

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Why workers should demand US out of Guantánamo!
— PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 80/NO. 15 APRIL 18, 2016

Join spring activities to build Socialist Workers Party

BY SETH GALINSKY

Join us from now through June — and beyond — as the Socialist Workers Party steps up its activities to get the party known more broadly in the working class and to win new members and friends to the revolutionary movement. Communist Leagues around the world are doing the same.

Among key aspects of this concentrated effort:

Getting Socialist Workers Party candidates for U.S. president and vice president — Alyson Kennedy and Osborne Hart — on the ballot in six states: Louisiana, New Jersey, Tennessee, Colorado, Minnesota and Washington (see details on page 3).

Joining and promoting the fight for unionization. Organize the unorganized! We will be right in the middle of the April 14 nationwide protests for \$15 and a union, and winning solidarity for other union actions by workers standing up to attempts by the bosses to make working people pay for the capitalist crisis.

Going door to door in small towns
Continued on page 3

US gov't blocks with Moscow to defend stake in Middle East

BY MAGGIE TROWE

In recent months Washington and Moscow have forged a strategic bloc to tamp down instability and combat in Syria and open the door to new attacks on Islamic State in both Syria and Iraq. The U.S. government judges that this new axis, which includes working with Tehran, can better advance its imperialist interests in the region.

The deal includes shoring up the brutal regime of Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad, the most stable force in the area, as well as recognizing de facto autonomy of the Syrian Kurds. Moscow carried out a partial withdrawal of forces last month.

A truce put in place in March permits military action against Islamic State as well as Jabhat al-Nusra, the Syrian branch of al-Qaeda.

Both Washington and Moscow have stepped up attacks against Islamic State. Moscow's bombers have backed Assad's forces, joined by combat troops from Iran and Hezbollah, in ousting IS from Palmyra, pressing
Continued on page 4

'Workers need to fight to take political power'

Socialist Workers Party campaigns across Wisconsin against capitalism and its crisis



Militant/Eric Simpson

Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate in California Eleanor García, right, on farm-worker picket line in Watsonville, California, March 31. Fights like these “help workers gain confidence, experience on road to taking power out of hands of capitalist class,” García said.

BY JOHN STUDER

“It’s an outrage that people in this country have to work for just \$8 or \$10 an hour. You can’t survive on those wages,” a Teamsters union truck driver told Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy as she campaigned among those attending a rally for Donald Trump at Nathan Hale High School in West Allis, Wisconsin, April 3. “But we have to worry about the people in this country first. We have people without jobs, people without health care or insurance.”

Attack on Ukraine Communist Party is threat to working class

BY JOHN STUDER

Members of the Communist Party and the Leninist Communist Youth Union in Ukraine were attacked and beaten by rightist thugs from the Azov Civil Corp in Kiev Feb. 17. Mikhail Kononovych, the leader of the youth group, and Igor Plitsyn, first secretary of the LCYU Kiev City Committee, were seriously injured.

This latest attack is part of an ongoing series of physical assaults, destruction of political offices, “disappearances” of CP members and government efforts to ban the party from exercising its right to participate in politics.

These attacks are a deadly threat
Continued on page 4

“I worked as a coal miner in Utah in a mine where the majority of workers were from Mexico,” Kennedy said. “We organized and fought to make it a union mine, to raise wages and get protection from the bosses’ disregard for our safety. The answer to the problems you pose is not deportations, but coming together to fight for the needs of all.”

“We face a basic conflict between the owning class, who use the government to defend their profits, and the working class,” Kennedy said. “We need a social revolution. Working people must unite and take political power.”

The Socialist Workers Party organized teams across Wisconsin to present the party’s revolutionary perspective in the political discussions leading up to the Republican and Democratic Party primaries there April 5.

The bourgeois elections in 2016 are
Continued on page 6

April 14 actions will demand \$15 an hour and union organizing



Militant/Betsy Farley

Airport workers rally in Chicago March 31, part of nationwide fight for \$15 minimum wage.

BY MAGGIE TROWE

On April 14 actions in dozens of cities across the U.S. will demand a \$15 minimum wage and a union. Across

**FIGHT FOR \$15
AND A UNION**

— SWP campaign statement, p. 9

Canada they will take place the following day.

Union janitors fighting for a contract, for \$15 an hour and the end of

sexual harassment of female workers by bosses, rallied in Oakland, California, March 31. Petra Reynaga, a fast-food worker and member of the East Bay Organizing Committee, urged the protesters to turn out April 14 for the \$15 and a union actions. “Rents are rising but wages are not keeping up,” she said.

In recent years, as working people looked for ways to defend themselves against grinding depression condi-
Continued on page 9

Inside

Celebrate life of political prisoner Mondo we Langa 2

SWP candidate backs fight to prosecute California cop 3

Cop account of killing of Jamar Clark ‘not true’ 9

—On the picket line, p. 5—

East Coast unionists protest Verizon concession demands

Washington, Mexico farmworkers tour together

Celebrate life of political prisoner Mondo we Langa

BY JOE SWANSON

OMAHA, Neb. — Some 200 people celebrated the life and work of political prisoner Mondo we Langa here March 26. He along with Ed Poindexter had been jailed on frame-up charges for more than 45 years.

We Langa, 68, formerly known as David Rice, died in the Nebraska State Penitentiary in Lincoln on March 11 after a long illness.

“Ed and Mondo helped organize protests against police violence that Omaha’s Black population suffered in the 1960s, which continues nationwide today,” said Tariq Al-Amin, president of Nebraskans for Justice. The group has fought for many years to free the men known as the Omaha Two. Nebraskans for Justice will “continue the work to free Ed Poindexter,” Al-Amin said.

We Langa and Poindexter were leaders of the Black Panther Party, which organized protests against police brutality, including the 1969 killing of 14-year-old Vivian Strong. They were railroaded to prison in 1970 on trumped-up charges of killing a police officer, who died after being lured into a home where a suitcase bomb exploded. Both were sentenced to life imprisonment.

The jury was never informed that the two were targets of the FBI’s Cointelpro spying and disruption campaign directed against Black rights organizations, anti-war groups, socialists and others. Witnesses placed them elsewhere at the time of the bombing, and the prosecution’s “physical evidence”

linking them to the case was dubious at best.

The celebration of we Langa’s life, held at the Malcolm X Memorial Foundation, included cultural performances and more than a dozen speakers. Messages were received from Africa, Australia, United Kingdom and from across the United States.

Freelance journalist Kietryn Zychal, who has been investigating the frame-up of the Omaha Two, introduced a recorded message from Poindexter. After being in separate prisons for 26 years, Poindexter said, he returned to the Nebraska State Penitentiary and found “Mondo was still serving the people.”

“Mondo was an inspiration and a mentor to fellow prisoners at the state penitentiary,” said Linda Kennedy of the Harambee African Cultural Organization, which meets weekly at the prison. “He explained, ‘I have no time to be bitter to the government frame-up, I have a life to live.’”

Other speakers included Angela Davis, who in 1970-71 was a Communist Party member framed up and imprisoned for her activity defending inmates at California’s Soledad prison. Davis called for continuing to fight to free other political prisoners, including Leonard Peltier and Mumia Abu-Jamal.

For more information and to get involved in the fight to free Ed Poindexter, contact Nebraskans for Justice at P.O. Box 11725, Omaha, NE 68111.

Letters can be sent to Ed Poindexter, #27767, P.O. Box 2500, Lincoln, NE 68542-2500.

London ‘tube’ drivers strike against unsafe trains



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

LONDON — Hundreds of London Underground “tube” drivers — members of the Rail, Maritime and Transport and the Associated Society of Locomotive Steam Enginemen and Firemen unions — took 24-hour strike action March 23. Pickets at the Arnos Grove depot, above, spoke of company harassment and intimidation and unsafe trains. There has been a rise in disciplinary action, pickets told the *Militant*.

“There are serious questions over the safety of the aging fleet on the Piccadilly line in terms of braking systems, wheel flats and brake operation” a union spokesperson said in January. The union has insisted for years that the 40-year-old trains — known as “1973 stock” — are dangerous.

