirit, Cuba — in response to the request made by U.N. Secretary-General, the honorable Ban Ki-moon and Director-General of the World Health Organization, Dr. Margaret Chan — has already begun the process of cooperation under the coordination of WHO, as Dr. Roberto Morales Ojeda from the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Cuba announced last Friday.

This cooperation will enable a medical brigade, whose participants have expressed their willingness to join the fight against this epidemic, to be sent to Sierra Leone. All have more than 15 years of professional experience and have worked in other countries, confronting natural and epidemiological disasters, as well as on collaborative medical missions.

We are prepared to work closely with other countries, including those with which we do not have diplomatic relations.

Cuba’s response is part of our solidarity with Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. Over the last 55 years we have collaborated in more than 158 countries, with the participation of 325,710 health workers. There are 76,744 collaborators who have worked in 39 African countries. Today, in this sector, 4,048 Cubans, 2,269 of whom are doctors, are serving in 32 African nations.

In addition, Cuba, a small and poor country, has to date trained 38,940 doctors from 121 countries free of charge. Ten thousand foreign students are cur-

## Fight to free Cuban 5 wins support in France



Militant/Claude Bleton

LE BOURGET, France — René González (fourth from right), one of the Cuban 5, five Cuban revolutionaries framed up and imprisoned by the U.S. government for actions in support of the Cuban Revolution, participated in the Fête de l’Humanité here just outside of Paris Sept. 14. González won conditional release in 2011 and returned to Cuba in May 2013.

Along with González, Olga Salanueva (third from right), his wife and a leader of the defense effort, met with Thierry Lepaon (fourth from left), general secretary of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), the main union confederation in France; André Chassaigne (second from left), deputy in the French National Assembly; and others. Each year, tens of thousands attend the Fête, which is organized by the daily newspaper of the French Communist Party, *l’Humanité*. González spoke to hundreds of people there in a number of meetings, building support for the campaign to free all the Cuban Five.

Supporters of Pathfinder Press, who had a stand in the book fair section of the Fête, sold 87 copies of the French edition of *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free*. Altogether, participants purchased 155 books, including 15 copies of *Thomas Sankara Parle* and five copies of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*.

González also visited Portugal to expand the defense campaign. He and Salanueva planned to travel to the United Kingdom, but the government there refused to grant him a visa, for a second time. Salanueva continued alone to Liverpool, where she met with trade unionists and others.

— DEREK JEFFERS

rently studying medicine on our island, 6,000 of whom study completely free of charge, under the principle of continuing to help the poorest, while those with resources pay their own expenses, which helps ensure the sustainability of the Cuban health care system and international collaboration.

Madam President:

In this battle against Ebola, which must involve everyone, the Cuban government decided to maintain and extend its cooperation to the countries most affected, who have already been informed.

In the rest of the region unaffected by Ebola and where we have, as I have already said, more than 4,000 health workers, we are ready to assist in the

prevention of this disease.

The medical brigades going to Africa to fight against Ebola form part of the “Henry Reeve International Contingent” — created in 2005 — composed of medical personnel trained in combating disasters and large-scale epidemics.

Cuba’s response confirms the values of solidarity that guide the Cuban Revolution: not to give what is left over, but to share what we have.

Africa is hoping for an immediate response from all U.N. member states, and in particular from those with resources. Joining this global effort against Ebola is an urgent necessity. Humanity owes a debt to the people of Africa. We cannot let them down.

## Who are the Cuban Five?



Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González are Cuban revolutionaries who during the 1990s accepted assignments from the Cuban government to gather information on the operations and plans of Cuban-American paramilitary groups based in southern Florida. These rightist outfits, organizing on U.S. soil with virtual impunity, have a long record of carrying out bombings, assassinations and other attacks, both against targets in Cuba and supporters of the Cuban Revolution in the United States, Puerto Rico and elsewhere.

On Sept. 12, 1998, the Five were arrested by the FBI. They were framed up and convicted on a variety of charges, which included acting as unregistered agents of the Cuban government and possession of false identity documents. Without a shred of evidence, three were charged with “conspiracy to gather and transmit national defense information.”

Hernández was also convicted of conspiracy to commit murder, on the pretext that he bore responsibility for the Cuban government’s 1996 shootdown of two Brothers to the Rescue planes that had invaded Cuban airspace in disregard of Havana’s repeated warnings. He is serving two life terms plus 15 years. His wife Adriana Pérez is barred from entering the United States.

René González returned to Cuba in May 2013 and Fernando González on Feb. 28 this year.



Adalberto Roque/AFP/Getty Images

Cuban doctors listen to speech by Cuban President Fidel Castro in Havana in September 2005 as he offers to send 1,100 doctors with two backpacks of medicine each to help people affected by Hurricane Katrina in Louisiana. White House snubbed offer.



