

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Cuba, Angola and 'most beautiful cause' — the defeat of apartheid  
— BOOK REVIEW, PAGES 6-7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 79/NO. 33 SEPTEMBER 21, 2015

## SWP and 'Militant' get support at Labor Day

BY NAOMI CRAINE

Carrying signs that read, "For a labor party now," "Walmart workers for \$15 and a union," and "Open the borders for immigrant workers," Socialist Workers Party candidates Osborne Hart for mayor of Philadelphia and John Staggs for City Council at-large

**JOIN SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY DRIVE TO RAISE \$100,000 — page 3**

got a good response when they joined thousands of trade unionists at the annual Labor Day Parade Sept. 7. Both Hart and Staggs are hourly workers at Walmart.

Members and supporters of the SWP participating in Labor Day activities got a similar response to the party's press across the country, giving a solid start to the drive to win new readers to the *Militant*. Well over 200 new subscribers signed up in the

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## Framed-up rail workers win support in Quebec town

BY JOHN STUDER

LAC-MÉGANTIC, Quebec — After less than 15 minutes, Judge François Tôth ordered further delay in the Canadian government's frame-up campaign against rail workers Thomas Harding and Richard Labrie, as well as company operating manager Jean DeMaître. They are threatened with life in prison, as scapegoats for the July 6, 2013, disaster where a crewless Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway train carrying 72 cars of crude oil rolled down a grade, derailed and burst into flame, destroying the downtown here and killing 47 people.

Tôth set a Dec. 1 court "management hearing" where lawyers for the government and the defendants would discuss potential witnesses and possible trial dates, and debate a government proposal to move the trial from Lac-Mégantic to Sherbrooke, a college town some 100 miles away.

"The crown doesn't want the trial in  
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## Europe: Refugees break out of camps, win solidarity

Thousands face cops, say: 'We are human!'



Reuters/Laszlo Balogh

Hundreds of Syrians and others fleeing wars in Mideast and Africa broke through police lines near Roszke, Hungary, Sept. 7 and marched up highway demanding asylum.

BY EMMA JOHNSON AND SETH GALINSKY

On Sept. 4 hundreds of Syrian and other refugees broke past Hungarian police at the Budapest train station and began walking, determined to reach Austria and Germany. The march grew as it went, blocking traf-

fic on the highway. As a result, tens of thousands of triumphant toilers made the border crossing, winning aid and solidarity from working people and others across Europe.

"Shame on you!" and "We are human!" hundreds had chanted in the  
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## Labor Day actions marked by fights against bosses' attacks



Militant/Dan Fein

Steelworkers fighting ArcelorMittal and U.S. Steel concession demands join Labor Day parade in Lowell, Indiana, Sept. 7. Contract covering 29,000 Steelworkers expired Sept. 1.

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Unionists fighting concession contracts, farmworkers demanding union representation and fast-food and Walmart workers fighting for \$15 an hour joined Labor Day events across the country Sept. 7.

Steelworkers contingents from large mills in the region helped lead the parade in Lowell, Indiana.

The contract between 29,000 Steelworkers and steel giants ArcelorMittal

and U.S. Steel expired Sept. 1. More than 2,200 Steelworkers are fighting a lockout by Allegheny Technologies Inc. at 12 plants in six states, imposed when they rejected steep concessions.

At the Philadelphia parade, United Steelworkers Local 1165 President Vonie Long from the Coatesville ArcelorMittal steel mill marched with oil refinery workers from Local 10-1. "It was an opportunity to get aware-

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## Calif. prison suit registers gains against solitary confinement

BY BETSEY STONE

OAKLAND, Calif. — The fight to end the inhuman conditions faced by thousands of prisoners held in solitary confinement got a boost with the settlement of a class action lawsuit filed by prisoners at the Pelican Bay State Prison in California in 2012.

The settlement, if fully implemented by prison authorities, will effectively end indefinite long-term solitary confinement in California and dramatically reduce the number of prisoners in isolation.

"We would not be here without the leadership of the prisoners," Anne Weills, an attorney in the case, told a rally and press conference that announced the settlement outside the State Building here Sept. 1.

Continued on page 9

## Cuba's program for Aboriginal literacy expands in Australia

BY RON POULSEN AND MANUELE LASALO

BREWARRINA, Australia — "What makes 'Yes I Can' so special is that it is our own community running it," said Jack Beetson, head of the Literacy for Life Foundation. He was addressing more than 100 people, a majority Aborigines of all ages, gathered for the Aug. 26 launch of the Brewarrina First Nations Adult Literacy Campaign, which will be carried out with collaboration from the revo-

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—On the picket line, p. 5—

Paperworkers in Washington say 'enough is enough,' strike 9 days

Boston airport workers strike 1 day, rally for pay and respect

# Aboriginal literacy effort

Continued from front page  
lutionary government of Cuba.

Brewarrina is an outback town of 1,500 people, over two-thirds of whom are Aboriginal, 600 miles northwest of Sydney. "Sixty-five percent of all Aboriginal people are functionally illiterate," said Beetson, presenting a barrier to them getting driver's licenses, jobs and services.

The program "Yes I Can," or "Yo Sí Puedo" in Spanish, draws on the experience of the mass literacy campaign during the Cuban Revolution in 1961, during which more than 700,000 people learned to read and write. A volunteer Cuban literacy teacher, who lives and works with the local community, leads

each session. Already some 90 adult Aborigines have achieved literacy in three other remote towns where the program began, contrasting to little progress from government courses.

Beetson explained why his hometown was next on the list. In 1849 up to 400 Aborigines were killed in a massacre nearby at Hospital Creek. This was part of the long frontier war for control of the continent, first by British colonists and then Australian capitalism.

Beetson spoke about the local Reserve, where Aboriginal people were deported from their ancestral lands to live in "tin shacks with dirt floors, hot in summer and cold in winter, no better than dog kennels." The Reserve manager could walk in at any time.

In 1987, Brewarrina erupted in angry protests, branded a "riot" by the media, after Lloyd Boney, a young farm laborer, died in police custody.

The launch was held by ancient stone fish-traps on the Barwon River, where thousands from different tribes traditionally gathered to feast. Used for 40,000 years before British colonization, the Ngunnhu Traps may be the world's oldest surviving man-made structures.

The Aboriginal people "have survived because of our ability to change and adapt," Pat Anderson, a director of Literacy for Life, said. "Being able to read and write is the next adaptation we have to take to be able to survive."

Cuban Ambassador to Australia José Manuel Galego said that since the revolution, Cuba's internationalism has meant more than 100,000 teachers have served in "different countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia. More than 200,000 doctors have been sent to 150 countries in the world," including Pa-

## NY actions demand, 'Free Oscar López now!'



Militant/Ellen Brickley

NEW YORK — Dozens of people joined an energetic rally and petitioning effort in Jackson Heights, Queens, Aug. 30 to build support for the fight to free Puerto Rican independence fighter Oscar López, framed up on charges of "seditious conspiracy." It was organized by 34 Mujeres NYC x Oscar, which holds a 34-minute protest — one minute for each year López has spent in U.S. prisons — on the last Sunday of every month in neighborhoods around the city. Many people stopped and took a flier. Two young women looked López up on their phones, signed the petition and left chanting, "Free him now!"

— SARA LOBMAN

## End the Blockade Against Cuba!

September 16-18  
Washington, D.C.

Lobbying days Sept. 16-17

Photo exhibit:

**The Cuban 5 Return:  
An Entire Country Celebrates**

Thurs., Sept. 17, 6 p.m.

University of D.C. Law School  
4340 Connecticut Ave., 5th Floor

All-day conference:

**The US Blockade Against Cuba:  
Why It's Wrong and  
What We Need to Do to End It**

Participants to include Puerto Rican independence fighter Rafael Cancel Miranda; Jan Susler, attorney for Oscar López; author Stephen Kimber.

Fri., Sept. 18, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

Calvary Baptist Church, 755 8th St. NW

For more info:

www.theinternationalcommittee.org

cific islands neighboring Australia.

