

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

End to wheat price control hits Canada's working farmers  
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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## Obama's 'job gains' based on antilabor offensive

BY JOHN STUDER

President Barack Obama delivered his annual State of the Union speech to Congress Jan. 24. On the economic front, he presented for emulation one example after the other in which bosses have strengthened the competitive edge of U.S. capital in relation to rivals abroad through attacks on the wages, unions and conditions of working people.

### COMMENTARY

Against the backdrop of a grinding capitalist economic crisis, Obama sought to present himself as speaking for the interests of workers.

"We can either settle for a country where a shrinking number of people do really well while a growing number of Americans barely get by," Obama said. "Or we can restore an economy where everyone gets a fair shot, and everyone does their fair share, and everyone plays by the same set of rules."

"Long before the recession, jobs  
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## 'Groundswell of support' backs Caterpillar workers

Bosses demand 50 percent wage cut



AP Photo/The Canadian Press/Dave Chidley

Locked-out members of the Canadian Auto Workers block train in Ingersoll, Ontario, Jan. 25 to prevent movement of locomotive made by Electro-Motive Diesel, a Caterpillar subsidiary.

BY JOHN STEELE AND JOE YOUNG

LONDON, Ontario—Some 10,000 unionists from throughout the province rallied here Jan. 21 to back the 465 members of Canadian Auto Workers Local 27 locked out New Year's Day by Electro-Motive Diesel, a subsidiary of Caterpillar Inc.

Since Jan. 25, CAW members have been blocking a Caterpillar locomotive on a railroad siding in Ingersoll, Ontario, not far from here. The locomotive was built at the London plant  
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## EGT agrees to hire ILWU labor, but fight is not over

BY MARY MARTIN

LONGVIEW, Wash.—On Jan. 24, members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 21 unanimously approved a tentative agreement with the company EGT. But the fight to defend the union is not over.

The agreement clears the way for ILWU members to work inside the grain terminal after months of waging a fight against union busting. "Not all the details of the agreement are settled, but we believe we are moving in the right direction," Byron Jacobs, secretary-treasurer of Local 21, told the *Militant*. "We have taken down our picket lines while reserving the right to reinstate them if final negotiations are not satisfactory."

The union had maintained picket lines in front of EGT 24 hours a day since June to protest the company's refusal to hire ILWU members in violation of an agreement between the union and the Port of Longview. Instead,  
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## Egypt workers organize unions, fight for wages, political rights



Temporary workers from the Military Production Ministry of the Egyptian government protest at Cabinet headquarters in Cairo Oct. 8, demanding permanent positions.

BY SETH GALINSKY

Workers, farmers and women in Egypt continue taking advantage of greater opportunities to organize since the removal of President Hosni Mubarak by the Egyptian military on Feb. 11, 2011, after 18 days of popular protest against his repressive regime.

Since ousting Mubarak, the military government has tried to stabilize capitalist rule and push back the

popular movement by attacking demonstrations, arresting protest leaders and outlawing strikes. Egypt must go "back to normal life," the military council says, "whatever the costs and sacrifices will be." But strikes and protests continue.

"The real difference since Mubarak's removal is that people have woken up and will not be lulled back to sleep,"

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## 'Militant' launches four-week drive to win long-term readers

BY LOUIS MARTIN

The *Militant* is launching a four-week international drive to sign up as many readers as possible to renew their subscriptions.

The effort—running from Feb. 11 to March 11—will give communist workers an opportunity to talk with

and get to know people who subscribed during the subscription campaign last fall. The international goal will be 500, which is 21 percent of the 2,410 subscriptions sold during the fall 2011 drive. New subscriptions for six months or longer will also count toward quotas.

The campaign will help build a March 10 public meeting in New York, where leaders of the Socialist Workers Party will talk about building revolutionary workers' parties through involvement in the growing working-class resistance worldwide.

"I really like the paper," said Dennis Wilebski, a locked-out sugar worker from Drayton, N.D., who recently  
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## Connecticut cops charged with attacks on Latinos

BY TIM CRAINE

EAST HAVEN, Conn.—The FBI arrested four local police officers here Jan. 24 on charges of conspiracy, false arrest, excessive force and obstruction of justice. The charges stem from long-standing complaints of police abuse from Latino residents of this working-class town.

Six days later, East Haven Mayor Joseph Maturo announced that Police Chief Leonard Gallo is retiring as of Feb. 3. The grand jury indictment of the cops included an unindicted "co-conspirator no. 1," widely assumed to  
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# Greek rulers' austerity drive undermines workers' health

BY BOBBIS MISAILIDES

ATHENS, Greece—To keep paying interest on their massive government debt, the capitalist rulers of Greece have been slashing expenditures and imposing onerous taxes to foist the maximum burden on working people. As millions are hit with the consequences of the nationwide economic contraction, which includes layoffs, pay and pension cuts, and reductions in work hours, the working class also confronts an accelerating erosion of government services such as health care.

Official unemployment in Greece now hovers at nearly 20 percent. According to estimates given by the Athens-Piraeus Doctors Association, one out of five working people in Greece are without health insurance.

"I never thought that I would be in such a situation," Yianis Lykopoulos told the *Militant*. "I had to borrow money from relatives in order to pay the hospital bill." Lykopoulos drives a small truck delivering books and periodicals. Two weeks ago his boss slashed his workweek to three days from five. His wife is unemployed and just gave birth to their second child.

"It used to be unheard of not to have health coverage," Theo Misailidis, a pediatrician in Katarini, said in an interview. "Workers who are employed or are receiving unemployment benefits are still covered through the government system. But once your benefits run out, you're no longer covered." And for those still covered, many are finding new fees too difficult to pay.

To stave off a credit collapse, the Greek

government is depending on billions of dollars in "bailout" money loaned by the so-called troika: the International Monetary Fund, the European Union and the European Central Bank. The loans are conditioned on imposing more austerity measures aimed at workers, including gutting public health care.

In the last two years government health-care funding was cut by 13 percent—from \$19.5 billion to \$17 billion. Hospital budgets have been slashed by 40 percent.

Many who can no longer afford private insurance are turning to the public hospitals. While private hospital admissions have fallen as much as 30 percent, in public hospitals they have climbed by about 24 percent.

"In a six-hour shift, I am seeing 40 patients, which is ridiculous," Dr. Elias Sioras, a cardiologist at Evangelismos Hospital in Athens, told the *New York Times*. "And a lot of things that were covered, especially tests, are not covered anymore."

The Athens daily *Kathimerini* reports that some public hospitals are refusing to admit uninsured women to give birth if they don't have money to pay the increased fees. Dr. Olatz Ugarte, an anesthesiologist at the Saint Savvas Cancer Hospital in Athens, told the *Times* that women with breast cancer often wait three months to have tumors removed, which can mean the difference between life and death.

Doctors around the country have protested the lack of basic supplies like toilet paper, syringes, gauzes, catheters and drugs. Roche Holding AG has stopped



Thousands of workers in Greece march to parliament in Athens Jan. 17 to protest latest round of austerity measures IMF, EU and Greek capitalist rulers are imposing on working people.

delivery of drugs to public hospitals that have not paid past bills.

"For people who did not have the money to pay the doctor, there used to be government-funded clinics that did

vaccinations for free," Misailidis said. "That has not existed for the last couple of years. Diseases that were unheard of for decades have begun to reappear, such as diphtheria and polio."

## 'Socialism and Man in Cuba' published in Greek



Militant/Malcolm Mehrabian-Terlexis

ATHENS, Greece—Some 40 people attended the Jan. 22 launching here of the Greek-language edition of *Socialism and Man in Cuba* by Ernesto Che Guevara, an Argentine-born leader of the Cuban Revolution. The book contains Guevara's 1965 article by that title, as well as two other pieces by Guevara and Fidel Castro's 1987 speech, "Che's Ideas Are Absolutely Relevant Today."