# Openings in class struggle ‘put workers party to the test’

The History of American Trotskyism 1928-1938: Report of a Participant is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for October. In talks given in 1942, James P. Cannon (1890-1974), a founder of the communist movement in the U.S., recounts his experiences building a proletarian revolutionary party. Cannon was national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party from 1938 to 1953 and then national chairman until 1972. In the excerpt below Cannon describes the Communist League's fusion with the American Workers Party in 1934, forming the Workers Party, and how party members joined the Socialist Party in 1936. Both were steps by revolutionaries to join forces with workers involved in growing resistance and win them to communism. Copyright © 1944 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JAMES CANNON

In the course of these lectures I have emphasized repeatedly that the tactics of a party are imposed upon it by political and economic factors beyond its control. The task of political leadership is to understand what is possible and necessary in a given situation, and what is not possible and not necessary. This may be said to be the gist of political leadership. The activities of a revolutionary party, that is, a Marxist Party, are conditioned



Garment workers in New Jersey strike for higher pay, August 1932. "When the logjam in the world labor movement began to break up, a new mass movement began to reveal itself," said James P. Cannon. "That was not the time to remain contentedly isolated clarifying principles, but to apply those principles in action in the life of the class struggle."

by objective circumstances. These circumstances sometimes impose defeat and isolation upon the party despite anything that can be done by the leadership and the membership. In other situations the objective circumstances create possibilities for successes and advances, but at the same time limit them. The party always moves within a set of social factors not made by itself. They are features of the process of the development of society.

There are times when the best leadership cannot move the party forward by a single inch. For example, Marx and Engels, the greatest of all the teachers and leaders of our movement, remained isolated practically throughout their entire lives. They could not even create a substantial group in England where they lived and worked during the period of their maturity. This was not due to errors on their part and certainly not to incapacity, but to external factors beyond their control. The British workers were not yet ready to hear the revolutionary word.

During the long period of reaction and stagnation, which gripped the world labor movement in the first years of our existence as a Trotskyist movement in this country, namely from 1928 until 1934, we could not avoid isolation. ... When the logjam in the world labor movement began to break up, especially

beginning with 1934, a new movement of the masses was to be seen in this country, and all over the world. When that new situation began to reveal itself we were put to the test and given our opportunity. That was no longer the time to remain contentedly in isolation, clarifying principles. That was the time to bestir ourselves and apply those principles in action in the life of the surging class struggle. Our determination to do this, our recognition that the opportunity was before us, and our determination to grasp that opportunity, brought us into conflict with the sectarians, the ultraleftists. We had to fight them, we had to defeat them, in order to go forward. We did that. In the Minneapolis strike we took a step forward in the economic mass movement. The fusion with the American Workers Party was another important step along the road toward the development of a serious Marxist party in the United States. But these progressive actions were only steps, and we had to recognize the limitedness of the accomplishments. Political initiative and resolute actions in more complicated situations were still required of us.

The entry of our group into the Socialist Party of the United States was a still more important step along the complicated, winding, long, drawn-out path toward the creation of a party that will eventually lead the proletariat of

America to victory in the socialist revolution. That step, the entry into the Socialist Party, was taken by us at just the right time. Time is always an important consideration in politics. Time does not wait. Alas for the political leader who forgets it. There is a legal expression: "Time is of the essence of the contract." Ten times, a thousand times more does that apply in politics. ...

Our entry into the Socialist Party took place against a background of great events which were in process of unfolding, both at home and on a world scale. The sit-down strikes in France, a veritable revolution, were taking place at the very moment we were arranging to join the Socialist Party. The second big upsurge of the CIO, destined to carry this tremendous movement to greater heights than the organized labor movement of America had ever known—in numerical strength, in mass militancy, and in its composition of the basic lower strata of the proletariat—this second big upsurge was in the beginning of its development at that time, in the spring of 1936. The CIO rebellion was partly influenced, undoubtedly, by the sit-down strikes in France. The Spanish civil war was about to break out in full force; and to raise once again, in the most acute manner, the prospect of a second victory of the proletarian revolution in Europe. The Spanish revolution had within it the possibility of changing the whole face of Europe if it should succeed. A few months afterwards the Moscow trials were to shake the whole world.

This great panorama of world-shaking events — and the rise of the CIO was not less important than the others in my judgment, from a world historical point of view — created the most favorable auspices for a forward march of the Marxist vanguard. There was no lack of political interest, no lack of mass activities, no lack of an adequate field for the operation of Marxist revolutionists at the time when we were conducting our activity within the framework of the Socialist Party. If we were worth our salt under such objective conditions, we were bound to gain. We would have had to be the worst kind of leadership; we would almost have had to set out consciously to defeat ourselves in order to fail to gain in such favorable circumstances as those.