For example, the door on a moving train with passengers flew open Jan. 16. The RMT said there had been four similar incidents in preceding weeks.

The company claimed the door opening was an “isolated incident.” But the BBC reported two doors opened on a moving train in October 2013. The Rail, Maritime and Transport union plans further stoppages on April 19 and 21.

— JONATHAN SILBERMAN

Rail worker, others donate bosses’ bribes to build SWP

The Socialist Workers Party Capital Fund received a \$3,500 check from Jim Altenberg, a railroad conductor and member of the United Transportation Union in Oakland, California. Amtrak makes an annual payment to conductors hired before 2000 in exchange for eliminating the second assistant conductor on long haul passenger trains. “Two now do the work of three, and we all pay in injuries, speedup and increasingly dangerous conditions on the trains,” Altenberg wrote.

The bedrock of the SWP Capital Fund, which helps finance the party’s long-term work, is contributions like this of “blood money” — the various “bonuses” that employers use to try to bribe workers to accept worsening conditions.

Twenty-eight Walmart workers recently contributed profit-sharing bonuses totaling \$4,876.95. “This is the blood money my employer hopes will keep us quiet. They will learn the hard way,” wrote one worker from Philadelphia.

Rick Young from Chicago sent a check for \$2,000 from a United Airlines profit bonus, part of the company’s “campaign to convince workers of the need for speedup and cost-cutting at the expense of safe working conditions and jobs,” he said.

To contribute, contact a party branch near you, listed on page 8.

— ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

THE MILITANT

Defend women’s right to choose abortion

The fight for the right to safe, legal abortion is fundamental to the struggle for women’s equality. The ‘Militant’ covers the battles to defend this right and why it’s an important issue to unify and strengthen the struggles of working people worldwide.



Militant/Helen Meyers

March 25 rally for abortion rights outside Planned Parenthood clinic in St. Paul, Minn.

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CLIP AND MAIL TO THE MILITANT,
306 W. 37TH ST., 13TH FLOOR NEW YORK, NY 10018.

The Militant

Vol. 80/No. 15

Closing news date: April 6, 2016

Editor: John Studer

Managing Editor: Naomi Craine

Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Seth Galinsky, Emma Johnson, Jacob Perasso, Gerardo Sánchez, Maggie Trowe, Brian Williams, Rebecca Williamson.

Published weekly except for one week in January, one week in June, one week in July, one week in August and one week in September.

Business manager: Lea Sherman

The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018. **Telephone:** (212) 244-4899

Fax: (212) 244-4947

E-mail: themilitant@mac.com

Website: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: United States: For one year send \$35 to above address.

Latin America, Caribbean: For one year send \$85 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

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Submissions to the *Militant* may be published in the newspaper in print and digital format. By submitting, authors represent that their submissions are original and consent to publication in this manner.

Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant*’s views. These are expressed in editorials.

SWP candidate backs fight to prosecute California cop

BY JOEL BRITTON

PARADISE, Calif. — “While many feel the two major parties are essentially the same, the Socialist Workers Party takes that viewpoint to its inevitable end — that both parties are actually working in concert against the American worker,” began an April 1 article in the *Paradise Post* here on Osborne Hart, SWP candidate for U.S. vice president.

Accompanied by campaign supporter Anita Wills and this reporter, Hart traveled here March 30 to meet and express solidarity with those who have organized protests that forced the firing of Patrick Feaster, the cop who shot Andrew Thomas last November. Thomas died several weeks later and Feaster has been charged with manslaughter.

We visited the memorial to Thomas at the site on Pearson Road where Feaster shot Thomas as he was getting out of his car after it crashed. Both Thomas and Feaster are Caucasian.

Cop brutality is “a class question,” Hart told more than 50 students in two political science classes at Butte College near here. The rulers use cop brutality and their prisons to intimidate and punish working people, Black and Caucasian alike, Hart said. Police mottos such as “We Protect and Serve” refer to the cops’ duty to serve and protect the interests of the capitalist ruling class, not working people.

Instructor Jack Hames introduced Hart, explaining that members of the Socialist Workers Party had come from the Bay Area to Paradise before to support young friends of Thomas — includ-

ing some in the classroom — and others who were protesting to get Feaster fired and indicted.

Hart said the Socialist Workers Party joins in the fight to win a minimum wage of \$15 an hour, to support women’s right to choose abortion, to win union recognition for unorganized workers and to push back against cop brutality and killings. The fact that Feaster was fired and charged with manslaughter, Hart said, was an example of what is happening more often now as families and friends of many of those killed protest and put the spotlight on cop brutality.

“Keep the pressure on for a prosecution”
Continued on page 6



Militant photos by Eric Simpson
Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party candidate for vice president, speaks March 30 with students at Butte College, some of whom have organized protests against police killing of Andrew Thomas in nearby Paradise. Inset, Hart visits memorial at site of shooting with Anita Wills and Joel Britton.



Join spring efforts to build Socialist Workers Party

Continued from front page

and big cities talking to workers, small farmers and young people to put forward a communist perspective and win new readers to the party’s press — the *Militant* and books that are part of advancing a Marxist program that points the way forward to putting an end to the dictatorship of capital.

An important beginning piece of this are teams in Wisconsin, where the big discussions and debates over the Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders campaigns are an opportunity to talk to workers — no matter what bourgeois candidate they support or don’t — who are fed up with politics as usual and looking for a way to fight back against the bosses.

We will build other social protests, from the fight against police brutality

to opposing the firings and deportation of immigrant workers to defense of women’s right to choose abortion, such as the April 9 demonstration in Indianapolis.

As part of all these activities, party branches are setting goals for selling subscriptions to the *Militant* from April 2 to May 17. Along with the paper, we will be getting Pathfinder books, with the continuity of more than 100 years of Marxist experience, into the hands of working people and youth looking for a way forward. The \$110,000 Militant Fighting Fund drive will run concurrently to raise the money needed to keep the *Militant* in print. Weekly charts starting in the next issue will track our progress on subscriptions and the fund.

The newest of Pathfinder’s arsenal of books — *The Cuban Five Talk About Their Lives Within the US Working class: “It’s the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the US ‘Justice’ System”* — is worth noting. This is not primarily a book about prison conditions or how to stand up to solitary confinement. It’s about the dog-eat-dog morality fostered inside that “microcosm” of capitalism that is prison in the United States. And about the lessons and example from five Cuban revolutionaries who conducted themselves with, and won others to, the morality and values of working-class solidarity and internationalism. Seven Pathfinder books, including this one, are on special during this drive.

All the capitalist candidates from Trump and Sanders to Ted Cruz and Hillary Clinton want you to believe that who is elected can change something

fundamental. Or that whoever they appoint to the Supreme Court can do so.

The Socialist Workers Party has a diametrically opposed view. The problem working people face is worldwide. It is the dictatorship of capital. The worldwide economic crisis *can’t be voted or legislated away*.

As working people stand up and fight for better work conditions and wages and join other social struggles, we gain self-confidence and combat experience. But these struggles by themselves cannot put an end to the exploitation that is part and parcel of capitalism.

That’s why the Socialist Workers Party and its candidates combat illusions in electoral politics and point a road forward to workers taking power out of the hands of the capitalist class, as the workers and farmers of Cuba did in 1959. The example of what Cuba’s working people have accomplished since then, standing up to every attempt by the U.S. rulers to overthrow that revolution, shows what workers can accomplish.

After these weeks of intense work, many of those we meet will want to attend the June 16-18 Socialist Workers Party conference in Oberlin, Ohio. This international gathering will be an unequalled opportunity to bring together the experiences of the last several months, continue political discussion, gain a better understanding of the communist movement and map out the work ahead.

Our work building the communist movement won’t stop after this spring campaign, but continues 365 days a year.

Join us!

SPECIAL BOOK OFFERS

FOR MILITANT SUBSCRIBERS



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

“It’s the poor who face the savagery of the US ‘justice’ system”

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

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

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

JACK BARNES

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

Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?