Mark Coulton, National Party Member of Parliament for the large outback electorate, and Angelo Pippas, mayor of Brewarrina, also spoke.

"At school, I never really learnt, like a lot of people," Kelvin Smith, 43, a sheep shearer who is Aboriginal, said. "I got sent to the back of the room. I didn't know how to use a phone or put words into sentences." After 13 weeks in the nearby Bourke course, he graduated from Yes I Can with new self-confidence.

Traditional Aboriginal dancers opened the launch. Ngemba elder Er-

nie Gordon sang a song he wrote for the program with the lyrics, "Literacy for life can make us strong. I can do it, you can do it, yes we can!"

The event ended at the community hall, where the classes will be held, with a barbecue of "bush tucker," including freshly hunted kangaroo and emu.

## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### CALIFORNIA

#### Oakland

Open the Borders to Immigrants From Africa and the Mideast. Speaker: Gerardo Sánchez, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Sept. 11, 7:30 p.m. 675 Hegenberger Road, Suite 250. Tel.: (510) 686-1351.

### GEORGIA

#### Atlanta

Driven by Wars, Social Crisis in Mideast, Africa, Toilers Seek Refuge: Open U.S., European Borders to All Immigrants! Fri., Sept. 18, 7:30 p.m. 777 Cleveland Ave. SW, Suite 103. Tel.: (678) 528-7828.

## —CALENDAR—

### NEW YORK

#### New York

Protest Dominican Republic Government's Denationalization and Deportation of Dominicans of Haitian Descent. Wed., Sept. 23, 2-7 p.m. Rally at Dag Hammarskjöld Park, United Nations. East 47th St. between 1st and 2nd avenues. Sponsor: Coalition for Human Rights in the Dominican Republic. For more info: (718) 618-9190.

## The Militant

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# THE MILITANT

## Stop U.S.-Turkish assault on Kurds!

The Turkish government, with full agreement from Washington, is waging a brutal war against the Kurdish people. The 'Militant' tells the truth about the Kurds' fight against national oppression and for a homeland. Don't miss a single issue.



Militant/Jacquie Henderson

Aug. 6 picket in Omaha, Nebraska.

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# SWP, 'Militant' at Labor Day

Continued from front page first three days. This eight-week effort, which runs through Nov. 3, has a goal of winning 2,300 new and renewing readers.

"I came here today to find more people wanting to fight," said Ira Dorsey, a Checkers restaurant worker who is part of the "Fight for \$15" campaign. He was one of a dozen participants who subscribed to the *Militant*.

Staggs spoke with members of Transport Workers Union Local 234 he knew from his previous job at Hyundai. One of them, Zeke Hernandez, joined in campaigning among the union contingents. "I support the idea of a labor party — that's a good idea!" he told Staggs. "We have the unions already, so why not take that step now?"

Twenty workers signed up for the *Militant* at Labor Day actions in Chicago and Lowell, Indiana. Ella Knox, a member of Steelworkers Local 1010 at ArcelorMittal, was impressed with the *Militant's* coverage of the 60th anniversary of the lynching of Emmett Till, whose death was a catalyst for the rise of the fight to end racial segregation in the 1950s and early '60s. "I was born in 1956 in Mississippi about 25 miles from where Till was murdered," she said. Till's killing and the response to it had an impact on her growing up.

Socialist Workers Party members in Washington state joined three Labor Day actions, including a farmworkers rally in Burlington and a union-sponsored picnic in Castle Rock, near Longview. "Discussions there and in the community were marked by the recent strike by paperworkers at KapStone and other labor struggles," said John Naubert. "At the three events and going door to door in working-class neighborhoods, we signed up 17 new

*Militant* readers."

Party members and supporters took part in the Days of Grace march in Charleston, South Carolina, Sept. 5, carrying SWP placards reading, "Black Lives Matter," "For a Labor Party based on the unions" and "Oppose attacks on immigrants." The march and rally, followed by a two-day conference, was organized by International Longshoremen's Association Local 1422. Participants included relatives of the nine people killed by a white supremacist at Emmanuel AME Church June 17 and of Walter Scott, shot in the back by a Charleston cop April 4, as well as unionists and members of area churches.

In the course of discussions and debates at the march and conference, 30 people subscribed to the *Militant*, and 20 books on revolutionary working-class politics were sold.

Elise Cromwell, a nurse recently fired by the Medical University of South Carolina, told Maggie Trowe at the march, "Management told me I had a pattern of being disrespectful and discourteous." The real reason was her support for Healthcare Workers United, she said. She got a subscription to the paper.

Maeve Harrington, a college student in upstate New York, got a subscription and several booklets at the conference, including *The Communist Manifesto* and *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*. "She and her friend said they never learned anything in school that they were being exposed to at the conference," said Rachele Fruit. "She grew up believing Cuba was a dictatorship and now wants to learn the truth about the Cuban Revolution."

To join the effort and Socialist Workers Party fund drive, contact a party branch near you. (See listing on page 8.)



*Militant*/Janet Post

John Staggs, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Philadelphia City Council at-large, center, at Labor Day parade, talks with members of Transport Workers Union he knew from previous job at Hyundai. Zeke Hernandez, left, joined Staggs in campaigning among the union contingents.

## Join Socialist Workers Party drive to raise \$100,000

BY JOHN STUDER

The Socialist Workers Party 2015 Fund Drive is crucial for the party to take advantage of spreading opportunities to deepen involvement in the class struggle and build a broader current that looks to the SWP. This fall the party is organizing an eight-week drive to raise \$100,000, alongside the international effort to expand the *Militant's* circulation and broaden the reach of books from Pathfinder Press on revolutionary history, politics and the example of the Cuban Revolution for today's combatants.

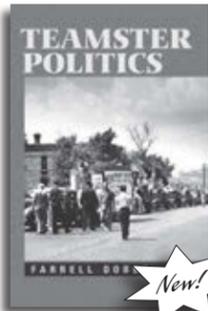
The fund strengthens the party's ability to join in fights like the labor defense campaign for railroad workers Tom Harding and Richard Labrie in Canada (see article on front page). It helps the party become more deeply involved in social battles, from the fight to push back cop brutality to protests against deportations of undocumented workers to defense of a woman's right to choose abortion.

In today's world where the crisis of capitalist production and trade is driving the ruling capitalist families to step up attacks on workers and farmers, the party is meeting workers and groups of fighters looking for help and solidarity, and a deeper understanding of what they face and how to fight effectively.

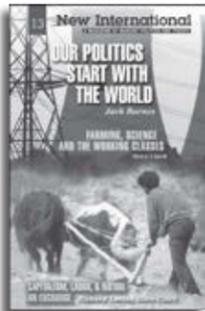
Introduce your co-workers and political collaborators to the party and its work. Ask them to join in working with us. And send as generous a check as you can!

*John Studer, a member of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee, is the 2015 party fund drive director.*

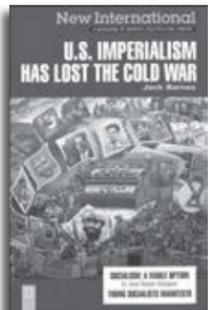
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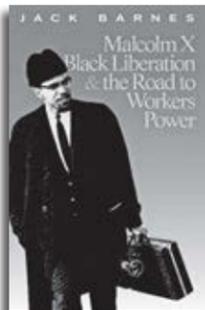
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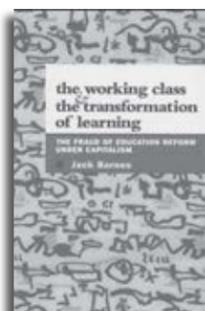
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## Labor Day marked by struggles

Continued from front page  
ness from other workers about attacks from ArcelorMittal," Long said.

In Chicago United Auto Workers Local 551 members from the Ford assembly plant wore "No tiers!" T-shirts, opposing the two-level pay structure pushed on them in 2007 and the auto bosses' latest demand for a lower, third tier at some parts plants. Contracts at Ford, General Motors and Chrysler expire Sept. 14. "We face concessions demands similar to the Steelworkers," autoworker Scott Aowdiegon told the *Militant*.