The book launch was held at the meeting hall of the Latin American and Spanish Social-Cultural Alliance, and was sponsored by the Cuban Embassy and the publisher Diethnes Vima. Speakers included (above from left): Natasha Terlexis, president, Diethnes Vima; Costas Isihos, former vice president of the Athens Labor Center; and Nikos Karandreas, president of the Greek-Cuban Friendship Society. Cuban Chargé d'Affaires Eliselia Diaz Suarez also spoke.

"This book is a valuable legacy and a framework for reflection for all, in particular for the working class today," said Diaz.

Participants bought nine copies of the book, along with 12 other titles on working-class politics published or distributed by Pathfinder Press.

—GEORGES MEHRABIAN

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Jan. 23 rally at U.S. Supreme Court marking 1973 ruling decriminalizing abortion.

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# Wyo. miner fought for safety, wins job ruling

BY PAUL PEDERSON

Cindy Clapp, a shovel operator with 28 years experience at the nonunion Cordero Rojo open pit coal mine near Gillette, Wyo., was fired illegally in March 2010 for raising safety concerns on the job, an administrative law judge with the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission ruled in December.

Clapp operated a 40-by-35 foot shovel truck, which loaded 240-ton haul trucks using a shovel large enough to house a pickup truck.

When the mine installed a new computer system to track “efficiency, asset management, and delay,” the steps included placing 12-inch GPS monitors in the front windows of the cabs of mine equipment.

“About early February 2009, two dozer operators, Leann Schneider and Blair Stugelmeyer, told Clapp over Channel 10 that the screen placement was blocking their vision,” states the ruling by Judge Thomas McCarthy. “Schneider cited a specific incident where a fully-loaded, 240-ton coal truck completely disappeared from her view at a mine intersection.”

The ruling describes how Clapp repeatedly asked to have the monitors moved out of the line of sight. And then when she took action and had a mechanic move the monitor on a piece of equipment, the ruling says her supervi-

sors objected. Clapp told them, “I need to see, I’m responsible down here for not injuring anybody. I have to have my vision.” The response from management was “bend over and look under [the screen].”

The ruling also notes that the company ignored Clapp’s requests for water trucks, used to suppress dust that hinders visibility. Clapp took the initiative to call management “on behalf of several truck drivers on her crew, including Helen Clark, Fallon Halverson, and Bob Brown, because their requests for water were also ignored.”

When Clapp questioned a new procedure that required overloaded haul trucks to dump coal back at the coal face, which Clapp felt was dangerous, she was pressed repeatedly to do it. After two managers and a human resources representative met with Clapp and pressed her to follow the new procedure, she set up a meeting with a higher-up. Her coworker, Michelle Whitted, agreed to join her at that meeting.

A week later, the ruling states, Clapp was called to the corporate office and fired. The next day, Whitted was called to a meeting and told she was losing her “crew training position” and accused of lying about company safety practices.

The judge ordered that Clapp be reinstated, paid lost wages, and fined the company \$40,000 because of the “chilling effect that the unlawful discharge of the leading safety advocate had on the willingness of other miners to raise safety issues at the mine.”

Cordero management is appealing the ruling and has declined to talk with the press.



Coal miner Cindy Clapp operated a shovel, like the one above, at Wyoming Cordero Rojo mine before being fired for fighting to defend safety on the job. A judge ruled the firing illegal.

“It’s a dangerous job,” said Helen Meyers, who worked as a haul truck driver at the Coal Creek Mine, just down the road from the Cordero Mine, and also at the Black Thunder Mine in 1999-2000. “You have limited visibility. You have to back up to the shovel using mirrors and you’re driving on roads that are changing constantly and can be unstable.”

Meyers said a similar GPS monitoring system was installed at the mine when she worked there.

“Workers were furious,” she said. “You’re working a 12-hour shift and they would track you when you parked your vehicle to go to the bathroom. If they thought you were going too slow they’d be on the phone screaming at you. They never wanted the shovel to stop loading coal.”

Shirley Hyche, a retired member of the United Mine Workers of America, worked for 27 years at Jim Walters Resources no. 5 mine in Alabama, one of the deepest underground coal mines in the country.

“In a nonunion mine you really don’t have any say-so,” Hyche told the *Militant*. “And if you do say something, you’re in trouble. I’m surprised that she [Clapp] kept her job as long as she did.”

“But if you do have a union, you need to be active in the union,” Hyche added.

One of the gains that the union fought for in the mine is the safety committee. The committee of workers has the power to halt production if an unsafe situation exists. “The safety committee is very important,” Hyche said. “It lets us know what’s going on, if it’s doing its job.”

Hyche also spoke about the fight by women to get into the coal mines. “I was hired in 1981,” she said. “I left a job at a hospital to go to the mine because I needed more money.” Hyche said there were never more than 30 women in the mine, out of 400 to 500 workers. “Some men didn’t want the women down there,” she said. “They would say it isn’t a woman’s place to be underground. But you have to feed your family as much as they do.”

## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

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**The Class Struggle in China.** Fri., Feb. 10, 7:30 p.m. 5482 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

### FLORIDA

#### Miami

**U.S. Hands Off Iran.** Speaker: Tom Baumann, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 10, 7:30 p.m. 719 NE 79th St. Tel.: (305) 757-8869.

### GEORGIA

#### Atlanta

**Labor Resistance Today: The Fight to Defend the Longshore Workers Union in Longview, Wash.** Speaker: Mary Martin, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Feb. 11. Dinner, 6 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 476 1/2 Edgewood Ave. Tel.: (404) 525-5200.

### IOWA

#### Des Moines

**The Class Struggle in China.** Speaker: Helen Meyers, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 10, 7:30 p.m. 3707 Douglas Ave. Tel.: (515) 255-1707.

### TEXAS

#### Houston

**How Memphis Sanitation Workers Won 1968 Strike for Union Rights, Black Dignity.** Showing of documentary video *At the River I Stand*. Fri., Feb. 3, 7:30 p.m. 4800 W. 34th St., Suite C-50L. Tel.: (713) 688-4919.

### UNITED KINGDOM

#### London

**Bankers’ Bonuses—Why Class Conscious Workers Don’t Care How Big They Are. Class Resentment—An Obstacle to the Road to Workers Power.** Speaker: Ögmundur Jonsson, Communist League. Fri., Feb. 10, 7 p.m. Donation: £3. *First Floor, 120 Bethnal Green Road (entrance in Brick Lane), E2 6DG.* Tel.: (020) 7613-2466.

## ‘Groundswell of support’ for Caterpillar workers

Continued from front page

but still needs to be painted. Supporters of the locked-out workers held solidarity picket lines at Caterpillar dealers in cities across Canada Jan. 26.

Electro-Motive Diesel Inc. assembles railway locomotives. Bosses shut the plant after workers voted by a 98 percent margin to reject concession demands that include cutting wages by more than half and the virtual elimination of their pension plan and benefits. Present wages are about \$34 an hour.

“We are fighting for what we believe in,” Graham Alexander, a painter at Electro-Motive for seven years, told the *Militant* at the solidarity picket line following the Jan. 21 rally. “When I was hired there were 70 painters. Now there are 36 doing the same work. They don’t care about us and never have. I think there is a groundswell of support starting for this. We have a moral obligation to look after each other.”

“All workers, union and nonunion, should recognize this is their fight,” said Chris Colby, a member of the United Steelworkers who came to the rally from Sudbury, Ontario, where he works at a legal aid clinic. “We have to tell the lords and masters that enough is enough.”

There were many unionists from the Canadian Auto Workers, United Steelworkers, Canadian Union of Public Employees, Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada and other unions. Speakers included Ontario Federation of Labour President Sid Ryan, CAW President Ken Lewenza,

Canadian Labour Congress President Ken Georgetti, interim New Democratic Party leader Nycole Turmel, Roger Zaczyc, president of United Electrical Workers Local 506 at the General Electric locomotive plant in Erie, Penn., and London Mayor Joe Fontana.