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# US bombing raids expand to Syria

Continued from front page

State, eight U.S. strikes were carried out west of Aleppo, Syria's largest city, against an al-Qaeda-affiliated rival of Islamic State. The operation killed at least seven combatants and eight civilians, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

Eighteen strikes reportedly hit Raqqa, the head of Raqqa is Being Silently Slaughtered, Abo Jilan, told the press. The city, populated by some 220,000, is Islamic State's de facto capital. It was once a center of the popular rebellion against the tyranny of President Bashar al-Assad. But the mass struggle and the political space it opened up there has since been quashed by Islamic State.

As part of the operation's political window dressing, the U.S. statement emphasized that "partner nations" — which includes the monarchies of Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia — had either "participated in or supported" the bombardment.

In a brief statement, President Barack Obama said, "The strength of this coalition makes clear to the world that this is not just America's fight alone."

But behind the official posture is a tepid alliance. British government officials told the *New York Times* that Prime Minister David Cameron was still considering whether to seek approval for London to join the bombing campaign in Iraq, and would only do so on Baghdad's invitation. The French military took part in a bombing raid in mid-September, but Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius responded to U.S. strikes in Syria by saying Paris had no legal basis to engage in operations there.

The White House is itself determined to limit U.S. engagement to bombings and use of secret special operations forces, which many military commentators have said can't deal a decisive blow to Islamic State. "After six weeks of American airstrikes, the Iraqi government's forces have scarcely budged the Sunni extremists of the Islamic State from their hold on more than a quarter of the country," wrote the *New York Times* Sept. 22. Support for sending ground troops is growing among sections of the U.S. ruling class, as is the attractiveness of military collaboration with the Assad regime.

Through the course of the three-year civil war Washington had shunned military intervention in Syria, instead opting to watch opposition forces get cut down, as tens of thousands of civilians were slaughtered and millions displaced. While the U.S. rulers opposed the Assad government and paid lip service to support for the opposition, they also feared the rebellion against his rule would draw workers and farmers into struggle against their capitalist and landlord exploiters. Now, given the shared interest in eradicating Islamic State, Washington told the Syrian government about its plans to strike.

In northern Syria, Islamic State forces have ad-

vanced towards the Kurdish-controlled city of Kobani, threatening gains made by the oppressed Kurdish people there during the civil war against the Assad regime.

## Kurds defend Rojava

In 2012 Kurdish forces wrested control over their lands in Syria, known to Kurds as Rojava (Western Kurdistan) and have held off offensives by various Islamist forces. Rojava comprises areas in northeastern Syria on the Iraqi border and in the north along the Turkish border, which includes Kobani.

Backed by tanks and heavy armor, Islamic State combatants launched an offensive Sept. 16, seizing more than 60 villages near Kobani and forcing the evacuation of dozens more. As a result, more than 130,000 Kurds fled into Turkey Sept. 19-21, according to Turkish officials.

While Washington and its imperialist allies have long sought to undermine the Kurdish people's fight for a homeland, they want to see the defeat of the Islamic State. The increasingly sovereign character of Iraqi Kurdistan is a fact that capitalist rulers from Turkey to Iran to the U.S. have grudgingly come to accept and Washington has slowly been providing weapons and training to Kurdish Peshmerga.

More than 300 members of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) of Turkey have joined with Syrian fighters from the Committee for the Protection of the Kurdish People (YPG) in defending Kobani. Hundreds of others on the Turkish side of the border are determined to do the same, but Ankara has prevented them from crossing.

"We all want to cross the border. We tried yesterday but they attacked us, and we will try again today," PKK fighter Shirwan, 28, told Reuters Sept. 22.

Turkish police fired tear gas and water cannon at hundreds of Kurds gathered on the Turkish side of the border Sept. 21, protesting Ankara's attempts to prevent PKK fighters from entering Syria and obstacles put in the way of Kurds from Syria seeking refuge in Turkey.

"We have been here for four days without water and food," Fidan Mohammed told *Rudaw TV* at the Turkish border Sept. 21. "Our children are dying of hunger ... we are humiliated and we are all starving here." Some 850,000 Syrian refugees were living in camps in Turkey before the latest influx.

In a Sept. 19 statement, officials of the Peshmerga said that while they're involved in daily battles with Islamic State forces in Iraq, they're prepared to assist the Kurds in Kobani. Despite denials by Kurdish Regional Government officials, "peshmerga forces had entered Syria," the *Financial Times* reported Sept. 22.

YPG spokesman Redur Xelil told Reuters Sept. 22 that advances by Islamic State forces to the east of Kobani had been halted, but the city is still besieged on three other fronts.