In Burlington, Washington, farmworkers gathered at Sakuma Brothers Farms demanding recognition of their union, Familias Unidas por la Justicia.

At the Labor Day picnic in Seattle signs calling for \$15 and a union, a 40-hour workweek and regular hours drew people to a literature table sponsored by OUR Walmart, an organization of workers at the retail giant.

In Omaha, Nebraska, some 3,000 unionists as well as community and youth organizations marched in the SeptemberFest parade. Contingents included the SMART rail workers union, whose members defeated Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway's attempt to impose a one-person "crew" last year.

A small group of Walmart workers carrying signs for "\$15 an hour, full-time work, and a union" was well received by many. A few unionists countered that Walmart should be boycotted out of business.

Attempting to discredit the growing fight against police brutality, a group that included family members of cops carried signs saying, "All lives matter," and "My husband's life matters." A "SupportBlue rally" held at the Omaha Police Department headquarters after the parade attracted 300.

Kelton Gordon stopped at the Socialist Workers Party table, attracted by a sign that said "For \$15 minimum wage, full-time hours, and a union; against police brutality."

"The police are supposed to protect and serve, but a lot of people are afraid of them," Gordon said.

At a Labor Day march in Boston organized by Service Employees International Union Local 32BJ, Jena Benson, a Dunkin' Donuts worker who joined the fight for \$15 recently, told the rally, "Nine dollars an hour is not cutting it."

"Airport workers are not giving up," said Radouane Fadal, a G2 Secure Staff employee at Logan Airport, who was part of two strikes this summer.

Juan Carlos, a downtown Wyndham Hotel worker fighting for safety on the job and a union, said, "When I asked for safety equipment, the supervisor said, 'You have to figure it out.'" He announced a Sept. 9 protest at the hotel.

*Dan Fein in Chicago, John Naubert in Seattle, Barbara Bowman in Omaha, Kevin Dwire in Boston, and Janet Post and Mitchel Rosenberg in Philadelphia contributed to this article.*

# Refugees in Europe

Continued from front page days before the breakout.

The determination of these men and women, who are seeking to escape the effects of the civil war in Syria and other conflicts in the Mideast and Africa, has put growing pressure on governments in Europe and North America to grant them asylum.

Washington in particular has declined to accept significant numbers, claiming U.S. imperialism's need to screen for potential terrorists makes it virtually impossible to do so. The U.S. government has accepted only 1,042 Syrian refugees in the last year.

At the same time the government of Hungary announced it was speeding the construction of a fence to keep immigrants out and the Danish government took out ads in Lebanese papers warning Syrians not to come to Denmark.

Twelve million Syrians — more than half of the population — have been forced from their homes by the civil war. Four million have fled the country, with most stuck in refugee camps in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey under unbearable conditions. Millions more are fleeing conflicts in Eritrea, Iraq, and other parts of the Middle East, Asia and Africa in response to the deepening impact of the capitalist economic crisis there.

At least 320,000 refugees have made the journey to Europe this year; 2,600 have died trying. The image of 3-year-old Aylan Kurdi washed up on a beach in Turkey and 71 bodies found in a truck in Austria have become symbols of the horrors of these voyages.

## Determination of Syrian immigrants

The latest crisis came to a head when the Hungarian government barred many Syrian refugees in Budapest from continuing on to Austria and Germany, leaving thousands stranded at the train station. A makeshift camp, controlled by the immigrants, went up in the area around the station. They held their ground against attempts by cops to clear them out.

Images of their trek to the border spread around the world, including of working people in Budapest offering food and water along the road. The German and Austrian governments finally agreed to allow them to enter and apply for asylum, waiving European Union rules that they register in countries where they first arrived. The Hungarian government then provided 100 buses to carry some 4,500 people to the border. German officials emphasized this was a "one-time response."

By Sept. 7, when the Austrian government said it would put back in place tighter border controls, 12,000 had crossed.

A similar situation has developed

on the Greek island of Lesbos, where 17,000 refugees are demanding that they be allowed to head farther north to countries where they hope to be able to settle.

While at times crying crocodile tears for the refugees' plight, the governments of other imperialist nations are doing as little as possible to aid them.

"The whole country has been deeply moved by the heart-breaking images we have seen over the past few days," British Prime Minister David Cameron told Parliament Sept. 7. "Britain should fulfill its moral responsibility to help."

His proposal? To resettle just 20,000 Syrians over the next five years. And under Cameron's plan, the U.K. would only accept applicants from the Middle East, not those who have already made their way to Europe.

Under the rising pressure, the U.S. State Department recently said it would raise its quota to 8,000 for 2016.

The German, Austrian and Swedish governments have taken in the largest number of refugees but have complained that other EU governments need to share the "burden" by taking mandatory quotas.

"The problem is not European, it's German," complained Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban Sept 3. "Nobody would like to stay in Hungary, neither Slovakia, Poland or Estonia." He added, "We do not want a large number of Muslim people in our country."

Orban has charged that Germany's provision of financial assistance to refugees has encouraged them to come to Europe.

On Sept. 7 the German government announced it was reducing cash assistance to asylum-seekers. The *Washington Post* noted that even before the cutback, a family of three Syrian refugees in Berlin was receiving just \$260 a month for food and clothing.

## 'Refugees welcome'

In stark contrast to the callous contempt shown by the imperialist rulers, there has been an outpouring of solidarity from working people and others across the continent.

In Dresden, Germany, 5,000 rallied Aug. 30 in support of the immigrants. The following day 20,000 marched in Vienna with banners reading, "Human rights are borderless" and "No person is illegal." In Budapest, some 5,000 dem-

## Vietnam event: Fight to end US embargo on Cuba!



Militant/Baskaran Appu

HANOI, Vietnam — "The Cuban Revolution has an important place in our heart," said Vu Xuan Hong, above, in his opening remarks to the Seventh Asia-Pacific Regional Conference of Solidarity with Cuba Sept. 8. "Vietnam is pleased to host this event, because in the most difficult time of our struggle for independence, Fidel Castro, president of the Republic of Cuba, explained that 'for Vietnam we are ready to sacrifice our own blood.'" Vu Xuan Hong is president of the Vietnam Union of Friendship Organizations and a member of the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Some 220 delegates are participating in the regional Cuba solidarity gathering, including more than 100 from Vietnam. They have come from 18 countries: Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Cuba, India, Laos, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, New Zealand, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Philippines, South Africa, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, the United States and Vietnam.

Antonio Guerrero, one of the Cuban Five, at right, was given a standing ovation. "Antonio's presence here is a strength. It means we won," noted Kenia Serrano, second from left, president of ICAP, the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples.

The re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States has taken place "with the historical leadership of the revolution in place," Serrano said. "The United States had to recognize their aggressive policy against Cuba had failed." Referring to Washington's 55-year-long economic war on Cuba, which remains in full force, she said that "the financial persecutions against the Island have been maintained, and the top priority for Cuba and the solidarity movement is to fight against it."

Also in photo are Vasudeva Nanayakkara, Democratic Left Front of Sri Lanka, left, and Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan, Deputy Chairwoman, Vietnam National Assembly, third from left.

— ANNALUCIA VERMUNT AND RON POULSEN

onstrated Sept. 2. A march in Stockholm Sept. 6 drew 15,000.

Soccer fans displaying banners saying "Refugees welcome" have become a regular feature in matches in the German premier league. Refugees are invited to matches and clubs organize collections of clothes and donations. Germany's top team, Bayern Munich, has announced it will raise \$1.1 million in aid and set up a training camp for those arriving in the city.

Fans in England and Ireland have followed the example and "Refugees Welcome" banners now appear at soccer matches and arenas there, too.

In Iceland, thousands of people have offered to take in those in need of shelter, as have hundreds in Berlin.

On Sept. 6 a caravan of 100 cars drove from Vienna over the Hungarian border to deliver donations of food and other basic necessities and offered rides to immigrants on the way back.