“We have 530 members and they support this fight,” said Allison Gardiner, a machine technician and member of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union at the nearby Kellogg’s plant, on the picket line Jan. 20. “We organize a 50/50 raffle every two weeks. Last week we gave \$750 to Local 27.”

Electro-Motive retirees have been active participants on the picket line. Many people drop off food or honk as they go by.

Workers told the *Militant* that before the lockout their average take home pay was \$800 a week. They are now receiving strike pay of \$200. Under Ontario law, they are not eligible for unemployment compensation.

Caterpillar has 95,000 employees in 50 countries. Members of the United Auto Workers at Caterpillar plants across the U.S. struck for five months in 1991-92 and 17 months in 1994-95 in an unsuccessful attempt to push back attacks on their wages and working conditions. Subsequent contracts at the company’s unionized plants in the U.S. have included further concessions. Bosses seek to leverage the fact that Caterpillar workers in the U.S. are now paid considerably less than those here. At the

company’s locomotive plant in Muncie, Ind., workers earn about \$12.50 to \$14.50 an hour.

Electro-Motive management did not respond to calls from the *Militant*.

“They created a solidarity monster,” Nelson Sarty, a locked-out welder, told the *Militant*. “People have never been through fights like we are going through today. We are getting growing support.”

Messages and financial contributions can be sent to: CAW Local 27, 606 First St., London, Ontario N5V 2A2 (attention Electro-Motive workers). Fax: (519) 455-3960. E-mail messages can be sent to: tcarrie@golden.net.

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# Somalia raid extends US boots on ground in Africa

BY NAOMI CRAINE

A U.S. commando raid in Somalia highlights Washington's growing use of special operations troops against forces that threaten the stability of U.S. imperialism's interests in Africa and other "hot spots" around the world.

The Jan. 25 raid freed two hostages who were being held for ransom by an alleged pirate gang near the city of Galkayo in central Somalia. According to the *New York Times*, about two dozen Navy SEALs and other troops parachuted into the area at night, killed nine Somalis and left by helicopter with the hostages, who had been working for the Danish Demining Group when they were kidnapped in October.

Although initial press reports spoke of a "shoot-out" or "gun battle," the U.S. Africa Command simply reported that "all nine captors were killed during the assault." No U.S. troops were injured in the operation.

"Pentagon officials defended the decision to kill the hostage takers," the *Los Angeles Times* reported Jan. 25, "arguing that they were armed and that explosives were found at the camp. The SEALs could have taken prisoners, but they were operating under rules of engagement that permitted use of deadly force."

The commando team included members of the same Navy unit that the Obama administration used to execute al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden in Pakistan last May.

The raid occurred as President Barack Obama was preparing to deliver his State of the Union speech to Congress. As he entered the House of Representatives, he congratulated Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, saying, "Good job tonight." In a statement the next day, Obama said, "I could not be prouder of the troops who carried out this mission."

This was the first publicly reported extended ground raid by U.S. forces in Somalia since 1993. Washington has

been stepping up its military involvement in Somalia, including conducting airstrikes on the Islamist group al-Shabab, increasing CIA activity, and supporting an African Union occupation force operating around the Somali capital, Mogadishu.

The operation was carried out from a U.S. military base in neighboring Djibouti, which has been increasingly used to launch aerial assassination drones against targets in Somalia and Yemen in recent months. Along with air bases in Ethiopia and the Seychelles Islands, the Djibouti installation is part of Washington's military posture aimed at strengthening its foothold in Africa with an "economy of force."

## Egypt workers organize unions, fight for rights

Continued from front page

Gamal Abu'l Oula, director of the Center for Trade Union and Workers Services office in Mahalla El Kubra, said in a phone interview. Mahalla is a major textile center with a history of strikes and sit-ins.

Egypt's Awlad Al-Ard Foundation for Human Rights says there were nearly 1,000 labor protests, including strikes, sit-ins and demonstrations, from January to June last year.

The English-language website for the Egyptian daily *Al Masry Al Youm* reports on more than a dozen labor battles in January.

On Jan. 19 alone 450 workers from the Egyptian Maintenance Company, run by the government Petroleum Ministry, began a hunger strike in South Sinai demanding temporary workers be given permanent jobs. Workers at Ezz Steel Company in Sadat City protested for a third day demanding raises. Workers at the Dar al-Tahrir Printing Press held a sit-down strike over back wages. More than 500 workers blocked Cairo's Ring Road to protest



Petty Officer 2nd Class Roger Duncan

U.S. troops in training exercise at Camp Lemonier in 2006. The Jan. 25 U.S. raid into Somalia was launched from that U.S. military base, located in Djibouti in the Horn of Africa.

their firing from the Dib Egypt Textile Company.

A few days earlier, nearly 350 laid-off railroad workers blocked the tracks at the Cairo Railway Station demanding they be hired back as permanent workers. Hundreds of port workers in Alexandria demanded better health care and the removal of retired military officials from administrative posts.

### New trade unions formed

"Two hundred new unions have been formed since the Jan. 25 Revolution, compared to 24 before," Mohammad Ahmad Mustafa, a spokesperson for the Egyptian Federation of Independent Trade Unions, told the *Militant*. "I estimate there are now about 3 million union members and 23 million unorganized workers."

The independent federation was founded during the fight to overthrow Mubarak. The old government-run Egyptian Trade Union Federation, still dominated by Mubarak-era officials, is in disarray. "They are trying to rebuild themselves," Mustafa said. "Our hope is that new leaders will be elected who will join the fight for freedom and democracy for the working class."

The independent unions are fighting for a new trade union law that would recognize their right to organize. The current law only recognizes the old federation. They are also demanding a higher minimum wage.

"The agricultural worker also needs to be organized," Mustafa said. "In the last few months we have formed agricultural labor unions."

Women have also taken advantage of the increased space. Thousands of women and hundreds of men marched through downtown Cairo Dec. 20 to protest an attack by soldiers on women participating in a demonstration in Tahrir Square three days before. Participants were incensed by the beating of a woman whose clothing was torn off by soldiers, captured on video.

Marchers carried signs that said "What are you waiting for? For this to happen to your sister?" and "Women are half the population."

### 'Now we can protest'

"They are targeting women. They don't want them to go to demonstrations," Maie Sherefay, a university student and one of the marchers, said in a phone interview from Cairo.

Sherefay said the reaction from male

passersby was mixed. "Some were upset with us, some were laughing, but some responded and gave us a victory sign."

"Under Mubarak, we could not protest. The military is still in power, but at least now we can protest," she said. "We want more."

Egyptian and foreign capitalists are concerned about the growing confidence and increased organization of working people in Egypt and worry that their profits could be threatened. *Businessweek* reported Dec. 25 that according to central bank figures, direct foreign investment was down 93 percent in the first nine months of 2011.

### Brotherhood as 'responsible partner'

The Muslim Brotherhood, which won a large plurality in the elections for parliament, has sought to assure local and foreign capitalists that it will be a responsible partner. And the ruling generals have made it clear that, whatever the parliament does, decisive power remains in the hands of the military, which itself owns factories, farms and real estate and is the largest single employer in Egypt.

The Brotherhood seeks to curb the economic role of the military. "We believe in a very, very big role for the private sector," Khairat El-shater, a central leader of the Islamist organization, told a group of 14 investment managers from the U.S., the U.K., Africa and the Middle East, according to *Businessweek*.

The Brotherhood is dominated by capitalists who operate in sectors outside the military's influence, including in consumer goods such as furniture and clothing. The Salafis, a more religiously conservative Islamist bourgeois opposition, won nearly 22 percent in the elections to take second place. Bourgeois liberal parties came in a distant third.