MARY-ALICE WATERS

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

Teamster Politics

FARRELL DOBBS

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

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution

JACK BARNES

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



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

VILMA ESPÍN, ASELA DE LOS SANTOS, YOLANDA FERRER

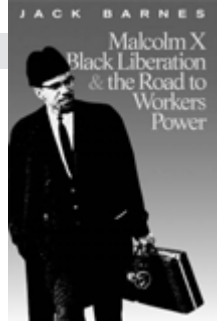
\$15 (regular \$20) Also in Spanish

50 Years of Covert Operations in the US

Washington’s Political Police and the American Working Class

LARRY SEIGLE, STEVE CLARK, FARRELL DOBBS

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



Help get the Socialist Workers Party presidential ticket on the ballot!

Louisiana: April 5-20

New Jersey: April 16-May 1

Colorado: April 23-25

Tennessee: April 28-May 7 & May 20-June 4

Washington state: May 7-22

Minnesota: May 17-June 5

To volunteer for these efforts, help expand the readership of the *Militant* and Pathfinder books, or to join the Socialist Workers Party in labor protests and other activities, contact a party branch listed on page 8 or the Socialist Workers Party 2016 campaign, 227 W. 29th St., 6th Fl., New York NY 10001. Tel.: (646) 922-8186. Email: swp2016campaign@gmail.com.

IF YOU SUBSCRIBE OR RENEW, THESE SPECIAL OFFERS ARE FOR YOU.
CONTACT THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY OR COMMUNIST LEAGUE BRANCHES LISTED ON PAGE 8.

Attacks on Ukrainian CP

Continued from front page

to the working class and labor movement, precedents that will be turned against all those who fight for a class-struggle road forward in Ukraine.

The CP and Communist Youth were seeking to replace a commemorative plaque celebrating former Stalinist leader Volodymyr Shcherbytsky, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from 1971 to 1989, who died in 1990. Their banner was stomped and burned by the thugs.

Shcherbytsky is notorious for attempting to hide and minimize the scope of the nuclear disaster at Chernobyl in 1986. He ordered workers to turn out for a May Day rally in Kiev five days after the power plant exploded, while radiation was still raining down on the city.

On Feb. 27 the Ukrainian Security Service accused Kononovych and his brother Alexander, a secretary of the Communist Party's Volyn regional committee, of supporting the separatist forces backed by Moscow in Donetsk and Luhansk, in eastern Ukraine. Alexander Kononovych was seized on the street and kidnapped March 12.

The physical attacks have been encouraged by the government of President Petro Poroshenko, which has filed suit to ban the Communist Party and passed "decommunization" laws aimed at outlawing the party, "communist symbols" and literature. And laying the basis for jailing its members.

Two years ago mass popular mobilizations known as the "Maidan" overthrew the Moscow-backed government of Viktor Yanukovych. Over the following months, the capitalist rulers sought to get the workers and youth who had mobilized off the streets.

Since taking office in May 2014, the Poroshenko regime has moved to crack down on political rights and impose layoffs and cuts in social spending that have dealt blows to working people. He accuses opponents of the regime of being "fifth columnists," suggesting any disagreement with government policies

amounts to supporting the rebellion in the east.

The Communist Party of Ukraine sent out an international appeal Feb. 29 urging support to its ongoing efforts to challenge the ban in court.

At the same time, the Moscow-backed leaders of the so-called Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics banned the CP there, preventing them from taking part in local elections in October 2014 and 2015.

Various groups in the labor movement that say they seek to advance a rebirth of Marxism and that fight against attacks on political rights in Ukraine have taken widely different positions on whether to fight against the attacks on the Communist Party.

The banning of the party "gives us a real chance to rehabilitate the name Communists for the Ukrainian working class, though it will not be that easy," Artem Klymenko, a member of the Flame socialist group in Poltava, told the Ukraine Solidarity Campaign in December. "Decommunization has many negative consequences, because it is part of the anti-democratic policies," he said. "As for the ban of the Communist Party, it is not the worst thing."

"To my mind, the fact of banning CPU does not have a negative impact on democratic rights in Ukraine," Volody-



Rightist thugs from Azov Civil Corp in Kiev attack members of Leninist Communist Youth Union of Ukraine Feb. 17. Inset, Igor Plitsyn, first secretary of youth group's Kiev City Committee, after the assault.

myr Sotnyk, a member of the Free Trade Union of Railway Workers of Ukraine in Kiev, told the same group. "De facto the working class has never been protected by CPU. Now the place for a real left party is vacant."

"The attacks on the Communist Party of Ukraine have nothing to do with the political positions of the party, which are against the interests of the working class. They are part of the capitalist government's broader attacks on the unions and parties of the left," Ivan Ovcharenko, a leader of the all-Ukrainian Defense of Labor union in Kiev, told the *Militant*

US gov't blocks with Moscow in Middle East

Continued from front page

them back toward the capital of their self-proclaimed caliphate in Raqqa. On April 4 Islamic State forces were driven out of al-Qaryatain, 60 miles west of Palmyra.

Washington carried out 17 different strikes against Islamic State across Syria and Iraq March 31. To advance their efforts, the Pentagon is considering increasing the number of U.S. special operations forces in Syria. They would like to cobble together Arab opposition forces to work with the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) to get to Raqqa first.

In Iraq, artillery fire from U.S. Marines on the ground at newly established Fire Base Bell and U.S. airstrikes pounded Islamic State some 50 miles south of Mosul.

Washington counts on Peshmerga combatants from the autonomous Kurdish region of northern Iraq in this fight, as well as U.S.-trained Iraqi special forces and the less competent Iraqi regular army.

"If I was told I was there to fight for the unity of Iraq, I would not stay a single minute," Peshmerga commander Kemal Kirkuki told Rudaw news service in an interview published April 2. He said Iraq should be replaced by three separate countries of Kurds, Sunnis and Shiites, as existed before the imperialist victors of World War I imposed new borders a century ago. "We will be good

neighbors, and we can help each other."

As a result of years of war and plummeting oil prices, the Iraqi economy is in shambles. The government struggles to pay wages and pensions. Unemployment is at an estimated 50 percent, and much higher in IS-occupied areas.

The devastating civil war in Syria began in 2011, after the government brutally crushed mobilizations of hundreds of thousands of Syrians demanding political rights and an end to Assad's regime. Against this backdrop, Islamic State, a brutal split from al-Qaeda with a leadership that includes former officers of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq, seized a sizable area in both Syria and Iraq.

The five years of bloody war in Syria has left half a million dead and millions homeless. Refugees with the means have attempted to get to Europe, with almost a million making it last year.

A scheme adopted in 2015 to relocate some 160,000 refugees from Greece and Italy throughout the European Union has resulted in only 600 being moved.

The EU has now reached agreement with Turkey to send Ankara cash in exchange for rulers there taking steps to

by Skype March 20. "The government's 'decommunization' moves have made it more difficult for socialists like us to function."

"Workers and all defenders of political rights must stand in solidarity with the Ukrainian Communist Party, its youth organization and members against physical attacks and legislative assaults," the *Militant* said in an editorial last July. "They are the naked fist that gives meaning to the capitalist rulers' 'decommunization' laws, which seek to outlaw communist political views."

cut the refugee flow and to accept refugees from detention camps in Greece. The first levy, mainly Pakistanis, were deported to Turkey April 6.

"Greece does not want to host us. Turkey is not allowing us. Where should we go?" one Iraqi refugee told Reuters. "We drown in the sea with our children, that's it."

Iran's economy recovers

The Iranian economy, larger than Australia's and the second largest in the Mideast, is picking up as the deal to ease sanctions in exchange for Tehran's agreement to curtail progress toward nuclear weapons goes into effect. The deal was brokered by Washington last July as part of the U.S. rulers' pivot toward Tehran and Moscow.

In January Tehran announced a \$600 billion increase in trade with China over the next 10 years, and in February, a \$40 billion deal with Moscow.