# UK rally protests gov't attacks on immigrants

BY PAUL DAVIES

MANCHESTER, England — Under a banner reading "No human is illegal," hundreds took part in a protest here Sept. 4 against the government's

response to the rising numbers of people seeking refuge in the country.

"This crisis is not new," Sandhya Sharma from Safety 4 Sisters told the rally. Pointing to similar protests around Europe she added, "Something is changing. People are being stirred into action."

In addition to Safety 4 Sisters, sponsors included the Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit, the Communist League, the Kurdish Cultural Centre and others.

The United Kingdom "is not full up," said Denise McDowell, director of the Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit. "We want people to come to be safe and have a better life."

In recent days, the government has shifted its policy to admit a limited number of asylum-seekers from refugee camps in the Middle East.

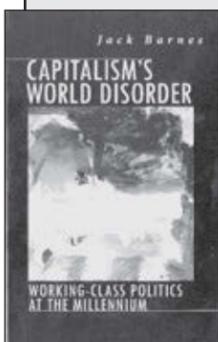
"Now the government is trying to

impose another division — between so called 'legitimate political refugees' and 'illegitimate economic immigrants,'" said Jonathan Silberman, Communist League candidate for mayor of London. "We should reject their attempts to divide us. This is a life-or-death question for the working class. Our unions should fight to open the borders of the U.K."

"Until the criminal regime in Syria is gone, more refugees must be allowed to come. Treat these people as humans," said Yasmine Nahlawi from Rethink, Rebuild Society (Syrian Community in Manchester).

The protest started with a spirited performance by the Women Asylum Seekers Together choir. "The U.K. has only accepted 216 refugees from Syria so far. Let's work together to change that," choir member Dianne Ngoza told participants.

## BOOKS FOR WORKING-CLASS FIGHTERS



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# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

MAGGIE TROWE, EDITOR

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

This column is dedicated to giving voice to those engaged in battle and helping build solidarity. National rail and auto contracts are approaching expiration: ATI Steelworkers are locked out; and union contracts for basic steel and East Coast Verizon have expired. I invite those involved in fights against concessions to contact me at 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018; or (212) 244-4899; or themilitant@mac.com. We'll work together to ensure your story is told.

—Maggie Trowe

## Paperworkers in Washington say 'enough is enough,' strike 9 days

LONGVIEW, Wash. — Some 800 members of Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers Local 153 struck KapStone Paper and Packaging here Aug. 27 after the company imposed its "final offer" Aug. 10.

"Enough is enough," Local 153 President Kurt Gallow, who works as a millwright and vibration analyst, told the *Militant*. "The membership has spoken loud and clear against the company's callous disregard for the law and for the union membership."

The company cut off workers' medical insurance hours before the strike began, Gallow said. "Since the mill was bought by KapStone, workers have brought them record profits," he said. "The company already took our pensions and retirees medical benefits in 2010. This time they want more." Other contract issues include safety and outsourcing.

The company brought in strikebreakers. On Aug. 31 a union member was hit by a scab vehicle exiting the plant. KapStone seized on this incident to file a restraining order against the union Sept. 1 aimed at limiting to two the number of

pickets on either side of the main gates.

"Local 153 has maintained a peaceful and disciplined picket line since commencing its unfair labor practice strike," the union responded in a statement. "The only incidents that have occurred were the result of provocation and reckless conduct by scabs and some salaried KapStone employees."

Calls from the *Militant* to KapStone for comment were not returned.

Dianne Fortenbury, a machinist with 40 years at the mill, participated in the last strike in 1978. "We have a real strong membership," she said. "We have support from younger people who never were in a strike before."

Derek Herren, 22, started work in the box plant three days before the walkout began. "I see a lot of hard-working people out here," he said. "I don't know a lot of them yet, but I stand by the union."

International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 21 and the Machinists, support the paper workers. "The KapStone workers deserve everyone's support. Their issues with the company have been going on for years," said Shelly Porter, a Longshore member.

On Sept. 4 KapStone accepted an offer by union officials to end the strike

## Maori defend ancestral land in NZ

BY JANET ROTH

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — "This is our birthright, our *whenua* [land]," Waimarie McFarland of the group Save Our Unique Landscape told the Auckland Council Aug. 27. More than 150 Maori residents of Ihumatao village and supporters came to the meeting to call for a halt to a housing development on ancestral land near Auckland Airport.

The disputed land is situated between the Otuaatua Stonefields Historic Reserve and Ihumatao, a Maori village of 80 households gathered around their meeting place, the Makaurau Marae.

It was confiscated by the government in 1863 and became a privately owned farm. The whole area, which includes ancestral burial caves, is significant because Maori have lived there continuously for over 1,000 years.

The government has designated the land as a Special Housing Area, which allows for fast-track construction. Fletcher Residential purchased the land in 2014 and plans to build 480 houses.

Save Our Unique Landscape representatives called on the council to withdraw its support for this designation, presenting a 4,000-signature petition.

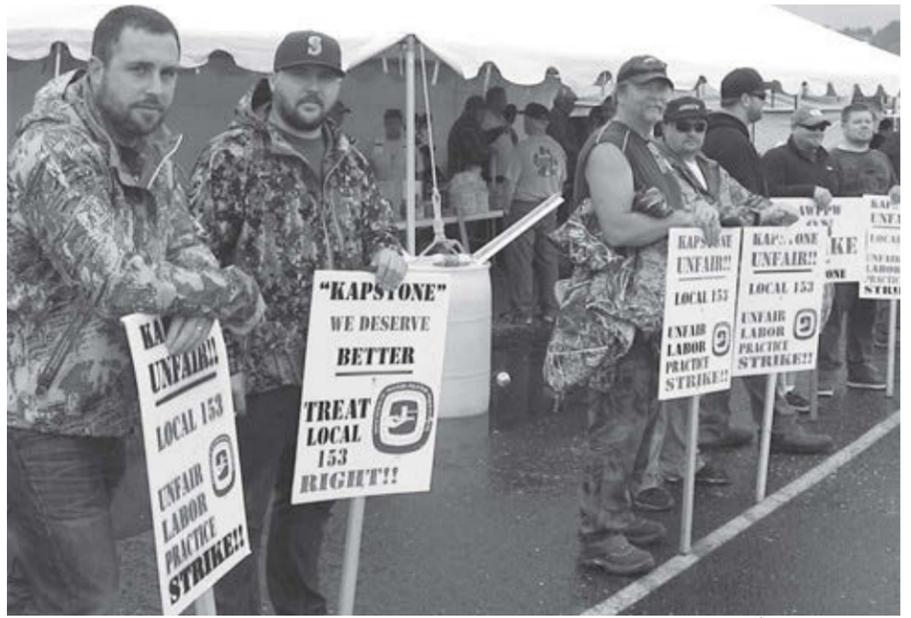
Te Warena Taua, chair of the Maori Trust that oversees Makaurau Marae, said Maori had long fought to preserve land and water rights at Ihumatao, but concluded, "We are unable to get the SHA overturned." He said Fletcher Residential had agreed to return a portion of the land, and that Maori would be able to buy some of the new houses.

McFarland responded that most people in this working-class area could not

afford them. "Lots of us in Ihumatao don't own our homes but rent," she said.

Save Our Unique Landscape proposes an alternative block that could be developed. This would require the agreement of both the municipal council and the New Zealand government.

The council voted 12-5 against revoking support for the Special Housing Area. "The fight will continue," declared Pania Newton of the Unique Landscape group, as she led supporters out to the waiting buses back to Ihumatao.



Militant/Mary Martin

Strikers picket KapStone Paper and Packaging Corp. in Longview, Washington, Aug. 31. After 15 months of talks workers struck after company imposed its "final" contract offer.

and return to work as contract negotiations continued. The workers would have been eligible for unemployment benefits had the company refused. The decision to return to work followed a court ruling rejecting KapStone's demand to limit pickets. At a Labor Day picnic near here, many expressed support for the paperworkers.