Members of the Brotherhood joined the military's Central Security Forces in blocking hundreds of protesters chanting "Down with military rule" from reaching the parliament building Jan. 31. The Brotherhood's members chanted, "The army and the people are one hand," reported *Ahram*, as they formed a human shield against the protesters.

Georges Mehrabian contributed to this article.

## Connecticut cops target Latinos

Continued from front page

be Gallo.

The arrested cops are Sgt. John Miller and three of his subordinates—David Cari, Dennis Spaulding and Jason Zullo. They were known as "Miller's boys" and had a reputation over years for detaining people without cause and beating them up after they were handcuffed. They were particularly noted for harassing customers of Ecuadoran-owned businesses on Main Street.

Luis Rodriguez, owner of Los Amigos grocery store, told the *Militant* that people in the community felt that they were without protection. "If someone came here to rob my store, I would not have anyone to turn to," he said, "since the police were our enemies."

"They tied my hands back, pushed me down to the ground, and this was in the police station," Jeffrey Gimenez, a customer at Los Amigos who was arrested in 2008, told TV station WFSB.

The situation began to receive national attention in February 2009 when the cops arrested Father James Manship as he videotaped them harassing residents. Manship's parish, St. Rose of Lima in nearby New Haven, is attended by many Ecuadoran residents and has served as

an organizing center. Shortly after they denounced Manship's arrest, Rodriguez says, his business and others found anti-immigrant flyers distributed by a group called "North East White Pride" at their doorsteps.

With the help of students from Yale law school, residents filed petitions to the U.S. Department of Justice, which led to the investigation and the arrests.

Residents taking part in a community meeting Jan. 31 called for the replacement of the mayor's hand-picked board, which is supposedly charged with reforming the police. That meeting also demanded that Gallo not receive severance pay, as he "should not be compensated for his conduct," according to Ecuadoran activist Dixon Jiménez. The next day the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators called for an investigation of Mayor Maturo.

"We have a great police department," Maturo told reporters the day the cops were arrested. "They'll be protecting the taxpayers of East Haven." In response to a reporter's question of what he would do to improve relations with the Latino community he said he "might have tacos" for dinner.

## ON THE PICKET LINE

### Caravan supports locked-out Steelworkers in Quebec

MONTREAL—"We've just come back from a car parade around the town, 250 cars," Marie-Christine Guay told the *Militant* Jan. 26. "The event was totally magnificent. People in their houses flashed their lights. People on the street waved. We circled all around town."

Guay is a nurse; her husband is one of the more than 750 members of the Steelworkers union locked out at Rio Tinto Alcan's smelter in Alma, Quebec.

Picket lines have been up since Dec. 31. Workers are fighting to prevent the company from more than doubling the percentage of work performed by mostly nonunion subcontractors, who get half the wages and no benefits.

"None of my family works in the plant," Cindy Dufour, 24, a municipal worker in the town of L'Ascension de Notre-Seigneur who organized the caravan, told the *Militant* via email. "I decided to organize this because too many people don't understand the stakes in this fight."

"The workers always see the same cars going by," she said. "They're in one corner of town, so I said to myself that I'd bring cars to them to boost their morale. And above all, to be visible for the population."

Unions representing miners in Turkey, Rio Tinto Group workers in Australia, and unions in the U.S., U.K., France and South Africa have pledged their support, with plans for joint solidarity actions to come.

—Katy LeRougetel

### Houston airport workers fight for union recognition

HOUSTON—"I was fired for reporting short paychecks to my Huntleigh USA supervisors and for defending my coworkers who faced the same shortages," Antoinette Spencer told airport workers and supporters at a Jan. 26 protest here. "This is why we need a union."

Workers from PrimeFlight Aviation Services and Huntleigh at Houston's Bush International Airport are fighting to get Service Employees International Union recognized as their union.

PrimeFlight workers assist passengers as wheelchair attendants and electric cart drivers, receiving a base wage of \$5.25 to \$6.35 an hour plus tips. Under federal law, employers must make up the difference in wages for workers who customarily receive tips, if tips and wages combined don't equal the legal minimum of \$7.25.

The *Houston Chronicle* reported that PrimeFlight workers say they are told to report tips they don't receive.

Spencer told the *Militant* that as a dispatcher she was paid \$9.50 an hour by Huntleigh and that most of her co-

workers who provide cleaning, baggage handling, and security services at the airport are paid \$7.25 an hour. "It's not enough to live on," she said. "So we are organizing."

Neither PrimeFlight nor Huntleigh returned calls requesting comment.

—Jacquie Henderson

### Job safety key issue in contract fight with oil companies

CARSON, Calif.—"Safety has everything to do with why we're here," said Robert Jacobus, 41, while picketing with more than 50 coworkers at the BP refinery here Jan. 26. His neck was bandaged from an acid burn on the job two days earlier.

"The next day BP provided the needed equipment, which proves it could have been made safe in the first place," Jacobus, a member of United Steelworkers Local 675, told the *Militant*. "Instead, the company puts profits ahead of safety."

Contracts covering some 30,000 Steelworker-organized refinery workers at BP and other oil giants are set to expire Feb. 1. Since the last contract took effect three years ago, 18 oil workers died on the job.

"We have advocated for the right of all employees to stop work if they feel like they are in danger in any way," said Walter Neil, Public and Government Affairs director for BP's Carson refin-



Marie-Christine Guay

Car caravan in Alma, Quebec, Jan. 26 to back smelter workers locked-out by Rio Tinto Alcan.

ery in a phone interview. "It's been that way for years."

"Today it's about paperwork and signing off things, which is not the same as safety," said Mathew Moala, a pipe fitter at BP. "When I first started eight years ago, this was a safe workplace because the older workers with experience trained us to pay attention to safety. Now it's a harsh environment."

—Arlene Rubinstein

### Seattle march backs union fight on Washington dairy farm

SEATTLE—Chanting "What do we want? Union! When do we want it? Now!" about 70 supporters of the United Farm Workers union marched to the

Darigold offices here Jan. 27 to demand union recognition at the Ruby Ridge dairy in eastern Washington. Ruby Ridge is one of 550 member farms of the Darigold milk products cooperative.

Marchers waved UFW flags and carried handmade picket signs saying "¡Queremos contrato!" (We want a contract) and "¡Sí se puede!" (Yes we can). Some had made the four-hour trip from Pasco, where the Ruby Ridge farm employs about 40 dairy workers who attend to nearly 2,000 cows.

"Today we are delivering 20,000 signatures to tell Darigold that they need to listen to the farm workers," Jorge Valenzuela, Pacific Northwest Director for the UFW, told the *Militant*. Darigold's stance is that this is a dispute between Ruby Ridge and the UFW.

Speakers described low wages and poor working conditions faced by dairy workers. They said 14 workers had been fired for supporting the union. The National Labor Relations Act does not cover farm workers. Ruby Ridge has filed a lawsuit against the UFW and 18 workers.

In a phone interview, Ruby Ridge owner Dick Bengen denied that he had fired any workers for supporting the union. "That would be illegal," he said. "I don't want a union. I run a dairy that I think would not operate as good under a union."

The rally included music, hot food and coffee, which helped lift spirits on a winter day.

—Dean Peoples



Militant/Jacquie Henderson

Jan. 26 protest by workers fighting for union at Houston's Bush International Airport. Wages are "not enough to live on," said Antoinette Spencer, at right. "So we are organizing."

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



February 13, 1987

DES MOINES, Iowa—The second women's farm conference held here January 16-18 brought together leaders of farm protest groups; organizers of food shelves, hotlines, and support groups; and women farmers to discuss how to solve the farm crisis and share experiences. Over 500 women participated.

The value of farmland has declined by \$146 billion over the last three years, and 2,000 farms a week are currently being lost.