Iran's oil production rose by 100,000 barrels per day in March to 3.2 million bpd, the highest level in nearly four years. Tehran registered a positive balance of trade for the first time in nearly 37 years, in spite of rock-bottom world oil prices.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

Oakland

U.S. Out of Guantánamo Now! End Washington's Embargo of Cuba! Speaker: Betsey Stone, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., April 15, 7:30 p.m. 675 Hegenberger Road, Suite 250. Tel.: (510) 686-1351.

CANADA

Calgary

The Working-Class Alternative to Brutality of Capitalism, SWP Candidates Say Join Today's Struggles. Speaker: Francois Bradette, Communist League. Sat., April 16. Dinner, 5:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 328 Centre St. SE, Unit 246. Tel.: (403) 457-9044.

Montreal

PEI Government Decision to Provide Abortions for First Time Since 1982 Is Victory in the Struggle for Access to Abortion Rights. Speaker: Annette Kouri, Communist League. Sat., April 16, 7:30 p.m. 7107 St. Denis, Unit 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

Western Sahara: 40 Years of Resistance. Speaker: Annalucia Vermunt, Communist League. Fri., April 15, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5. 188a Onewunga Mall. Tel.: (09) 636-3231.

Join international day of solidarity to demand:

Freedom for Oscar López!

Puerto Rican independence fighter imprisoned in US nearly 35 years

Mon., June 20, 4-6 pm

New York City

1st Ave and East 47th St.

New International no. 11

U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War

by Jack Barnes

That's what the Socialist Workers Party concluded in the wake of the collapse of regimes and parties across Eastern Europe and in the USSR that claimed to be communist. Contrary to imperialism's hopes, the working class in those countries has not been crushed. **\$16**

New International no. 7

Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq

by Jack Barnes **\$14**

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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

MAGGIE TROWE, EDITOR

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

This column gives a voice to those engaged in battle and building solidarity today — including Steelworkers opposing concessions, construction workers demanding safe conditions and workers fighting for \$15 and a union. I invite those involved in workers' battles to contact me at 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018; or (212) 244-4899; or themilitant@mac.com. We'll work together to ensure your story is told.

— Maggie Trowe

East Coast unionists again protest Verizon concession demands

NEW YORK — Several hundred members of the Communications Workers of America took part in a Stand Up to Verizon rally March 31 in front of the company's headquarters here protesting concession contract demands. Similar actions took place that week in other cities and towns in New York state, New Jersey, Virginia and elsewhere.

One of the issues is Verizon's demand to be able to send workers up to 90 miles away from their home for 120-day stretches multiple times a year, Jim Padgett, who has worked for Verizon for 27 years, told the *Militant*. "It's a disruption of life," he said.

Verizon is also demanding increased health care contributions, concessions on pensions and elimination of accident and sickness disability coverage. Union members are continuing to work under the old contract, covering 39,000 members of the CWA and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers in nine East Coast states. That pact expired Aug. 1.

Verizon posted over \$5 billion in profits during the fourth quarter of 2015.

— Willie Cotton

Farmworkers from Washington, Mexico tour West Coast together

WATSONVILLE, Calif. — Some 80 farmworkers and supporters rallied in front of the corporate headquarters of berry distributing giant Driscoll's March 31. The action, called by the Washington-based Familias Unidas por la Justicia (Families United for Justice), is part of a monthlong West Coast tour promoting a boycott of the company's berries and building the fight for a union among berry workers in Mexico and Washington who work for Driscoll's subcontractors.

Three farmworkers are on tour — Ramon Torres, president of the Familias union; Lazaro Matamoros, a member of the union who works for Sakuma Brothers Farms in Burlington, Washington; and Gloria Gracida, spokesperson for La Alianza farmworker union in the San Quintín Valley in the Mexican state

of Baja California. The region is a major producer of Driscoll's berries in Mexico and home to tens of thousands of farmworkers, many indigenous Mixtec and Triqui people from Oaxaca. These workers initiated strikes and organizing efforts beginning in 2013 in Washington and Baja California. Thousands of Mexican workers walked off the job in March 2015.

Torres and Gracida described harsh conditions agricultural workers face in both countries. Child labor is common. Workers in Mexico have been protesting sexual harassment of female workers.

During the event two Driscoll's representatives walked up carrying water jugs and cups for the protesters.

"This is a humiliation," Gracida said, pointing to the need for clean drinking water in the fields and the homes of farmworkers.

— Raul Gonzalez

Steelworkers in Mexico win strike over firings at ArcelorMittal

Members of the Mexican Mining and Metal Workers Union walked out March 4, shutting down production at ArcelorMittal's steel mill in the Pacific port of Lázaro Cárdenas, Mexico. Some 3,500 people work at the plant. They struck over company violations of the union contract, demanding reinstatement of more than 200 workers fired at the coke plant when the company closed it recently.

On March 13, the company backed down, agreeing to relocate 125 of the workers to other jobs in the mill, to provide severance packages for 81 workers who took voluntary retirement and to pay the workers for nine days on strike.

When the strike began ArcelorMittal said it was illegal because it had not been approved by the Mexican Federal



Militant/Sara Lobman

Members of Communications Workers of America rally in front of Verizon building in New York March 31 against company's concession demands. Their contract expired last August.

Labor Board. "The effects of this illegal blockade are already being felt," said a company statement. With the lost production of 8,500 to 10,000 metric tons per day, "we run the significant risk of losing customers."

Workers refused to be intimidated, organizing mass pickets at the company gates. Thousands of steelworkers, teachers, transport workers, telephone workers and others marched through the main streets of Lázaro Cárdenas to the plant March 12 supporting the strikers.

"We marched to show we were united, with support from unions and the community," Luis Gonzalo Zaragoza, housing secretary for the union, told the *Militant* in a phone interview March 29. "The next day, the company agreed to our demands."

ArcelorMittal has closed or cut back production at several facilities in Europe and the U.S. to protect profits in the face of increased competition and a worldwide glut of steel. Most recently the company closed its Point Lisas plant in the Caribbean island of Trinidad, firing 644 workers the day after the union won a wage dispute case in industrial court.

More than 13,000 members of the United Steelworkers at the company's U.S. mills continue working while the union negotiates with bosses. The old contract expired Sept. 1. The company has refused to back down from concession demands, including significant cuts

to medical benefits for retirees and active workers.

— Betsy Farley, member of USW Local 1010 at the ArcelorMittal mill in East Chicago, Indiana

Union rail workers picket against unsafe conditions in New Zealand

DUNEDIN, New Zealand — Rail workers scored a victory here when Dunedin Railways withdrew a disciplinary warning following a March 8 picket of the company. A driver had been disciplined after sending a safety report to the company and the union health and safety committee after a breakdown in radio recordings of track occupancy led to two crews potentially using a single track at the same time. Informing the union committee was considered by the boss as misconduct.

"It's a rail worker's worst nightmare to see another train coming towards you," Brian McKay, secretary of the Otago branch of the Rail and Maritime Transport Union, told the *Militant* in an interview March 22. "The potential is for a serious incident and we thought it was important to send the company a message. If we don't stand up as a union to defend protections we have won, they will be eroded away."

Some 30 people took part in the March 8 picket, including the Dairy Workers Union, Public Service Association and Nurses Organisation.

— Annalucia Vermunt

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



April 19, 1991

As many as a million Kurds, fleeing intense air and surface bombardment by the Iraqi military, were made refugees the first week of April.

President Saddam Hussein announced April 7 that the rebellion by the Kurdish people had been defeated.

Facing a fierce onslaught that included napalm attacks by the Iraqi regime's forces, Kurds headed for Turkey and Iran at the end of March and beginning of April. In sub-zero temperatures and cold rain, the refugees traveled aboard huge trucks, by mule-back, or squatting on blankets on top of a gasoline truck.

Thousands without gas for vehicles set out on foot, moving down hillsides in the first stages of a 100-mile trek. One crossing alone on the Iranian border was said to have a 45-mile-long column of refugees.