—Mary Martin

## Boston airport workers strike 1 day, rally for better pay, respect

BOSTON — Baggage handlers, cabin cleaners and other workers at G2 Secure Staff, a contractor for Delta and American airlines, held a second one-day strike this summer Aug. 19 at Logan International Airport for \$15 an hour and a union.

The G2 strikers, with the support of Service Employees International Union Local 32BJ, picketed the airport and rallied at Boston's South Station transit hub. They were joined at the rally by fast-food workers as well as members of UNITE HERE Local 26, who are in their own fight for a contract at LSG Sky Chefs.

"We can't survive with the wages they pay us," said G2 worker Ababuti Ogalla. "The manager follows us, even on breaks. They cut hours, so some stay home, the rest have to work their breaks."

A week later, on Aug. 26, 75 people marched through East Boston near the airport in support of union members at LSG Sky Chefs, whose national con-

tract expired in March. The starting wage for many there is below \$10 an hour. They were joined by hotel workers fighting for a union at the Wyndham Hotel, others who won the union at Le Meridien hotel and a contingent of G2 workers.

The protest, organized by Local 26, took place while negotiations for the LSG Sky Chefs contract took place in Boston.

"We're fighting to get a raise and better health care," union steward Remona Mojica, who works at the Boston Sky Chefs facility, told the *Militant*. "The working conditions are terrible. The dishroom is extremely hot. But every manager has a new air conditioner for their office! A warehouse worker narrowly missed being hit by a falling crate recently when he was working alone."

"We're fighting for respect," G2 worker Jonathan Cornier told the rally. "And we need to do what we've got to do."

—Kevin Dwire

## Railroad Safety: Workers, Community & the Environment

Building a Labor-Community Alliance Around Rail Safety

Chicago Conference Saturday, Sept. 19

United Electrical Hall, 37 S. Ashland Ave.

Sponsored by Railroad Workers United [www.railroadconference.org](http://www.railroadconference.org)

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

**THE MILITANT**  
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

September 21, 1990

Unionists and working people should come to the aid of the embattled Greyhound strikers who are facing serious challenges in their seven-month fight against the giant bus company. The strike is in need of the united solidarity of the entire labor movement.

The Greyhound strike is understood by many workers as a battle against union-busting. Greyhound chairman Fred Currey forced 30 percent pay cuts on the 8,000 union members in 1987 and steep give-backs again this year.

The strike has won support on the picket line, at rallies and most recently during many Labor Day celebrations across the country. Strikers at Eastern Airlines and coal miners fighting company attacks in the coalfields have taken the lead in giving solidarity.

**THE MILITANT**  
PUBLISHED WEEKLY IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

September 20, 1965

The war between Pakistan and India is one more explosion of a powderkeg planted by imperialism. In this case, it was planted by the British and stuffed with extra high explosives by the U.S. which has tended to replace British imperialist interests on the Indian subcontinent as well as elsewhere in the world.

After World War II, the British realized they would no longer be able to hold on to India. The wave of demonstrations and strikes and the Royal Indian Navy mutiny of 1946 supported by the Bombay workers made it clear that the British could not long hold on by a military and repressive apparatus. So the wily British imperialists applied the principle of which they are past masters — divide and rule.

## SOCIALIST APPEAL

September 21, 1940

A plenary session of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party will be held, jointly with active workers' conference of delegates from all branches, in Chicago, September 27-29.

The Plenum-Conference will serve as the mobilization of the party to give reality to Comrade Leon Trotsky's last words: "Please tell our friends I am sure of the victory of the Fourth International. Go forward."

The principal question under discussion will be the fundamental task of party policy toward the militarization of the United States. An unfinished article by Trotsky on this basic question was on his desk awaiting completion when the assassin struck him.

# Cuba, Angola and ‘the most beautiful ‘Visions of Freedom’ tells ‘true history’ of Cuban Revolution

*Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria, and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976-1991*, by Piero Gleijeses. 655 pages. University of North Carolina Press, 2013.

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

*Visions of Freedom* fills a big hole in telling the truth about a story that until now has been largely unknown around the world: revolutionary Cuba’s decisive contribution to the liberation of Angola, Namibia and South Africa. That strug-

gle, which Cuban leader Fidel Castro has called “*la causa más bonita*,” — the most beautiful cause — changed the course of history on the African continent and beyond.

I’ve read this book a few times, with tattered and worn stickies throughout and underlining in various colors to prove it. Written in clear and compelling language, it offers meticulously documented facts and takes no shortcuts in explaining the complexities of Cuba’s internationalist combat mission in Angola. I strongly recommend it.

*Visions of Freedom* is the sequel to *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976*. The first volume, published in 2002, covers Cuba’s aid to liberation struggles from the Algerian independence war in the early 1960s to the victory over the first South African invasion of Angola in 1975-76. *Visions* takes the story through the 1988 final victory in Angola over the apartheid invaders and the subsequent shattering of the white supremacist regime itself.

The two books together provide a powerful account of the selfless internationalism that makes the Cuban Revolution unique in the world today — a living example of what working people are capable of when they take state power, transforming themselves and their society in the process.

A Spanish-language edition of *Visions of Freedom* has now been published by Havana-based Ciencias Sociales. It was launched in June at meetings in Havana with the participation of Gleijeses, Cuban leader Jorge Risquet, who was Cuba’s chief representative in the negotiations that ended the South African intervention in Angola, and Ricardo Alarcón. During the internationalist mission Alarcón was Cuban ambassador to the United Nations and then deputy foreign minister.

“When you read this book, you feel proud to be a Cuban and a revolutionary. You feel proud of the leadership of the revolution, and of having been part of that internationalist effort,” said Fernando González in an exchange with Cuban students last year. González is one of the five Cuban heroes who spent more than a decade and a half in U.S. prisons on frame-up charges stemming from their work in defense of the revolution. Three of the Cuban Five, including González, were volunteer combatants in Angola.

Gleijeses, who teaches U.S. foreign policy at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, was the first non-Cuban scholar to gain access to the closed archives of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba. He assembled 15,000 pages of documents from that source — including transcripts of conversations of Fidel Castro and Raúl Castro with close aides, Soviet officials, and Angolan leaders — as well as documents from the archives of the U.S., South African and other governments. (He has made many of these available through the website [digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org](http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org).) The author also interviewed more than 150 participants, including many of the principal protagonists.

## A deeply popular effort

Over a 16-year period, 425,000 Cuban internationalist volunteers served in Angola as combatants or as doctors, teachers and other civilian workers. They joined with Angolans to fight off two major South African invasions, in 1975-76 and again in 1987-88. In between, they held the defensive line against countless actions by the South African army, as Luanda waged a long war against counterrevolutionary Angolan forces supported by the apartheid regime and Washington. Some 2,000 Cubans, along with hundreds of thousands of Angolans, were killed.

One thread that runs through the book is the Cuban people’s deep support for the internationalist mission in Angola and the genuinely voluntary character of their participation in it. It comes through in the author’s interviews with numerous volunteers, who in their own words express their identification with the fight to free southern Africa and willingness to risk their lives in that effort.

Gleijeses quotes a 1979 report from the CIA, not exactly a neutral source, that in Cuba, “Service in Angola remains popular with the youth.”

Rebutting Washington’s lie that the Cubans were acting as “Soviet proxies,” Gleijeses documents the true record. As Nelson Mandela put it in 1991, when he visited the island to thank the Cuban people for their contribution to the anti-apartheid struggle, “What other country can point to a record of greater selflessness than Cuba has displayed in its relations to Africa?”

The book also demolishes claims that the U.S. government sought to bring down the apartheid regime. It irrefutably documents Washington’s support to the South African invasions of Angola and its military aid to UNITA and other Pretoria-backed groups inside Angola.