Shirley Sherrod, a Black farmer from Albany, Georgia, outlined the urgent need to help Black farmers stay on the land. "Since 1920, 94 percent of Black farmers have been driven off the land."

Many farmers active in Midwest farm protests have pointed to the civil rights movement as a model for their struggle. It has only been in the last year or so, however, that Black and white farmers have begun to join forces.



February 12, 1962

DETROIT—The recently formed Community Tenants League here has won a victory against a landlord. Because of the severe shortage of apartments where Negroes are welcomed, landlords often raise rents and reduce maintenance when they start renting to Negroes.

The Community Tenants League was formed by five families in an apartment building at 3201 Rochester. The building was integrated last October, and the rents raised from \$65 to \$90.

Instead of moving out, the white tenants in the building joined with the Negroes. The League, co-chaired by Howard Crum and Art Fox, was formed, and they all went on a rent strike.

The landlord sued for the rent, but after much embarrassing testimony and publicity, he made an "out of court" settlement in mid-January reducing the rent to \$70.



February 6, 1937

LOS ANGELES—The campaign to organize the aircraft workers into an industrial union has started off with a bang. In the last few weeks hundreds of workers have joined the union in spite of company intimidation.

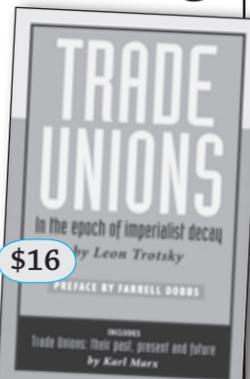
The company unions, under the name of employee associations, at the Douglas and Northrup plants, have been completely discredited in the eyes of all honest workers. With militant organized labor on the offensive throughout the country, the workers in the aircraft plants are beginning to realize that industrial unionism is the only answer to their immediate problems.

Local 188 of the United Automobile Workers of America is leading the organization drive in aircraft. A number of very successful educational mass meetings have been held along with several street meetings at the Douglas and Northrup plants.

### Further Reading

Invaluable to the practical education of militant workers who are relearning today what a strike is and how it can be fought and won.

See page 8 for distributors or



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# Sugar workers boost pickets, plan protest

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

DRAYTON, N.D.—The 1,300 workers locked out by the American Crystal Sugar Co. confront a drawn-out boss campaign to wear them down, along with stepped-up cop harassment. Workers are responding by organizing expanded pickets, a month-long food drive, defense against police frame-up, and a solidarity caravan with other workers in struggle.

“Earlier generations of workers fought hard to keep the union. We don’t plan on letting them down,” Mike Johnson told the *Militant* while on picket duty in front of the factory here.

Members of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union are picketing 24 hours, seven days a week. The union has been organizing expanded pickets once a week for the last three weeks to confront scabs during shift changes in front of American Crystal’s five factories in northern Minnesota and North Dakota.

“Last Tuesday we had about 60 in front of the plant,” said locked-out worker Paul Dahlman in Drayton.

“When you have 75 plus, like we did last night, that has a big impact on our spirits,” said Lee Schlichtmann, a mem-

ber of the union’s Action Committee, describing the Jan. 30 picket line at the Hillsboro, N.D., plant.

American Crystal locked the workers out August 1 after the union membership rejected the company’s concession contract offer by a 96 percent margin. Bosses had planned well ahead, lining up a professional strikebreaking outfit to supply scabs from around the country. Since November the company has been on a campaign to hire replacement workers from the local area.

Workers in Drayton and Hillsboro have been denied unemployment benefits by the state of North Dakota. Some have been able to get by on \$100 weekly stipends from the union, personal savings or help from family, but many are working or looking for work elsewhere. Others who can are retiring.

The new canola processing plant northeast of here requires locked-out workers to quit their jobs at American Crystal before it will hire them.

Workers started another food drive running from Jan. 23 to Feb. 24 to alleviate some of the financial pressure.

Picketers are also facing increased surveillance by the local cops. While this reporter was in town, the police came to the picket line looking for radios that the company said were interfering with communications inside the plant. A number of workers report receiving letters from the company saying



Militant/Frank Forrestal

Locked-out unionists picket Jan. 29 at American Crystal Sugar’s plant in Drayton, N.D.

they are being investigated for harassing scabs on the picket lines.

American Crystal has not responded to calls from the *Militant*.

Support is growing for Brad Knapper, a locked-out worker from the Moorhead, Minn., plant who was framed up on felony charges for allegedly scratching a replacement worker’s vehicle during a shift change late last year.

Union supporters of Knapper have set up a fund to help defray attorney fees. So far more than half of the \$2,500 goal has been collected from about 25 supporters. “The fight has been long and will get much harder,” wrote Jim Stevens, a contributor to the fund, “so if we intend to stay in this fight for what’s right it’s time for all working people to admit

only in numbers do we have strength!”

Donations to the defense fund can be made online at <http://www.gofundme.com/d6aas>, or by sending a check or money order. Make checks payable to “We the Union Local 167G” and mail to Wells Fargo Bank, 730 Center Ave., Moorhead, MN, 56560.

The union is planning a protest where it will turn over petitions signed by people across the country calling for the company to end the lockout, according to John Risky, BCTGM Local 167G president. The event will also kick off a joint solidarity caravan of locked-out workers from both American Crystal and Cooper Tire, in Findlay, Ohio. The caravan will begin in the Red River Valley and end in Findlay.

## FOOD DRIVE for locked-out sugar workers JAN. 23 - FEB. 24

Drop off nonperishable items at:

BCTGM Union Hall, 100 N 3rd St.  
Suite 50, Grand Forks, ND 58203  
8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

IBEW 1426 Hall, 1714 N Washington St.,  
Grand Forks, ND 58203  
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For cash donation, make checks out to:

BCTGM 167G Food Drive

Questions? contact:

Debra Kostrzewski (218) 478-4045  
John Risky (701) 746-6133  
Ken Lamberson (218) 230-4129

# Drive to win new long-term readers

Continued from front page

sent in a check for a three-month renewal. “It covers labor struggles in the West, in Ohio, even in Europe, New Zealand and Australia. They are trying to make us slaves everywhere. People around here really like the paper because it tells the truth about our fight.”

Wilebski is one of 1,300 members

of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union who have been locked out by American Crystal Sugar Co. since Aug. 1 for refusing to accept company concessions. They have since led a resolute fight at seven plants across the Red River Valley and in southern Minnesota and Iowa. (See article above.)

“I give my copies of the paper,” added Wilebski, “to a friend of mine who works at MCI, a bus company in Pembina, N.D. Their union contract runs out in May and they may have a fight on their hands. He really likes the paper too. When he’s done, he gives it back to me and I bring it down to the picket shack in Drayton for others to read.”

“The *Militant* is very informative on what’s going on here in this country and in other countries,” said Danny Eaton, a member of BCTGM Local 48G, which fought for 10 months through July 2011 against a lockout by Roquette America in Keokuk, Iowa.

Eaton recently renewed for one year. “I also like the articles on Cuba. It’s unique in its own way. That’s a plus because if you’re used to the same old thing and then hear something different that pertains to you and that you can relate to, that’s part of the attraction.”

“I like reading the *Militant* because I’m getting better information that I actually believe is true,” said Larry Long, also a member of Local 48G. He has been reading *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free*, a collection of *Militant* articles on the U.S. government’s frame-up of the Cuban Five revo-

lutionaries. “I like the coverage on labor struggles because that’s what brought me to it in the first place.”

Members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union have been renewing in Washington state, where the union recently forced EGT Development bosses to agree to hire ILWU labor at its terminal. Two unionists there, one an ILWU member and the other a retired member of the Operating Engineers, recently sent their renewals by mail.