April 18, 1966

The striking grape pickers of Delano, Calif., won an important victory on April 5 when Schenley Industries Inc. issued a statement recognizing the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) as the representative of the workers in the Schenley vineyards. They agreed that the contract negotiations will be held within 30 days.

Cesar Chavez, director of the NFWA, emphasized the importance of the victory, pointing out that this is the first time in the history of the U.S., outside of Hawaii, that union organization of farm labor has been recognized.

The agreement does not terminate the strike, however, for Schenley employs only about 500 of the 4,500 striking agricultural workers.



April 19, 1941

One thing about the neutrality pact that Stalin signed with Japan on April 13 is as clear as daylight: Stalin, by means of the pact, has dealt a severe blow to the struggle of the Chinese people against Japanese imperialism.

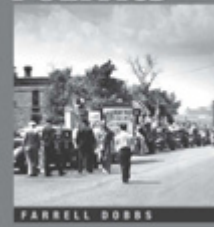
Stalin's mouthpiece in the United States, the *Daily Worker*, can shamelessly assert that "out of the present Soviet-Japanese pact the Chinese people will gain." But the unalterable fact remains that in the midst of a life-and-death struggle on the part of the Chinese people to expel the Japanese invader, Stalin signs a pact with that same invader.

The *Daily Worker* does not attempt to explain just how the Chinese people will gain out of the pact. It makes that mere assertion and wants everybody to be satisfied with it. But not even dupes of Stalin can swallow that.

Teamster Politics

by Farrell Dobbs

TEAMSTER POLITICS



Unionism and politics cannot be separated. Power generated at the trade-union level can be shattered by government blows. Workers must enter the political arena as an independent class

force, with their own party.

\$19 (special \$14 with subscription)

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SWP contends in Wisconsin

Continued from front page

marked by a splintering of both major capitalist parties and the emergence of the “outsider” campaigns of Trump in the Republican Party and Bernie Sanders in the Democratic.

They draw interest because workers have lived through more than a decade of accelerated capitalist crisis, grinding away at jobs, wages, working conditions and social and political life. The propertied rulers, their media and politicians have no answers other than deepening attacks to make working people pay for the crisis of their system.

The Socialist Workers Party is running Kennedy, Osborne Hart for vice president, and other candidates across the country, campaigning to win workers to the party, to the perspective of building a revolutionary working-class movement that aims to overthrow capitalism and replace it with a workers and farmers government.

For months the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *New York Daily News* and other big-business papers have declared Trump finished, or Sanders too far behind to matter. Every week their wishes fail to overcome reality.

After Trump was invited to address the American Israel Public Affairs Committee conference March 21, both the *Times* and the *Post* said large numbers of delegates were organizing to boycott or walk out of the session.

To the contrary, Trump was greeted with ovations and cheering over 50 times, especially when he denounced the Obama administration’s nuclear deal with Iran. And those in the audience were not the working-class “white trash” the press says make up all of the billionaire’s support.

The next day the bourgeois dailies said not a word about the big protest that wasn’t. They just turned to new efforts to demonize and dismiss Trump’s campaign.

While Trump in practice has no course different from his fellow capitalist candidates, he gets a hearing from workers in part because he points to the crisis they face and claims he will fight for jobs. He told the *Washington Post* April 2 that economic conditions are

perilous, with a growing bubble on the stock market, and he sees the country headed for a “massive recession.” And he accurately described as “statistically devised” the official 5 percent unemployment rate. “We’re at a number that’s probably into the twenties,” he said.

“To those voters furious at politicians who sent their children to fight and bleed and die in Iraq,” J.D. Vance wrote in the April 4 *Times*, Trump says “the war was a terrible mistake imposed on the country by an incompetent president” and “he promises to take care of our veterans.”

Combining these views with coarse, anti-immigrant, sometimes thuggish comments, Trump offers himself as a strong man for today’s difficult times.

Anti-working-class slanders

Some blame Trump’s support on what they call the “White Working Class’s Dysfunction,” as Kevin Williamson scornfully titled a March 28 article in the neo-conservative *National Review*. “If you spend time in hardscrabble, white upstate New York, or eastern Kentucky, or my own native West Texas, and you take an honest look at the welfare dependency, the drug and alcohol addiction, the family anarchy ... you will come to an awful realization,” he wrote.

“The white American underclass is in thrall to a vicious, selfish culture whose main products are misery and used heroin needles. Donald Trump’s speeches make them feel good. So does OxyContin,” Williamson said, in a slander mirroring the contempt for the “redneck” working class expressed by liberals and the left.

In Wisconsin, Republican Gov. Scott Walker and his radio talk-show backers were in the “Never Trump” coalition along with public service union leaders who have tried and failed to force Walker out of office. They all joined in calling on people to vote for arch-conservative Texas Republican Ted Cruz,



Militant/Glova Scott
Jacob Perasso, left, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate in New York, talks with warehouse worker Eric Pirrung, center, and roofer Anthony Ramirez in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, April 2. Ramirez, who is considering Trump, got *Militant* subscription to learn more about SWP.

to return bourgeois politics to “normal.”

Whatever the outcome in Wisconsin, Trump continues to draw workers’ interest. “I’ve never really been interested in politics, it’s like all the politicians are crooks,” Chuck Choate, a writer, told SWP campaigners at Trump’s meeting in West Allis.

“Trump and Sanders are getting support because they sound like they’re making radical proposals. They talk about the working class, continuing high unemployment and some of the real problems we face,” Kennedy told him. “But the Republican and Democratic parties are the parties of the capitalists and the bosses.”

Choate signed up for a subscription to the *Militant*.

Sanders held a March 31 rally of over 15,000 people in the Bronx, New York, where the primaries are set for April 19. There too Socialist Workers Party campaigners got a good response.

When Lea Sherman approached Martha Epstein, a drug rehabilitation counselor, Epstein was skeptical. “Isn’t Bernie socialist enough for you?” she asked.

“I answered voting doesn’t make social change, it comes from the mass mo-

bilization of workers in action, like the civil rights movement and the growth of the CIO union movement in the 1930s,” Sherman told the *Militant*. “In the course of struggle, workers become different people, conscious of the fact capitalism cannot be reformed and confident of our capacity to overthrow it.”

“This is what happened in Cuba, where workers and farmers took power in 1959, an example for us to learn from,” she said.

Epstein got a subscription and said to keep in touch.

The Socialist Workers Party will continue to take its campaign to workers in rural areas, small towns and big cities in states where primaries are scheduled and all across the country explaining class politics and building the party.

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Join fast-food workers
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fightfor15.org

SWP candidate backs fight to prosecute Calif. cop

Continued from page 3

tion to the full extent of the law,” Hart said.

Hart explained the SWP’s revolutionary, anti-capitalist program and pointed to the example of Cuba’s working people and the revolution they made in 1959, overthrowing the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. “We demand that Washington end its criminal embargo that punishes the Cuban people for their revolution and return Guantánamo,” he said.

A friend of one student challenged Hart. He said as an oil field worker, it would be “a slap in my face” if the minimum wage was raised to \$15. He made \$17 an hour until he was laid off, he said, and workers who hadn’t made the same “sacrifices” shouldn’t get paid nearly as much. He also attacked Cuba’s socialist revolution.

A vigorous debate ensued. “Wages are built from the bottom up,” Hart said, and millions of workers winning an immediate raise to \$15 and organizing unions would advance the interests of all working people.

“Thank you all for taking the time to come up and really help inform us on

the socialist platforms,” Elisa Bigham, one of the students active in the fight to indict Feaster, wrote to Hart after her class. “Thank you all for your support in fight for Justice for Andrew Thomas.” Eighteen students signed the note.

On March 31, Hart and Eleanor García, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from California, joined 80 farmworkers from Washington state and Mexico and their supporters in a protest in Watsonville at the headquarters of Driscoll’s, a giant berry distribution company. Familias Unidas por la Justicia, the union that sponsored the action, represents farmworkers in Washington state fighting for union recognition, a pay raise and better working conditions. It has also organized activities in other cities in California and in Oregon (see On the Picket Line, page 5).