The political and military leadership



Ricardo López

Cuban and Angolan combatants in Cuito Cuanavale, May 1988. Victory there and drive to Namibian border, as Cuba mobilized tens of thousands of troops including its best pilots and military equipment, dealt crushing defeat to South African invaders and secured Angola’s sovereignty.

capacities of Fidel Castro and of the broader cadres leading the Cuban Revolution are evident throughout — from the unhesitating commitment of tens of thousands of Cuban troops in response to the 1975 South African invasion of Angola, to the definitive defeat of Pretoria’s army in Cuito Cuanavale and southwest Angola in 1988, through the negotiations and the final withdrawal of Cuban troops in 1991.

The Cuban leadership had confidence in the fighting capacity not only of the Cuban people but of the Angolan soldiers, the Namibian freedom fighters of the South West Africa People’s Organization, and the rebellious masses of South Africa, led by the African National Congress, who were increasingly inspired by the Cuban-led victories. Cubans helped train ANC and SWAPO combatants.

“The South African people are showing courage and heroism that is truly astonishing,” Fidel Castro wrote in a 1985 letter to the president of Angola, referring to the upsurge of demonstrations, strikes, and school boycotts against the

white supremacist regime. “It is clear,” he noted, “that a new situation has emerged and that the question of the final eradication of apartheid has moved to center stage.”

Gleijeses cites statements by Fidel and Raúl Castro that, as long as the Angolans wanted their help, Cuban volunteers would remain in that country until the apartheid regime was defeated. That revolutionary course led to a triple victory: Angola’s sovereignty was secured, Namibia won its independence from South African rule, and the apartheid regime itself was brought down.

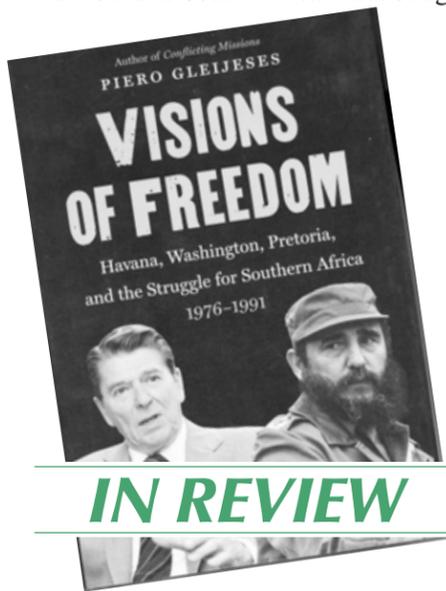
## Two conflicting courses

*Visions of Freedom* does an impressive job of documenting the sharp differences between the course followed by the Cuban leadership and the one implemented for many years by Angolan officials and their Soviet military advisers. Defending Angola against Pretoria depended on very substantial military and economic aid from Moscow. But the Cuban leadership did not hesitate to argue for and carry out a proletarian in-



Fernando Lez

Some 425,000 Cuban volunteers served in Angola 1975-91. Internationalist mission increased self-confidence of Cuban working people and youth, strengthening revolution and helping meet economic and political challenges of 1990s. Above, students greet Cuban combatants returning from Angola, Jan. 29, 1991.



IN REVIEW

# 'Our cause' — the defeat of apartheid Cuba's selfless internationalist example in southern Africa



Above: Gillian Edelstein

Cuban-led defeat of South African army in Angola inspired Namibian freedom fighters and strengthened popular struggle that brought down apartheid regime itself. Above, protest in Eastern Cape, South Africa, March 1986. Inset, from right, Nelson Mandela, Fidel Castro and Cuban Division Gen. José Ramón Fernández during Mandela's July 1991 visit to Cuba to thank Cuban people for their role in liberation of southern Africa.

internationalist course.

Moscow's main priority, Gleijeses notes, was seeking détente — arms limitation treaties and other diplomatic accommodation with Washington. They feared the popular struggles in Africa and elsewhere would derail those efforts.

"In November 1975 the Kremlin had been angered by the dispatch of Cuban troops to Angola," Gleijeses writes. Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev "was focused on the SALT II negotiations with the United States" and wanted to proclaim the success of détente at the upcoming Soviet Communist Party congress. Anticipating this reaction, the Cuban government sent troops to aid the Angolan government first and notified Moscow later.

In late 1987, when Cuba deployed tens of thousands of troops to Angola for the culminating battles, the Mikhail Gorbachev regime — infuriated because this might complicate U.S.-Soviet arms control talks — urged the Cubans to publicly describe the mobilization as only "a planned troop rotation." Raúl Castro, Cuba's minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, replied that they would not "say it is a troop rotation because this is a lie and we don't tell lies."

Throughout the war the Soviet advisers insisted that "Angola should build a conventional army with tanks and heavy weapons that would keep the South Africans at bay," Gleijeses explains. The Cubans, on the other hand, argued that their forces should hold the line against foreign invasion, allowing the Angolans to concentrate on the war against the UNITA counterrevolutionaries, for which smaller units "with light equipment and training in irregular warfare" were needed.

The Soviet-backed strategy led to ill-conceived offensives and one demoralizing military setback after another, with unnecessarily heavy casualties. Finally, in November 1987, facing the potential annihilation of some of Angola's best-trained forces in the remote

southern town of Cuito Cuanavale, the Angolan leadership accepted Havana's proposal that Cuba be given command of a military offensive that would bring the South African intervention to an end once and for all.

The Cuban-led troops halted the assault on Cuito Cuanavale, then attacked with overwhelming force in southwestern Angola. It was "like a boxer who with his left hand blocks the blow and with his right — strikes," as Fidel Castro put it. Sending their best pilots and most modern equipment to Angola, the Cubans gained air superiority and drove toward the Namibian border with tens of thousands of Cuban, Angolan and Namibian troops. The apartheid rulers were dealt a resounding defeat and forced to the negotiating table, withdrawing from Angola by mid-1988 and ceding independence to Namibia.

## Proletarian values of revolution

*Visions of Freedom* also illustrates the proletarian moral values that guide the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba — the opposite of those of the bourgeois officer castes of imperialist armies. In organizing to decisively defeat the enemy, Cuba's leadership sought to avoid big, costly battles and minimize casualties on all sides, just as they had done in the 1956-58 revolutionary war in Cuba.

In a 1983 memo to the Angolan authorities, "the Cubans stressed, as they had time and time again, that it is 'absolutely necessary' to treat the enemy wounded and prisoners of war with humanity and also to pay more attention to the needs of the population," Gleijeses notes.

Unlike other foreign officials and businessmen, "the Cubans offered no bribes and no expensive gifts," and Cuban officers in Angola lived in modest conditions.

The Cuban leadership always collaborated with the Angolans as equals — with respect for their sovereignty,

never trying to dictate to them how to conduct their affairs, even when they disagreed.

## World context of Angolan mission

One of the things I had not fully appreciated until reading Gleijeses' account was the political complexities of the class struggle — in Africa and elsewhere — within which the Angolan internationalist mission unfolded. The way the Cuban leadership under Fidel charted a course through these challenges is a powerful confirmation of its revolutionary capacities.

Among the developments Gleijeses highlights:

- ♦ In Ethiopia, where an anti-feudal land reform and anti-imperialist struggle was unfolding in 1977-78, some 12,000 Cuban volunteers responded to the Ethiopian government's plea for help to repulse a U.S.-backed Somali invasion. Cuba did so without weakening its military commitment in Angola.

At the same time, to the dismay of the Ethiopian government and their Soviet advisers, the Cubans refused to deploy their military forces against the Eritrean people, who were waging a war for independence from Addis Ababa.

- ♦ Havana's defense of Angola gave more breathing room to Zambia, Mozambique and other "front-line" countries threatened by apartheid South Africa. The Cuban-led victories in Angola and Ethiopia were a decisive factor in Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia) throwing off a white-supremacist regime in 1980.

- ♦ The Cuban government sharply disagreed with the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. When Fidel Castro met with Soviet leaders in early 1980, among the several disagreements he expressed, "the main item in Castro's indictment was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan," Gleijeses writes. "The Cubans disapproved of the decision, of how it had been carried out," including the fact that Moscow had invaded a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, of which Cuba was then president.

"Afghanistan created a great strain in our relations," Cuban leader Jorge Risquet told Gleijeses.