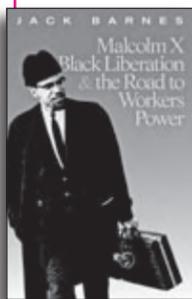
Byron Jacobs, secretary-treasurer of ILWU Local 21, renewed for two years. He said a relative who works at a plant in Longview, Wash., shares copies of his paper with coworkers. Jacobs suggested members of the Socialist Workers Party talk with these workers next time they’re in town.

Beverly Bernardo from Montreal said *Militant* distributors there have sold 13 renewals since they started organizing this work in early January. They have been combining their renewal effort with sales of books on revolutionary working-class politics. Five such books are on special for new and renewing readers, as well as the new book by Pathfinder Press, *Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution*. (See ads on pages 3 and 6.)

To register efforts already under way in many areas, all renewals or long-term subscriptions sold since Jan. 21 will count toward local goals.

Please send notes and short articles about the renewal effort in your area to the *Militant* by 8:00 a.m., Tuesday morning, EST.

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by Mary-Alice Waters ~~\$7~~ \$5 with subscription

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by Jack Barnes ~~\$3~~ \$2 with subscription



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*Militant* subscription rates on page 2

# Canadian gov't ends wheat price control

## Move tightens squeeze on working farmer

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL—Many hard-pressed working farmers in Canada are speaking out against the federal government's decision to dismantle the Canadian Wheat Board.

For some 70 years the Wheat Board has held a monopoly on sales of wheat and barley by farmers in western Canada. Farmers have sold all grain to the board and received common prices, based on an average negotiated by the board on world markets. This has helped exploited farmers in face of competition from capitalist farmers and agribusiness and debt payments to the banks.

But concern for the well-being of working farmers isn't why Canada's capitalist rulers have kept the board all these years. It has given Canadian imperialism an edge in markets at home and abroad against U.S. and other grain monopolies.

In the process, Canada's rulers have pointed to the board as a reason for working farmers to back protectionist measures pitting them against working people in other imperialist countries and oppressed nations the world over.

Canada accounts for 20 percent of world wheat exports, 85 percent of it produced by farmers in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. Most is exported through the Wheat Board.

The U.S. imperialist government, acting on behalf of owners of U.S.-based agribusiness giants like Cargill, has tried in vain 14 times over two decades to get the World Trade Organization to declare the board an "unfair trade practice."

Last December, the Conservative government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper ended the board's monopoly and fired the farmer-elected members of its board of directors. The new law, set to take effect Aug. 1, says the board must either be privatized or dissolved in five years.

The move comes as the world economic crisis creates greater volatility in the cost of fuel and other expenditures and the price that farmers can fetch for their wheat.

Speaking to the *Militant*, Manitoba farmer Ian Robson called dissolution of the board "jackboot" legislation. Rob-

son produces wheat, canola and cattle on 900 acres near Deleau, Manitoba, and is a member of the National Farmers Union. Farms in Manitoba average 1,000 acres, the government reports.

If the board goes "it will be more difficult for me to market my grain," said Robson. "Its marketing staff tracks prices in 70 countries. How can an individual farmer do that?"

The National Farmers Union says net income for many farmers has stagnated for decades at below average production costs. Prices of seed, fertilizer, fuel and machinery have risen, along with onerous bank debt to buy them.

More and more farmers have to rent out land, work a job, or both to avoid foreclosure and keep farming. Some 2,500 of Canada's 230,000 farms go under each year, swallowed up by banks, realty companies and wealthy farmers.

Abolition of the Wheat Board monopoly will accelerate "the concentration of capital in agriculture at working farmers' expense," Howard Brown, who farms 1,900 acres in Saskatchewan, told the *Militant*. Farms there average about 1,500 acres.

According to a 2011 survey conducted for the Wheat Board, well over 70 percent of farmers with fewer than 2,500 acres want to keep the board (76 percent of those with fewer than 640), but only 47 percent of those with more than 2,500 acres.

### Wheat Board's evolution

The Wheat Board was set up in 1935, partly as a government concession to farmers' struggles to ease competition among themselves in face of large grain-handling capitalists. In 1943 Ottawa gave the board a sales monopoly under the War Measures Act to ensure grain to Canada's imperialist allies in World War II.

Large farmer protests in the mid-1990s pushed back efforts by the Liberal government, agribusiness, and many capitalist farmers to make inroads against the monopoly in barley. In 1998 Ottawa changed the board from a government-run entity to a federally regulated corporation with 10 directors elected by farmers and five appointed by the government. Farmers were supposed to have decisive vote on any ma-



End of Wheat Board will accelerate "concentration of capital in agriculture at working farmers' expense," said Saskatchewan farmer Howard Brown. Above, Canadian wheat farmer takes in crop.

nor changes.

But Ottawa's new law was adopted without letting farmers vote. (In a non-binding vote held by the board in August, 62 percent of wheat farmers and 51 percent of barley farmers backed keeping the monopoly.)

The new law is backed by owners of grain-handling companies in Canada like Richardson and Viterra, as well as of the Canadian Pacific and Canadian National railways. The board's demise was hailed in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, at the Jan. 4-6 convention of the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association, an organization, it says, of "progressive farmers and entrepreneurs."

"It's a question of principle and economics," Mike Bast, an Alberta farmer with 2,000 acres and a leader of the association, told the *Militant*. He said studies show that nine times out of 10 "better contracts could have been achieved on the open market."

The board's nonbinding vote in August "was fake," Bast said. The board sent out 68,000 ballots, "but there are only 15,000 to 20,000 ... whose sole income is from farming." Implying that farmers who rent out land or work jobs to make ends meet shouldn't have been allowed to vote.

Another Alberta farmer with 1,400 acres, who asked that his name not be used, expressed his opposition to the CWB monopoly. "I'm running a business," he said. "To be forced to be equal is like being in a communist country."

Like being a serf. We are entrepreneurs. We want to grow our business."

### Clashing class interests

The shift by Canada's rulers on the Wheat Board shows why working farmers—as they oppose measures like this that worsen living and working conditions on the land—can't rely on boards or agencies of the capitalist government. It shows why it's against working people's interests to support the rulers' nationalist and protectionist policies that target workers and farmers abroad.

In the absence of organized resistance to Ottawa's new law today, opposition to it is taking place largely in the courts. The government is appealing a Dec. 7 federal court ruling that it violated the Canadian Wheat Board Act by not holding a farmers' referendum.

Eliminating the Wheat Board's guaranteed price for working farmers is one front in efforts by the rulers and their governments to shift the burden of the capitalist crisis onto the backs of "wage slaves" in factories and "debt slaves" on the land.

As the capitalist assault deepens, working farmers need to extend solidarity to workers in Canada, the United States, and the world over standing up to the bosses. And workers need to extend the hand of active support to their exploited fellow toilers on the land.

Annette Kouri contributed to this article.

## Bribe pits us against workers worldwide

Militant subscriber Dianne Groth from Milwaukee recently sent in a check for \$1,000 to the Socialist Workers Party Capital Fund. The fund helps finance the long-range work of the party.

"This is blood money gained through a government program," Groth wrote. "Laid off in July 2010, I became eligible under the Trade Readjustment Allowances Act to receive education and/or job benefits. Because I choose to work, I have received extra money to offset my once-higher wages."

Blood money is a special category of contributions workers are encouraged to donate to the SWP Capital Fund. It includes payments from the bosses or the bosses' government designed to bribe workers to accept speedup, unsafe working conditions, and lower wages and benefits or to pit workers against each other, undermining solidarity.

Trade Readjustment Allowance benefits, according to the Labor Depart-

ment, are for "those who were laid off or had hours reduced because their employer was adversely affected by increased imports from other countries." The program seeks to reinforce the notion that workers should line up with the employers to defend "American jobs" against their fellow workers in other countries.