Hart and García both addressed the crowd, expressing solidarity with the fight.

“It’s not who you are against, it’s what you are for that matters” was the theme of Hart and García’s talks at the April 1 Militant Labor Forum in Oakland. García is on the ballot, listed as an “aerospace factory worker,” in the June

7 primary vote.

García pointed to the Familias Unidas por la Justicia protest in Watsonville, saying “everyone here should join one of the actions they are organizing.” She highlighted the importance of the farmworkers’ fight for “workers control of safety and conditions on the job.”

“You can see in these struggles people are trying to beat back attempts by the bosses to make workers pay for their crisis. That’s why even the small battles are important,” García said. “Fights are where workers learn and where they open up to new perspectives. It is only through struggle that men and women see their worth, and this is a perspective we offer working people and a reason to join the party.”

Join the Socialist Workers Party campaign in 2016!

To get involved, for information, or to make a contribution, contact SWP units listed on page 8 or:

SWP 2016 Campaign
227 W. 29th St., 6th Floor
New York, NY 10001
(646) 922-8186
swp2016campaign@gmail.com

Capitalism’s World Disorder

by Jack Barnes

The social devastation, financial panics, political turmoil, police brutality and military assaults accelerating all around us are not chaos. They are the inevitable

product of capitalism. But the future capitalism has in store for us is not inevitable. It can be changed by the timely solidarity, courageous action and united struggle of workers and farmers conscious of their power to transform the world.

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Why workers should demand US out of Guantánamo!

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

“The return of the territory illegally occupied by the U.S. Naval Base in Guantánamo” and ending Washington’s 55-year-long economic embargo of Cuba are essential steps Washington must take before there can be normal relations with Havana, Cuban President Raúl Castro reiterated during President Barack Obama’s visit to the Caribbean island in March.

Obama incredibly claimed that his administration has “removed the shadow of history” from relations between Washington and Havana. He said not a word about the Guantánamo Naval Base — 28,000 acres of land surrounding Guantánamo Bay, occupied by the U.S. military for more than a century in violation of Cuba’s sovereignty.

It’s useful to look at how the U.S. rulers usurped this territory in the first place, and why workers in the U.S. should insist Washington get out now.

In 1898, as Cuban independence fighters were on the verge of winning their 30-year struggle for freedom from Spanish colonial rule, Washington declared war on Spain, and grabbed the colonies of Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines. The peace treaty signed in Paris in December 1898 — with no Cuban representative present — said, “Spain relinquishes all claim of sovereignty over and title to Cuba. ... The Island is, upon its evacuation by Spain, to be occupied by the U.S.”

A 45,000-strong U.S. military force stayed until May 1902. By that time a regime subservient to Washington had been installed and an amendment to the country’s new constitution — initiated by U.S. Sen. Orville Platt — was imposed upon the Cuban people. The amendment obligated the Cuban government to ratify everything done by the military occupation and gave Washington the right to intervene in Cuba’s internal affairs whenever it deemed it necessary and the right to buy or lease Cuban land for military bases.

The puppet government in Havana agreed in February 1903 to “lease” Guantánamo Bay to Washington for an



Militant/Jack Arnold

Socialist Workers Party candidates for public office in New York join “Hands Off Cuba!” protest during October 1962 “missile crisis,” when Washington threatened nuclear strike.

unspecified period of time.

The Cuban people repeatedly mobilized to protest the Platt Amendment and establishment of U.S. military bases on Cuban soil over the coming years. The U.S. Marines reoccupied Cuba from 1906 to 1909 and from 1917 to 1922, with direct U.S. military rule continuing until 1926. In 1934, the Platt Amendment was replaced with a new treaty obligating Cuba to lease Guantánamo to Washington indefinitely, unless both parties agreed otherwise. To this day, the U.S. government sends a yearly “rent check” of \$4,085, which the Cuban government refuses to cash.

Staging ground for U.S. imperialism

Washington used the base over the years as a staging ground to defend U.S. imperialist interests in the region. The U.S. military’s 1915-1934 occupation of Haiti and its 1926-1933 occupation of Nicaragua were launched from Guantánamo.

With the victory of Cuban workers and farmers in overthrowing the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in January 1959, the revolutionary government led by Fidel Castro from day one demanded that the U.S.-occupied territory be returned to the Cuban peo-

ple. “The Republic of Cuba repudiates and considers as null and illegal those treaties, pacts or concessions signed under conditions of inequality or which disregard or diminish her sovereignty and territorial integrity,” said Cuba’s constitution adopted in February 1976.

The victory of the socialist revolution in Cuba, the first in the Western Hemisphere, made Washington more determined to hold onto the Guantánamo base. The U.S. rulers used it to train counterrevolutionary bandits and carry out provocations, including killing some Cuban soldiers and starting fires across the boundary line inside Cuba.

“We have followed an extremely careful policy with respect to the naval base,” Fidel Castro told the Cuban people in a televised speech on April 23, 1961, four days after the Cuban victory over the U.S.-organized mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs. “We declared we would never try to take Caimanera [port at Guantánamo Bay] by force. ... Our aim was to not provide them even the slightest pretext to carry out a direct attack against our country.”

The Cuban leadership pressed again for the return of Guantánamo in October 1962, after U.S. President John F. Kennedy pushed the world to the edge of nuclear war over the presence of missiles from the Soviet Union in Cuba.

Speaking in New York on Nov. 9 of that year, Farrell Dobbs, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, insisted, “It is our duty to defend from within this country the rights of the Cu-

bans. Back them in their demand that the United States withdraw from Guantánamo. Kennedy wants to dictate what weapons the Cubans can have because they are ‘threatening’ the United States from 90 miles away, and he has a military base right on Cuban soil.”

Base used for infamous prison camp

After revolutionary victories led to the establishment of workers and farmers governments in Grenada and Nicaragua in 1979, Washington beefed up its forces stationed at Guantánamo, a threat to all these new challenges to imperialist domination in the Americas.

Washington later began using the Guantánamo base as a prison camp as well. Thousands of Haitian refugees were imprisoned there under deplorable conditions in the early 1990s. Fleeing dictatorial rule after the overthrow of the elected government of Jean Bertrand Aristide in their country, many wanted to enter the United States.

Cubans who sought to reach the U.S. by boat in 1994, at the height of the economic crisis in Cuba provoked by the collapse in trade with the Soviet Union combined with Washington’s embargo, were also detained by the U.S. military at Guantánamo.

Beginning in January 2002 the infamous Camp X-Ray was set up at the base for prisoners captured in Afghanistan and elsewhere, incarcerated without charges or trial as part of Washington’s “war on terror.” Some 780 alleged “enemy combatants” have been sent to Guantánamo since then, facing torture and dehumanizing conditions. Obama took office seven years ago saying he would close the prison, but 91 people are still imprisoned there.

“Cubans are outraged that something so terrible — something so horrible I can’t put a name on it — is being done in our territory. Think about those human beings who’ve been imprisoned there year after year, without even a trial,” said Antonio Guerrero, in the book *The Cuban Five Talk About Their Lives Within the U.S. Working Class: ‘It’s the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the US ‘Justice’ System.’* Guerrero was one of five Cuban revolutionaries incarcerated in U.S. prisons for more than 16 years on frame-up charges until being released to Cuba in December 2014. “Guantánamo is — the most unjust link in the chain of imperial ‘justice,’” he said.

Gerardo Hernández speaks in Canada: ‘We’ll keep building our socialist society’

BY ROSEMARY RAY

TORONTO — Gerardo Hernández, one of the Cuban Five, began a cross-Canada tour here, speaking to more than 200 people at the Steelworkers hall April 3. He spoke in Montreal April 6 and goes next to Ottawa and Vancouver.

“Ideas from abroad try to make capi-

talism before the 1959 revolution look like a paradise of sea and beaches,” Hernández said. “This is not true. It was a system that killed and tortured its own people.”