- ♦ Cuba did not pull back from its defense of Angola despite growing U.S. military threats it faced in the early 1980s. Responding to the 1979 revolutionary victories in Grenada and Nicaragua, Washington sharply escalated its war drive in Central America and the Caribbean, providing massive support to the *contras* (counterrevolutionaries) in Nicaragua and invading Grenada in 1983.

At the same time, Soviet officials had made it crystal clear that, "if the imperialists attack Cuba, we can count only on ourselves," as Fidel Castro put it.

- ♦ The exposure in late 1986 of secret U.S. funding of the Nicaraguan counterrevolutionaries, financed partly through clandestine arm sales to Iran, politically weakened the Reagan administration. The Cuban leadership, Gleijeses notes, correctly judged that with the Iran-contra scandal, "the danger of a U.S. military attack against their country receded." The decision to commit massive troop reinforcements to Angola, along with the best military equipment at Cuba's disposal, in response to the 1987 South African escalation was based on that assessment.

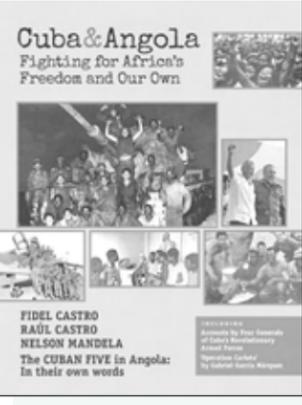
And the Cubans put everything on the line — including the Cuban Revolution itself. Gleijeses quotes Raúl Castro in November 1987: "I told the Soviet [General Zaitsev] that we'll go without underpants if we have to. We will send everything to Angola."

To get the most out of *Visions of Freedom*, two additional books complement Gleijeses's account. One is *Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own*, published by Pathfinder Press. It includes speeches by Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro, and Nelson Mandela, as well as accounts by the three of the Cuban Five who served in Angola.

*Cuba and Angola* adds substantially to the story, mostly in the words of leading actors in these historic events. It

**Continued on page 8**

**Additional reading . . .**



**Cuba & Angola: Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own**  
Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro, Nelson Mandela, the Cuban Five in Angola: In their own words  
Includes accounts by four generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces and Gabriel García Márquez on Operation Carlota. \$12  
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**How Far We Slaves Have Come!**  
Nelson Mandela and Fidel Castro  
\$10  
Also available in Spanish and Farsi.



**Cuba and the Coming American Revolution**  
Jack Barnes  
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# 'Socialism is the next inevitable stage of social evolution'

Below is an excerpt from America's Road to Socialism, which contains five talks given by James P. Cannon in December 1952 and January 1953 in Los Angeles. It is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for September. Cannon, born in Kansas in 1890, joined the Socialist Party at the age of 18. He was an organizer for the Industrial Workers of the World before and during World War I and became a founding leader of the Communist Party. Expelled in 1928 for leading a political fight against Stalinism, Cannon helped found the Socialist Workers Party, serving as SWP national secretary and national chairman. Copyright © 1975 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



James P. Cannon speaking at 1948 N.Y. meeting protesting attacks on unions. After he became a socialist, Cannon was told, "It'll never work, it's against human nature." He said he learned "all the forces of history were on my side, the side of socialism. I just had to lend a hand."

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JAMES P. CANNON

Almost as soon as I was old enough to look around and see and think for myself, I rebelled against the poverty, injustice, and all-around crookedness of capitalism. I became a socialist and joined the movement when I was a boy, and have been working at it ever since.

And if I made a mistake, I can't say I wasn't warned. Quite a few practical people who were interested in my welfare and thought I was marked for success in life began to shake their heads sadly when they heard me popping off on the street corners about socialism.

"It's a fine idea, son, but it'll never work," I was told. "It's against human nature." "There always have been rich and poor and there always will be. Be a realist. Don't waste your life on a utopian dream that can never be realized. If you want to get ahead in this world, you've got to be practical and look out for Number One."

I mention this to show you that I know all the arguments against socialism. I heard them more than forty years ago. And I won't say that I didn't pay attention to them. I did. Especially the argument that socialism is a utopian dream that can never be realized. I was then, as I am now, inclined to realism, and I never saw any point in expending energy on impossible and unrealizable projects. The argument that socialism is not practical and not realizable worried me.

It was this troubled frame of mind that brought me, more than forty years ago, to an open forum such as this, conducted by the Socialist Educational Society in Kansas City. I went there in search of more detailed information about this thing called socialism, which had charmed me and inspired me with its grand promise of the future society of secure peace and abundance for all; a society based on equality, solidarity, and comradeship.

It was at that forum that I got my introduction to the ideas of Marx and Engels, the ideas of scientific socialism. From the discussions of that fo-

rum and the further study inspired by them, I became acquainted with Marx's analysis of capitalism, and his sweeping assertion that socialism is not only a good idea, but is the next inevitable stage of social evolution; that the further development of capitalism cannot lead to anything else but its downfall and the socialist reorganization of society.

That did it. That settled all my youthful doubts about practicality and realizability of the idea. It convinced me theoretically, and that is the firmest conviction there is, that all the forces of history were working on my side, on the side of socialism, and that all I had to do was

lend a hand, along with others, to help the historic process along.

Compared to the privilege of participating in this magnificent historical mission, all the so-called practical concerns of life and the possible material rewards of conformity seemed trivial to me more than forty years ago, and they still do. I have never changed my mind about this question in all the intervening years. That was not because of dogmatic obstinacy, but simply because I saw no good reason to change my mind. ...

If I grew stronger in my socialist convictions as the years passed by, it was because it appeared to me that the development of events was confirming in life the analysis and predictions of Marx.

It was Marx himself who said that no social system can be superseded until it has exhausted its progressive capacities. If capitalism is capable of further progressive development on a world scale, and is therefore invulnerable against any attempts to change it in a radical manner, then there is not much point in arguing that socialism would be a better system.

But on the other hand, if capitalism has lost its progressive character and become reactionary, has ceased to grow and expand and develop the productive forces of the people, upon which all human welfare is based; if it has entered into its period of decline and decay — then the optimistic defenders of capitalism are in the wrong. They are the real utopians of the present day.

## 'The most beautiful cause'

Continued from page 7

underscores an important element that does not come through clearly in *Visions of Freedom*: how Cuba's internationalist mission in Angola politically strengthened the Cuban Revolution. The confidence that Cuban workers and farmers and several generations of youth gained in their own capacities helped make it possible for Cuba to survive the sharp economic crisis of the 1990s, when it lost 85 percent of its foreign trade as the Soviet Union imploded.

As Raúl Castro put it in a May 1991 speech included in the book, "When we face new and unexpected challenges we will always be able to recall the

epic of Angola with gratitude, because without Angola we would not be as strong as we are today."

The other book is *My Life* by Fidel Castro (Penguin Books, 2007), especially the chapter "Cuba and Africa." In it, Castro notes that Washington has tried to rewrite history to cover up "the honorable role that Cuba played" in the southern African freedom struggle for more than a quarter century. That was possible in large part, he said, because "the true history of those events has never been written."

Fortunately, with *Visions of Freedom*, the true history is beginning to be told.

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# Open the borders to refugees now!

The Socialist Workers Party demands Washington ‘Open the borders!’ to the hundreds of thousands of refugees from Syria and elsewhere driven from their homes as a result of capitalist exploitation, competition and war. The SWP’s sister Communist Leagues in the United Kingdom, Canada and elsewhere are initiating and joining protests demanding their imperialist rulers do likewise.

We salute the proletarian response of tens of thousands of working people in Europe who reject chauvinism and welcome the immigrants, demanding the governments where they live do the same.

The deadly turmoil in the Middle East and Africa today is a result of the coming apart of the imperialist-imposed order headed by Washington, as well as decades of betrayals by Stalinist and nationalist misleaderships that claimed to speak for the toilers of the region. It is a product of the world crisis of capitalist trade and production, which falls most heavily on toilers in the semicolonial countries.