"I liked your article about lower wages and temporary work," Groth wrote, referring to an article in the Jan. 23 issue. "I've been working for a temp agency since March 2011. While 90 days can get you hired, I still toil as a temp."

"Apply the check as needed," she said. "Your work is instrumental in leading the working class to power."

Other workers who would like to contribute to the Socialist Workers Party Capital Fund can contact *Militant* distributors listed on page 8.

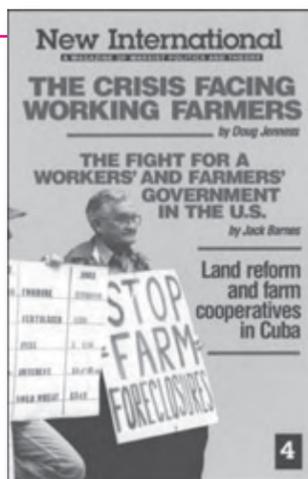
—SETH GALINSKY

## Further Reading

"Washington's policies are designed to benefit the capitalist farmers and big food processors and merchants. They do little or nothing to free exploited working farmers from the scourge of foreclosures, land dispossession, and repossession of tools, livestock, and machinery.

"The working class has a direct stake in the resistance of exploited farmers against this ruinous proletarianization. The larger the number of working farmers who succeed in this struggle, the stronger will be the worker-farmer alliance."

—From "The Revolutionary Perspective and Leninist Continuity in the United States" in *New International* no. 4



\$14 — Order from distributors listed on page 8 or online at [pathfinderpress.com](http://pathfinderpress.com)

# Communist parties must be tempered in class struggle

Below is an excerpt from *Revolutionary Continuity: Birth of the Communist Movement, 1918-1922* by Farrell Dobbs. Dobbs was a leader of the 1934 Minneapolis Teamster strikes, central organizer of the campaign to organize over-the-road truck drivers, and national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party from 1953 to 1972. The excerpt describes the 1921 debate in the Communist International—the organization of proletarian parties that rallied around the Russian Revolution and organized to extend that historic victory—over how to organize work in the trade unions and other mass struggles. Copyright © 1983 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



V.I. Lenin addressed Third Congress of Communist International in Soviet Russia in 1921, debating world situation and revolutionary strategy in trade unions and mass struggles.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

The reports and resolutions at the third Comintern congress analyzed the current stage of the class struggle in Europe along the following broad lines. When capitalism entered its imperialist phase during the last years of the nineteenth century, a deepgoing social crisis had been precipitated that could not be resolved under the existing system. Therefore, new revolutionary explosions could be expected to occur. It would be wrong to base day-to-day communist tactics solely on this correct general perspective, however, just as it was wrong to think that the need

for anticapitalist propaganda had now been bypassed by revolutionary mass action.

“The world revolution does not develop along a straight line,” the third congress theses on tactics stressed.

As matters stood in the first half of 1921, communist tactics had to focus on a steady and systematic effort to win the majority of the working class to a revolutionary perspective. As a means to that end, communists had to be part and parcel of the workers’ resistance to the employers’ offensive, pointing to the working-class road out of the worldwide capitalist economic crisis that had begun toward the end of 1920.

Throughout Europe the bosses were attempting to force workers to produce more for less pay and to give up social gains won in the past. Workers were not willing to make those sacrifices without a struggle, however. In fact, they wanted to improve their living standards, an aspiration that stood in direct contradiction to measures being taken by the employers to restore capitalist economic profitability and impose a new class equilibrium. Proletarian struggles would continue to erupt.

Not all layers of the working class would move into action at the same time and in the same ways, however. There would be ebbs and flows, advances and retreats. Whenever struggles did break out, communists should fight shoulder to shoulder with rebellious workers, shaping tactics to fit these defensive

battles. In this way, communist workers would best be able to influence militants deceived by class-collaborationist misleaders and win recognition in the labor movement as leaders who knew how to take on the capitalists and who had an alternative program to that of the sell-out officials.

Only along this line of march could the workers be led to advance, step by step, toward revolutionary objectives. As defensive struggles extended in scope and were coordinated in action, the new experience gained by the masses would shatter old illusions that held sway among them. Such changes in political consciousness, together with the insecurity of their livelihood under capitalism, would push workers toward becoming a powerful combat force. As that was accomplished, the working class could shift from the defensive onto the offensive and take the leadership of other exploited toilers in a struggle that would eventuate in a bid for political power.

If these aims were to be realized, the Russian leaders emphasized, the shortcomings shown in practice by the European Communist parties had to be corrected. These parties didn’t yet fully understand the kind of program and strategy needed by the working class, and flowing from that the kind of vanguard party the workers had to construct. Nor did most European communists comprehend how such a party must be tested and tempered in the fires

of the class struggle.

Some in the young Communist parties sought to bypass the task of preparing the majority of the proletariat and its allies for united action against the propertied classes. Revolutionary impatience often predominated at the expense of tactical flexibility. Many communists had yet to learn how to maneuver according to a given class-struggle situation, and how to take into account different levels of political consciousness among various layers of the working class. Lacking in class-struggle experience, they had yet to grasp how to conduct an offensive at an opportune time, and how to organize a temporary retreat when the odds turned against the workers.

These misconceptions were most pronounced in the political line of various “leftist” tendencies in the European Communist parties. They contended that militant action by a minority of workers could galvanize the masses into a revolutionary fighting force. They put forward the concept of an uninterrupted proletarian offensive as the only correct communist strategy. Actually, this rigid, adventurist course would alienate rather than mobilize the masses, who would suffer its consequences.

The Bolshevik leaders believed that this ultraleft political line had to be repudiated by the Comintern in order to prevent communists from being sidelined into sectarian isolation. As a signal that they intended to lead a fight against “leftism,” Russian CP leaders such as Lenin and Trotsky proclaimed themselves to be on the “right wing” of the world movement.

A political confrontation with the ultralefts occurred at the third Comintern congress, where many delegates took issue with the Russian Communists on the questions of revolutionary strategy and tactics and party organization. Following a sharp debate, the majority of delegates adopted the reports and resolutions advocated by the leaders of the world’s first workers’ state.

These documents set forth the measures needed by communists to guide the working class and its allies to a revolutionary victory. The overriding immediate task was captured in what became the central slogan of the congress—“To the masses!”

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# Working class has no country

In his State of the Union address, President Barack Obama extols examples in which bosses have recently made inroads against the wages and unions of working people as the way to fix “our” economy. But there is no “we.”

Our answer is working-class struggle and internationalist solidarity. Our examples are workers standing up to American Crystal Sugar, Caterpillar, EGT, Cooper Tire, Rio Tinto—a list that keeps growing as the exploiting class foists the burden of their crisis on our backs.

Obama’s nationalist demagoguery is aimed at duping workers into seeing ourselves in competition with workers elsewhere, in a mirror of the increasingly cutthroat competition between capitalists worldwide. We are supposed to see ourselves in league with the imperialists and their efforts to increase their profits off the backs of labor—at home and abroad. In exchange we get a promise that they will provide more jobs, at lower pay of course.

But a growing layer of working people, particularly those engaged in struggle against the exploiting class, see themselves in the growing struggles of fellow toilers from Canada and Europe to the Middle East, Africa and Asia, as comments from readers in this week’s front-page article on the *Militant*’s renewal drive show.

Obama pledges that his administration will take all possible protectionist measures, backed up by the largest military on the face of the globe, as well as “take on illegal immigration.” The rulers’ attempts to pit workers of different nationalities

against one another—Black and Caucasian, native and foreign born, at home and abroad—are an essential part of their drive to weaken working-class solidarity and our capacity to fight back.

One reader mentioned in this issue set a good example of internationalist solidarity by contributing to the Capital Fund of the Socialist Workers Party. She turned over a nationalist “blood money” bribe from the Trade Readjustment Allowances Act—which allocates pittances for workers tossed on the street by the competition of international capital—with a note saying, “Your work is instrumental in leading the working class to power.”