“Do you remember when the imperialists said they would never negotiate with Cuba while the Castros were still in power?” Hernández said when asked about President Barack Obama’s recent visit. “Cuba hasn’t renounced one single principle in the negotiations. This is a huge victory for our leaders and people. We don’t deny there are dangers but we Cubans aren’t naïve. We don’t forget history. We will continue to fight to build our socialist society.”

Representatives of the Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association and Friends of Cuba against the U.S. Blockade invited everyone to demonstrate April 16 at 2 p.m. at the U.S. Consulate in Toronto demanding the U.S. end the embargo of Cuba and close the U.S. naval base and prison in Guantánamo.



Militant/Rosemary Ray

Gerardo Hernández, one of five Cuban revolutionaries framed up and imprisoned in U.S. for 16 years until Dec. 2014, in Toronto.

Learn about the Cuban Revolution

Puyallup, Washington

“I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived”
Exhibit of paintings of Antonio Guerrero of the Cuban Five

April 11-29

Pierce College
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Opening celebration

Tues., April 12, 4 to 6 p.m.

Arts and Allied Health Building
Theater

Cross-Canada tour of Gerardo Hernández of Cuban 5

Ottawa

Sat., April 9

5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Cuban Embassy, 388 Main St.
ottawacubaconnections@gmail.com

Washington, D.C.

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Speaker: Cuban Ambassador
José Ramón Cabañas

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Sponsor: Int’l Committee for Peace,
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TheInternationalCommittee.org

Vancouver

Tues., April 12

Art exhibit, 6 p.m.; Speakers, 7 p.m.

Vancouver Public Library
350 W. Georgia St.
www.vancouver solidarity.com

How Cuban youth fought to end US-backed tyranny

Aldabonazo, Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground, 1952-58 by Armando Hart is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for April. Hart was a founding member of the July 26 Movement, which led the successful revolutionary struggle to overthrow the U.S.-backed tyranny of Fulgencio Batista in Cuba. Excerpted here is a document written in June 1958 by Raúl Castro, commander of the Rebel Army's Second Front in eastern Cuba, titled, "To Cuban Youth, To All Latin American Youth, To the Youth of the World." It was circulated clandestinely among members of the July 26 Movement, including in the Principe Castle prison, where Hart was incarcerated. Copyright © 2004 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY RAÚL CASTRO

From the rebel mountains of this eastern province — Free Territory of Cuba — on behalf of youth who, sacrificing everything, have promised to win or die rather than live under such ignominious oppression at a decisive moment of our history, we issue this *urgent call to all young people in the world* to unite their efforts with ours, so as to help save the youth of a brother people from destruction and extermination. We call on them to help a defenseless people that is being cruelly subjugated by the worst gang of



Cuban Council of State Office of Historical Affairs
Raúl Castro speaks to a meeting of peasants in eastern Cuba, September 1958, to win support for Rebel Army and program for distributing land, shortly before Jan. 1 revolutionary victory.

criminals and murderers that any nation has ever suffered. We will never abandon the fight, no matter how unequal it might be.

On March 10, 1952, eighty days before general elections in which the people were to freely choose their rulers, Mr. Fulgencio Batista assumed military control of the country through a coup d'état. With a stroke of the pen he swept away all democratic institutions, assumed control in an autocratic way, and imposed the darkest despotism on the people. The leaders of the traditional political parties betrayed the people and abandoned them to their fate, taking refuge in their comfortable positions to await better times, in order to reappear with the stupid ambitions that have always helped characterize them as vultures over a battlefield. In this situation, Batista prepared phony one-man elections, electing himself president together with a housebroken congress.

Meanwhile, a people who suffer want to fight. It was then that Cuban youth decided to take the reins of the resistance. Students, workers, peasants, and professionals prepared to fight. On July 26, 1953, a youth ready to conquer its own destiny waged a frontal attack on the second most important fortress in the country. When the attack failed, a hundred young people paid with their lives for their brave act of rebellion after suffering horrendous tortures. The students, on a struggle footing from the very first moment, saw their ranks diminished with the fall of new martyrs, including José Antonio Echeverría, the

leader of the Cuban students. The sugar workers shook the country with tremendous strikes for the conquest of their just demands and the defense of violated liberties, facing the regime's repressive apparatus and the gangster machinery of the officialdom imposed on the trade unions. New losses are being added to the already long list of combatants of the Cuban proletariat

At the end of 1956, after several years of preparation, the insurrection broke out in the countryside and the cities under the leadership of Fidel Castro and Frank País, an insurrection that continues and grows today. In mid-1957 the murder of Frank País in the streets of Santiago de Cuba produced the most formidable explosion of popular indignation ever witnessed in our country, and the general strike caused by his premature death at twenty-three years of age was drowned in blood. . . .

Batista has handed over great wealth to U.S. interests, but the Yankees want more, and to obtain it they are employing the tactic of a diplomatic shift. Now they are naming as ambassador Mr. [Earl] Smith, who pretends to pester Batista and support the revolutionary opposition. The goal was clear, and within a few days bore fruit: Batista, fearful of losing Yankee support, delivered scandalous concessions: the Moa cobalt mines, located in the territory of this Second Front; new concessions to the Telephone Company, to the Electric Company, to the oil companies, to the King Ranch cattle farm, and so on. We are so sure of what we say that our

denunciation is being confirmed as we write these lines. This very morning, June 26, we heard on the radio that Batista has signed a decree with new and more humiliating concessions of Cuban subsoil to U.S. companies, *in perpetuity* no less. We have never seen such great monstrosities done to the economy of a nation. Undoubtedly these latest concessions come in exchange for the military aid the U.S. government is giving Batista at this precise and terrible moment.

As irrefutable proof of these charges, we point out the following facts: Colonel Tabernilla Palmero, chief of the dictatorship's air force and responsible for the merciless bombings of the cities of Cienfuegos and Sagua la Grande, was decorated by Major General Truman H. Landon, chief of staff of the U.S. Air Command of the Caribbean, on the express orders and on behalf of President Eisenhower himself. This event was recorded in photographs by several newspapers of our country. At the end of May, officers of our Department of Rebel Intelligence informed us that throughout the month, the enemy air force had been supplied by bombs of all types at the Caimanera U.S. naval base [at Guantánamo Bay]. . . .

If you maintain an indifferent silence, you will become accomplices of those who today murder us and tomorrow will murder you. It does not matter if you are North American, Soviet, Chinese, or Venezuelan; we are all brothers. Across borders, languages, political or religious beliefs, we all belong to the great family of the world's youth. We confront the same problems, suffer the same consequences, and live under the same threats. In face of that, arm in arm, with a firm footing and our heads held high, let us all sing the same hymn of hope. Let us aspire to and fight for peace and future happiness. And let us conquer the common good for the well-being of all.

Finally, [José] Martí, whose road we follow, told us something that is part of the body of ideas we put forward on behalf of Cuban youth who await your determined support: "Every American of Our America is a Cuban. In Cuba we do not fight only for human freedom, nor for a well-being that is impossible under a government of conquest and bribes, nor for the exclusive well-being of a revered island that inspires and strengthens us with its simple name. *In Cuba we fight to assure, with our independence, the independence of Latin America.*"

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April

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8

The Militant April 18, 2016

—SWP CAMPAIGN STATEMENT— For \$15 an hour and a union!

The following statement was released March 31 by Eleanor García, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate in California.

I will use my campaign as the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate to continue to organize and fight along with others for an *immediate* and substantial raise in the minimum wage and for unionization for all.

The fight for \$15 and a union has drawn thousands of workers into street mobilizations and has the support of millions more. This fight has won concessions. The legislative action on the minimum wage by Gov. Edmund Brown Jr. is aimed at heading off the independent mobilizations of working people and drawing us into voting for one candidate or another of the ruling rich.