# Quebec workers

Continued from front page

up current union contracts by forcing municipal workers to pay more and receive less in retirement benefits. The proposed law is scheduled for a November vote in the Quebec National Assembly. Radio-Canada estimated the crowd at over 50,000.

"We have to go to the streets. It's important to have our rights respected," bus driver Ginette Langlois, a member of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), told the *Militant*.

The spirited and noisy action was the latest in a series of demonstrations organized by the Coalition for Free Negotiations over the past few months. Quebec's two main union federations, the Quebec Federation of Labor (FTQ) and Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN), as well as the municipal unions, Espace 50+, an organization of some 50,000 retirees, and other groups make up the coalition.

Montreal authorities filed criminal charges against 41 members of the firefighters' union after several hundred angry workers protested inside Montreal City Hall Aug. 18, bringing a city council meeting to a halt.

Street cleaners, road repair crews, electrical underground superstructure workers, garbage pickup workers, firefighters, office workers and others, along with retirees, participated in the action.

"We negotiated our pensions freely, but they are trying to cut the benefits that we won," Montreal city office worker Andrée Laurin said. "Our pensions are deferred wages. They belong to us. If there is a deficit, then the city should pay, not us."

Bill 3, the proposed law, targets 172 union contracts, unilaterally changing their pension coverage. The government claims workers should have to pay for a \$3.9 billion deficit in the pension fund.

Jonathan Remillard, a municipal worker in Sept-Îles in Quebec's north, traveled 12 hours with 40 other workers in school buses to make his voice heard. "We are here for the pensions and those who have retired," he said.

Workers not directly affected also marched to express their solidarity. "I came to support everyone here. The same thing will happen to us. We have to show them we can fight," said Daniel Letourneau, a letter carrier with Canada Post and a member of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers.

Marching in the contingent of the International Association of Machinists, David Plourde, Local 1660 recording secretary, said, "We will be next. They negotiated in good faith and won what they have. We have to support them."

The flags of Unifor, the largest private sector union in Canada, which was formed in 2013 out of the merger of the Canadian Auto Workers union and the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada, were also prominent along the route of the march.

"Never will we allow you to trample on our pension rights," Daniel Boyer, president of the Quebec Federation of Labor, told the crowd, speaking from a flatbed truck at the end of the march in front of the Montreal office of Quebec Liberal Premier Philippe Couillard. "Quebec should be concerned about the vast majority of the population which has no defined pension benefits instead of attacking workers and retirees."

Couillard insists he will push the pension cuts through, no matter what the unions do.

"It's not just about pensions. It's about working conditions, full time jobs being replaced by part-time jobs, working more for less, less job security," Marc-André Bernier, an electromechanical worker for the Montreal subway system, told the *Militant*. "The common front the unions showed here today is a good first step."

## Corrections

The article "Washington's Trade Embargo, Hostility Toward Cuba Is Matter of US State Policy" in the Sept. 29 issue incorrectly said that Ramón Sánchez-Parodi escaped from prison a few weeks after being arrested in 1957. Sánchez-Parodi was released from prison by a judge's order and left Cuba under the protection of the Embassy of Mexico and then later traveled to the U.S.

The article entitled "Militant Kicks Off Fall Subscription Campaign," in the Sept. 22 issue incorrectly reported that at the Atlanta rally of fast-food workers, Eddie Foreman and four co-workers had driven from Opelika, Georgia. Opelika is in Alabama.

## LETTERS

### 'Right on front line'

This is the best newspaper out there right now. The *Militant* doesn't shy away from what's happening out there around the world. You are right on the front line, giving us the best and highest morale of any newspaper. Keep doing this work. It's real, not phony. You all are about the struggle that we all face.

A prisoner  
Florida

### Electrocution no 'accident'

Roopnarine Surajpal, an electrician apprentice and member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Union, was electrocuted on the job near Albany, New York, Sept. 11.

Surajpal was working on the lighting system in an expansion of the Fage Yogurt plant in Johnstown. He was killed when he came into contact with a live circuit.

Johnstown police chief Mark Gifford called Surajpal's death an "industrial accident."

Word of the electrocution spread within a couple hours to the large construction site in Malta, New York, where I work. Many electricians here do not consider it to be an accident.

Why was an apprentice working on "hot" electrical wiring? Union rules and safety traditions call for only trained, journeyman electricians to do this. Why was the lighting circuit not turned off?

### 'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

The Prisoners' Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the Militant and earmarked "Prisoners' Fund" to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

Standard lockout/tagout procedures are required on every job site, but bosses too often ignore these rules.

One of my co-workers pointed out that contractors make new apprentices do journeyman work to make more profits.

Another, a recent graduate of the program, said that the union's apprentice program should instill confidence that it is OK to say "no" in an unsafe situation.

Ray Parsons  
IBEW Local 236 member  
Albany, New York

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.