For the bosses, national borders drive exploitation, plunder and war. For workers, internationalism and solidarity open the road to end the capitalists’ class dictatorship.

“The working men have no country” explains the *Communist Manifesto*, the founding document of the modern communist movement by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. We are all wage slaves. And wage labor, the necessary condition for the existence of the capitalist class, “rests exclusively on competition between the laborers.”

We share a common enemy and common solution: the overthrow of capitalist rule and conquest of power by the working class.

We urge those hungry for solidarity and a course of struggle rooted in the common condition, revolutionary needs and fighting capacity of the working class to use the *Militant*. Become a long-term reader and help distribute the paper far and wide.

## Obama’s ‘job gains’ based on antilabor drive

**Continued from front page**

and manufacturing began leaving our shores,” Obama said, as if the jobs woke up one morning and decided to go on a vacation, as opposed to reflecting conscious moves by bosses seeking higher rates of profit.

“In 2008, the house of cards collapsed,” Obama continued, blaming irresponsible bankers, lax regulation, and workers who took out mortgages they “couldn’t afford or understand.”

But, he crowed, things are beginning to turn around. He argued for steps to raise taxes on the rich to generate the funds for big, “smart” government to increasingly regulate and “stimulate.”

“No, we will not go back to an economy weakened by outsourcing, bad debt, and phony financial profits,” he swore. He presented a nationalist “blueprint” for “an economy built on American manufacturing, American energy, skills for American workers, and a renewal of American values.”

“The day I took office, our auto industry was on the verge of collapse,” he said. “We got workers and automakers to settle their differences.” The result? “General Motors is back on top as the world’s number-one automaker.”

The “differences” were settled on the backs of workers, as the auto bosses pushed back wages, imposed divisive multitier wage scales and jacked up “productivity” at the expense of health and safety.

General Motors Co. closed 14 out of 47 plants, going from 113,000 workers in 2006 to 46,000 in February 2010. New hires, on a deep and permanent second or third tier, get about \$14 an hour, half the previous pay, which comes on top of wages frozen since 2003.

At GM’s Lake Orion, Mich., plant new third-tier assemblers start at under \$10 an hour.

Obama proposed a series of protectionist trade measures, including tax incentives, subsidies, and other steps to reward bosses who supposedly “insource” jobs into the U.S. as opposed to overseas. Along these same reactionary nationalist lines he pledged to “take on illegal immigration” and boasted about having put “more boots on the border than ever before.”

He pointed to the bosses at Master Lock Co., a company that transferred some 1,300 jobs to China and Mexico in the early 1990s, but have recently relocated three dozen back. Master Lock has ratcheted up the speed of its assembly line, according to the

Milwaukee *Journal Sentinel*, churning out “a shiny new combination lock every 2 1/2 seconds.”

Other examples that have been singled out by the White House include General Electric Co. and Caterpillar Inc.

Today, Caterpillar has locked out the workers at their Canadian locomotive plant, demanding they take a 50 percent wage cut. If they don’t, the company says it will move their production to a new plant in Indiana, where nonunion workers make half the wages.

GE has added some jobs in Louisville, Ky., instead of their plant in China, on a lower wage tier paying up to \$15 an hour less than older workers. “We have got to the point where making things in America is as viable as making things any place in the world,” James Campbell, president of GE’s appliances division, told the *New York Times*.

“I will go anywhere in the world to open new markets for American products,” Obama said, calling for aggressive protectionist measures. Obama especially targeted China, whose exports increasingly challenge U.S. products, and where U.S. imperialism is refocusing its military posture.

“Over a thousand Americans are working today because we stopped a surge in Chinese tires,” he added. He failed to mention the more than 1,000 tire workers who are on the street in Findlay, Ohio, locked out by Cooper Tire, which is pressing for deep concessions, five wage tiers, and faster production. According to workers there, the organization and pace of work has resulted in widespread injuries.

Obama also proposed to help lead reductions in Medicare, Social Security and other programs that have helped buffer the hardest-hit workers from the consequences of the capitalist crisis. Like the Republican candidates for president, he says the U.S. debt—obligations to the ruling-class bondholders—needs to be reduced, and these programs must be cut.

Obama concluded his address on the same note he began—praise for U.S. military might with special tribute to special forces assassins who killed Osama bin Laden. “America remains the one indispensable nation in world affairs,” he declared.

At bottom, Obama’s message is that if workers keep sacrificing, the bosses will get stronger, their government will get stronger, their military will get stronger and U.S. imperialism can prosper—at our expense.

# Longshore union

**Continued from front page**

EGT hired members of Operating Engineers Local 701 through a subcontractor at inferior wages and without a contract. If successful, it would have set a precedent with the first West Coast grain terminal run without ILWU labor in eight decades.

Meanwhile, the union is appealing more than \$300,000 in fines levied by a federal judge for alleged damages incurred during union protests at the port. And many union members still face court hearings and trials for trumped-up charges.

More than 200 union members or supporters were arrested in the course of protests against EGT, and scores were cited with criminal charges.

Local 21 members Shelly Porter and Alison Beam were both cleared of trespass charges Jan. 23. They refused an offer to plead “guilty” in exchange for dropping two other charges “without prejudice,” meaning they could have been refiled later at the prosecutor’s discretion.

“I knew I could prove I never stepped on EGT property except when forced to by police orders to ‘move over here now,’ which can be seen on video,” Porter told the *Militant*. “When the prosecutor learned we were not accepting the plea bargain deal he conceded he had no case.”

This is the third set of charges Porter has beaten. In recent weeks 18 unionists have been cleared of various frame-up charges.

“I didn’t really pay attention to the world before this fight and now I see other people are fighting everywhere,” said Porter. “There is so much more to do.”

Some Local 21 members have already been processed for hiring and reported to EGT for orientation Jan. 30-31. Some 25 to 35 union members will work as electricians and millwrights, and also perform work on the docks and in the terminal, according to Jacobs.

A Jan. 27 union statement explained the main points of the tentative agreement: The Port of Longview “approved an amendment to its lease with EGT agreeing that EGT is no longer bound by the Port’s Working Agreement with ILWU Local 21. In exchange, EGT agreed that the ILWU/PMA Joint Dispatch Hall (Local 21) shall provide the labor for EGT’s facility at the Port of Longview, and agreed to a union card check procedure. If a majority of workers indicate their preference to be represented by ILWU Local 21 at the EGT facility, EGT and ILWU Local 21 expect to negotiate the details of a labor agreement for all landside and shipside operations.”

Prior to the tentative agreement, the company had been planning to run a scab ship to load grain, backed by the U.S. Coast Guard.

“As for the arrival of EGT grain ship, expected any day now, the union has no plans and no reason to protest the ship because it will be loaded by ILWU members,” Jacobs said in an interview at the union hall. “I call that a victory. Any others who plan to protest the arrival of the ship are on their own. The ILWU will not sanction any such protest.”

Jacobs presented a solidarity message signed by workers in a lighting factory in Queens, New York, that had just arrived by mail. “This means a lot to us,” he said. “It would not have been possible to win this fight without all the support we received worldwide.”

“Our support started with our own retired members. When we had meetings for working members they took extra shifts at the picket tents. They prepared meals at the hall in the thick of our protests last summer. They accompanied our members to court hearings and trials. They raised funds for our fight.”

“In some unions when you retire, you’re out, you’re done,” said Bruce Wilcox, a retired member of Local 21 who worked on the docks for 41 years. “In the ILWU you’re never through. I come to the union hall one to three times a week to do whatever needs doing.”

“Our eyes are open to what is going on in the world besides here in Longview,” said Jacobs. “I’d like to say thank you to all who stood with us. We are planning a public ‘thank you’ celebration in March for all those who supported us in this fight.”