The Socialist Workers Party has a proud history of demanding Washington open the borders to those

seeking refuge — from Jews fleeing Nazi concentration camps in the 1930s to Kurds and others following the 1991 U.S. assault on Iraq.

“Crumbling borders weaken the employer-fostered competition between workers of different nationalities and widen the cultural scope and world view of the working class,” SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes wrote in *Capitalism’s World Disorder*. “This process strengthens the fighting potential of labor’s battalions and brings new experiences and militancy into the workers movement.”

Widespread working class solidarity and aid to the fleeing toilers stands in stark contrast to the response of their rulers, who block fleeing refugees with border fences and naval flotillas and paint immigrants as terrorist threats. Workers can see more clearly the need for our class to act — to take a revolutionary course to break from the capitalist parties, to build labor parties based on the unions on the road to overthrowing the dictatorship of capital and joining the worldwide fight for socialism, a society based on relations of human solidarity, not me-first dog-eat-dog capitalist values.

# Framed-up rail workers win support

Continued from front page

Lac-Mégantic,” Thomas Walsh, attorney for Harding, told the *Militant*, the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. and other media after the hearing. “But it is the people here who were affected. They are in the best position to judge. All they want is justice.”

And many know Harding, who has been running trains through the area for years. They think the wrong people are in the dock.

“The big bosses should be charged. They’re the ones that gave the orders to the workers who had to carry them out,” Sylvie Carrier, an auxiliary nurse at the local hospital and member of the Quebec nurses union, told Communist League member John Steele from Montreal and this reporter as we went door to door showing people coverage on the defense campaign from the *Militant* and asking them what they thought.

“Tom Harding doesn’t deserve this, he isn’t guilty of anything,” said Françoise Roy, owner of the Passion Chocolat shop a few hundred yards from the center of the explosion. “Most of the population here thinks like me. He has slept in the inn here on runs for years. The directors of the MMA have to take the responsibility. We have to fight for justice.”

Workers said similar things at the motel where we stayed and at various restaurants, including the rebuilt Musi-Cafe restaurant, where 27 people died and the building was destroyed in the disaster.

“Lac-Mégantic is behind Tom Harding,” said Passion Chocolat server Aline Savard.

## Workers have stake in fighting frame-up

The fight against the frame-up has substantial stakes for rail workers and the entire working class.



Militant/John Steele

Train engineer Tom Harding, right, with lawyer Thomas Walsh Sept. 8 outside courthouse in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec.

The 2013 disaster was bound to happen. In search of profits, rail bosses have been pushing to run trains with ever-smaller crews. While it was normal for a train to operate with a caboose on the back and a five-person crew 30 years ago, today the caboose is long gone and crew sizes are two and sometimes one.

The Canadian government’s Transport Canada gave Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway a special dispensation to run cargo, including crude oil, with only one worker on the train.

The workday on many rail lines has been lengthened to 12 hours. Schedules are erratic. Fatigue is rampant. Track inspectors have been cut and repairs postponed. Train lengths have grown.

Harding and Labrie are backed by their union, the United Steelworkers, which has raised funds for their defense. Literature on the disaster, the conditions facing rail workers and the defense effort are available on the websites of the Transportation Division of the SMART union, which organizes rail workers in the U.S.; the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen division of the Teamsters; and the Tom Harding Defense Fund, a site put up by a former co-worker of Harding who used to make the Lac-Mégantic run and now works for Amtrak in the Albany area.

Since the disaster, Montreal, Maine and Atlantic declared bankruptcy. The Canadian state chose not to file charges against MMA’s bosses.

The \$72 billion Fortress Investment Group has taken over the railroad, renamed it Central Maine and Quebec, and restarted operation. It says it will run timber products, chemicals and fertilizers, grain and “energy products and fuels.” The tracks are being relaid right through the downtown area leveled two years ago. The company says it won’t ship hazardous materials like volatile crude “until at least Jan. 1, 2016.”

Workers in the area are organizing. Noting that the company’s tracks are riddled with rotting ties and torn up spikes, one group has begun to circulate a petition demanding the city bar all rail transport of hazardous material. They took us for a walk on the tracks and we could see the dangerously eroded ties for ourselves.

“We started petitioning a little over a week ago,” committee leader André Blais told us when we met with him and four other activists. “We’ve got well over 1,000 signatures.” The official population of Lac-Mégantic is 6,036.

“We are looking toward organizing a public march in October,” he said.

Harding’s attorney Walsh will attend the Sept. 19 Railroad Safety: Workers, Community and the Environment conference in Chicago that is being organized by Railroad Workers United and a number of area environmental groups. The conference plans to discuss the Lac-Mégantic disaster and the witch-hunt against Harding, organizer Mark Burrows told the *Militant*.

John Steele contributed to this article.

# Solitary confinement

Continued from front page

The prisoners who brought the suit were leaders of three hunger strikes, the last of which, in 2013, grew to include more than 30,000 people and put a national spotlight on the conditions prisoners face in solitary.

As of 2012, more than 500 prisoners had been isolated for more than 10 years in the Security Housing Units in Pelican Bay; 78 for more than 20 years, including some of the plaintiffs.

Prisoners in the SHU are kept in windowless 8-by-10-foot cells 23 hours a day, allowed out only for solitary exercise periods. They are not allowed phone calls, except in emergencies. Visits are “non-contact” via a glass barrier.

The settlement grants a central demand that prisoners no longer be placed in solitary based on accusations of gang affiliation or their political ideas and interests. Up to now inmates could be “validated” as gang members merely on the basis of a supposedly gang-related tattoo, possession of a book, letter or piece of art or on the word of another prisoner. Review for possible release to general population took place only once every six years.

In order to be released from the SHU, they were required to “debrief,” that is finger others as gang members — a divide-and-rule practice calculated to increase tension and violence between prisoners.

The settlement stipulates that solitary confinement will be imposed for specific acts and for a fixed length of time, although existing rules continue to include riots or strikes as well as violence and weapons possession as SHU-eligible violations.

Prisoners now in solitary as a result of gang validation will receive a review within one year. Almost all prisoners who have been in solitary more than 10 years will be immediately released to general population facilities, and no more prisoners will be held in the SHUs at Pelican Bay for more than five years.

When those still in solitary complete their terms, they will be put into a two-year program of easing restrictions before returning to the general population, instead of the previous four-year process.

Prisoner representatives and their lawyers will meet with prison officials and the judge to oversee implementation of the settlement.

## Violation of constitutional rights

The Center for Constitutional Rights, which represented the plaintiffs, argued that solitary confinement is contrary to the Eighth Amendment that prohibits cruel and unusual punishment and that prisoners were denied due process when placed in solitary at the discretion of prison authorities.

At the news conference, Marie Levin, the sister of Sitawa Nantambu Jamaa, read a statement signed by her brother and nine other prisoner-plaintiffs that called the settlement “an important step toward our goal of ending solitary confinement in California, and across the country.”

The statement pointed to an agreement signed by hunger strike leaders in 2012 to end violence between ethnic groups in the prison as a foundation of their movement.

“It is our hope that this groundbreaking agreement will inspire not only state prisoners, but also jail detainees, county prisoners and our communities on the street, to oppose racial and ethnic violence. From this foundation, the prisoners’ human rights movement is awakening the conscience of the nation to recognize that we are fellow human beings.”

“We recognize that achieving our goal of fundamentally transforming the criminal justice system and stopping the practice of warehousing people in prison will be a protracted struggle,” they wrote. “We are fully committed to that effort, and invite you to join us.”

“This is only the beginning,” Dolores Canales, a leader of California Families Against Solitary Confinement and mother of a prisoner in Pelican Bay, told those at the rally.

“The prisoners themselves have been impacted by the fight,” Lupe Reynoso, whose son was recently released from solitary, told the *Militant*. “In my son’s case, he told me one day he was no longer a racist. It shows what can happen when there is unity.”

The Hunger Strike Solidarity Coalition continues to organize protests on the 23rd of each month. For information visit: [prisonhungerstrikesolidarity.wordpress.com](http://prisonhungerstrikesolidarity.wordpress.com).