Working people welcome any raise in the minimum wage, but Governor Brown's bill would not reach \$15 until 2022. Sixty million workers in the U.S., 42 percent of all workers, earn less than \$15 an hour. We need relief today from the effects of a slow-burning depression that means stagnant wages, the crushing cost of living and persistent unemployment. The governor says that the bill "takes into account the vagaries of the capitalistic economy," by stating that if unemployment goes up, the economy slows, or there is a

state budget deficit, the wage increase will be stopped. That's guaranteed.

Workers create all the wealth. The capitalists always strive to drive down the cost of labor to increase their profit rates at our expense. That is why workers and bosses are in constant conflict over which will rise, wages or profits.

I have walked the picket line of striking Kaiser nurses in Los Angeles fighting for a contract and have joined the picket of warehouse workers at California Cartage fighting for their rights and dignity on the job. But our labor unions have shrunk in size and power. Union officials have refused to mobilize us to fight, instead telling us our only hope is to elect a Democrat or Republican. But tying our fate to the bosses' parties is the opposite of what we need.

We need to organize the unorganized and rebuild the unions, organizations that can unite and defend the working class. We need our own party, a labor party, based on the unions that will break with the capitalist parties and rely on our solidarity, power and mobilization of workers.

This would be a step toward overturning the dictatorship of capital that we live under today. A step on the road to replacing the bosses' government with a government of workers and farmers, like working people have done in Cuba.

Cop account of killing of Jamar Clark 'not true'

BY KEVIN DWIRE
AND JACQUIE HENDERSON

MINNEAPOLIS — Hundreds of people took to the streets here March 30 to protest the refusal of Hennepin County Attorney Mike Freeman to charge police officers Mark Ringgenberg and Dustin Schwarze for the Nov. 15 shooting of Jamar Clark, 24, who died the next day.

Two marches converged on the Government Center, one that began where Clark was killed, organized by the Twin Cities Coalition for Justice 4 Jamar, and the other called by Black Lives Matter.

Clark's sister Danielle Burns told the *Militant*, "We want people to know that we are not OK with this."

"We're Black, we're Latinos, we're white, we're Asians," Mel Reeves, an organizer for Twin Cities Coalition for Justice 4 Jamar, told the crowd. "We've united to fight for Jamar and we can win."

"The officers are supposed to protect and serve. Everybody's life matters," James Clark, father of Jamar, told another rally April 1.

In announcing his decision Freeman released for the first time dozens of videos on the events that day. None show clearly the shooting of Jamar Clark.

Freeman said the confrontation began after Clark assaulted RayAnn Hayes. She has given varying accounts of what happened that night but told the press, "I never said anything about domestic violence."

The transcript of the initial call to 911 requesting an ambulance makes no mention of Clark or any domestic dispute. "There was an altercation downstairs in the building and I tried to break it up and in the process of it I think my leg's sprained," a caller who identified herself as RayAnn said.

After Hayes was in the ambulance, Freeman said

that Clark tried to get in, although that is not visible in the videos.

When Hennepin County Emergency Medical Services Deputy Chief Michael Trullinger arrives, Clark can be seen backing away from the ambulance. In its description of the video the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* notes that "Trullinger displays no overt emotional response during his interaction with Clark, and later walks out of the frame."

According to Freeman, when Ringgenberg and Schwarze arrive they each grab one of Clark's wrists and tried to handcuff him and that in the "ensuing struggle ... Ringgenberg landed on his side on top of Clark, who was on his back." The cops claim that Clark reached for Ringgenberg's gun and that Schwarze put his gun to Clark's head. When Clark refused to let go, Schwarze shot him point blank. None of this is caught on tape.

Clark said, "I'm ready to die," the cops claim. "The only people who heard what Jamar said were the two officers and Mr. Clark," Freeman said. "And he is not here." In a video immediately after the shooting a woman can be heard shouting, "He didn't have to do that."

While some eyewitnesses said that Clark was handcuffed when he was shot, that does not appear to be the case.

Teto Wilson, who said he saw the shooting, said Clark "was thoroughly pinned down" and the cop account is "just not true."

"Your entire narrative today was to push the propaganda of the Minneapolis Police Department," said Minneapolis NAACP spokesperson Raeisha Williams. "You, Mr. Freeman, did not give a fair and accurate portrayal."

—LETTERS—

Cuba's historic achievement

President Barack Obama's visit to revolutionary Cuba has engendered countless news articles in the bourgeois media about how "backwards" Cuba is, pointing to old automobiles,

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.

limited Internet access, old building stock and other aspects of Cuban society. What they willfully ignore is that the vast majority of humanity is living through the devastating effects of a social system that was long ago outmoded and broken down: world capitalism.

The Cuban people's heroic revolution and socialist transformation of human relations is, as Cuban leaders point out, a historic achievement that far outstrips any product that Silicon Valley, General Motors or Lockheed-Martin

peddles on the world market.

Greg McCartan
Oslo, Norway

Keep sending the 'Militant'

Since my transfer out of SHU [Security Housing Unit] I have not received any recent issues of the *Militant*. I request to be re-added to your subscription list. Your paper keeps myself and those around me abreast on current events and issues from a progressive perspective.

A prisoner
California

April 14 actions

Continued from front page

tions, the demand for \$15 and a union was raised in initial actions by fast-food workers in New York in November 2012. What was dismissed by bosses and their media as a pipe dream began to be seen as necessary and possible by millions of workers who can't make ends meet on the \$7.25 federal minimum wage. The demand spread to airport, home health care and retail workers. Tens of thousands joined the cross-country protests last April 15 and another national mobilization took place Nov. 10.

'Friends of labor' seek to derail fight

As the struggle gained support, savvy politicians defending bosses' interests began to posture as supporters of the Fight for \$15, promoting legislation to raise the minimum wage, but on a slow track over years and with loopholes.

As the 2016 elections approach the pressure has increased to tie the fight to support to so-called friends of labor like New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, California Gov. Jerry Brown and presidential candidates Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders, downplaying unionization and focusing on winning legislation. This is an approach supported by the labor union officialdom.

Brown signed a bill April 4 provisionally setting \$15 as the state minimum wage six years from now, at firms employing more than 25 people. The increase starts next year with a measly 50 cents. Worse, the law has "off-ramp provisions," giving the governor power to halt increases in the likely scenario of a decline in jobs or retail sales or a deficit state budget.

That same day, Cuomo signed a law increasing the minimum wage in New York City to \$15 by the end of 2018 at businesses with more than 10 employees, and a year later for smaller establishments. In nearby Long Island and Westchester County, the \$15 wage will go into effect at the end of 2021. In the rest of the state the hourly minimum rises only to \$12.50, and not until the end of 2020. The 10 poorest communities in the state are in upstate New York, according to a December 2015 study by the American Community Survey.

Cuomo's law has a "safety valve" like its California counterpart. Beginning in 2019 state officials will conduct "an annual analysis of the economy in each region ... to determine whether a temporary suspension of the scheduled increases is necessary," the governor's press release states.

Two weeks before the New York state primary election, Cuomo, after signing the law, held a rally with Hillary Clinton. She had previously called for raising the minimum wage to \$12 an hour.

Unionization is key

Workers by the millions employed at McDonald's and Walmart, baggage handlers and cleaners at airports, home health attendants, farmworkers and others have shown they want to fight together to raise wages and improve conditions on the job. Organizing unions, not counting on politicians who represent the wealthy employers, is the only way to do this.

It takes organized, collective union action to fight for increases in wages, to win full-time hours for those who seek them and regular schedules posted well in advance, to prevent retaliatory firings of militant workers, to insist on safe work conditions, and to fight race and sex discrimination.

"We're on strike today for wages and health benefits," airport contract worker Sadaf Subijano, one of the organizers of a March 31 rally of 250 workers at O'Hare airport in Chicago, told the *Militant*. "We have no health benefits, no sick days either. We work outdoors in all kind of weather."

"I came out to support the airport workers because our struggle is the same," said Tyree Johnson, a 24-year McDonald's worker. "Some people are afraid to stand up, but we'll never achieve anything if we don't."

Betsey Stone in Oakland, California, and Betsy Farley in Chicago contributed to this article.

'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

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