

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Canada Steelworkers organize meetings demanding: 'Free Cuban 5!' — PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 77/NO. 18 MAY 13, 2013

Miners fight Patriot Coal scheme to gut union and 'cut to the bone'



Militant/Kevin Cole

Miners march in St. Louis April 29 against Patriot Coal's plan to slash pensions and health care.

BY FRANK FORRESTAL AND ALYSON KENNEDY

ST. LOUIS — Clad in T-shirts that said “Peabody Promised” on the front and “Peabody Lied” on the back 3,000 upbeat and determined members of the United Mine Workers of America and their supporters, rallied here April 29 in front of Peabody Energy’s headquarters.

After the rally they marched to the federal courthouse where bankruptcy hearings are underway for Patriot Coal, created in 2007 by Peabody Energy when it spun off all its union operations east of the Mississippi. In 2008 Patriot bought Magnum Coal, a spinoff from Arch Coal.

“Patriot Coal is just a name,”
Continued on page 9

Socialists' campaign disclosure victory registers party's revolutionary record

BY JOHN STUDER

“Thank you to the many readers of the *Militant*, supporters of Socialist Workers Party campaigns and other defenders of political rights who didn't let any incident of harassment, threats or attacks on SWP candidates or their backers go by in recent years without writing them up,” Steve Clark, chair of the Socialist Workers National Campaign Committee, told the *Militant* April 25. “Those reports were the bedrock for our victory.”

Earlier that day the Federal Election Commission had voted 4-1 to extend the exemption of SWP candidates from requirements to disclose names of financial contributors until Dec. 31, 2016, through the next presidential election. The party has fought for and won the right for its supporters to make campaign contributions without turning over their names to the government since 1974.

In letters to the FEC in November 2012 and April 2013, the SWP's attorneys — Michael Krinsky and Lindsey Frank, of the firm Rabinowitz, Boudin, Standard, Krinsky & Lieberman — requested the extension. They detailed the “history of government persecution of the SWP — its long duration, exceptional intensity, and gross illegality.” They submitted some 70 declarations since

2009 documenting firings, police spying and interference, and right-wing threats and assaults reported by SWP campaign supporters across the U.S.

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Protest strikes rock Bangladesh after factory building collapse

Hundreds killed by bosses' indifference to workers' lives



AP/Wong Maye-E

Tens of thousands of garment workers organized protest strikes in Bangladesh after bosses disregard for safety led to building collapse and deaths of hundreds of workers. Above, workers who volunteered in rescue efforts protest April 28 after government ordered halt to search.

BY EMMA JOHNSON

For days, thousands of garment workers in Bangladesh downed their tools and came into the streets after landlord and boss actions resulted in a factory building collapse in Savar, 12 miles north of the capital Dhaka. As of April 30, 386 were reported dead

and about 1,000 injured. With hundreds still missing, presumed buried under the rubble, the death toll is expected to rise substantially.

In spite of obvious warning signs, some 3,000 workers were inside the eight-story Rana Plaza April 24 when
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'Militant' drive helps spur discussion on need for conference of fighting workers

BY LOUIS MARTIN

A seven-week international campaign to win thousands of subscribers to the *Militant* and sell hundreds of books on revolutionary working-class

politics got off to a strong start at a union rally of 3,000 coal miners and their supporters in St. Louis April 29. (See article above.)

Hand in hand with the subscription drive, Socialist Workers Party members, readers of the paper, workers involved in union struggles and other working people are discussing organizing a conference this summer. Such a gathering would provide an opportunity for those thinking about how to effectively confront the capitalist crisis and the assaults by the bosses and their government to come together, exchange experiences and discuss the next steps forward

Continued on page 3

May Day actions across US defend immigrant rights



Militant/Betsy Farley

Thousands march in Chicago May 1 for immigrant rights, one of more than 50 actions that took place from coast to coast on International Workers Day. Next issue will cover day's events. See editorial on page 9: “Organize! Unionize! No deportations!”

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SAfrica gathering calls festival in Ecuador of anti-imperialist youth

BY PAUL PEDERSON

PRETORIA, South Africa — Manifestations of the deepening economic and social crisis of capitalism and resistance by the working class to shouldering its costs are evident in every corner of the globe — from Greece to Bangladesh, from Egypt to South Africa to the U.S. The need for young people who are part of and attracted to these working-class struggles around the world to come together, share experiences, debate and chart a course independent of the capitalist ruling classes has never been greater.

This is the context in which the 18th World Festival of Youth and Students will take place Dec. 7-13 in Quito, Ecuador. Under the banner of the international struggle against imperialism, the gathering will draw thousands, coming from every region of the world. The festival will be hosted by Ecuadoran youth organizations, including the youth of the governing Alianza Pais party, the Communist Youth, Socialist Youth and the Federation of University Students.

More than 70 delegates from 50 organizations in 32 countries came together here in Pretoria March 26-27 to take part in the first International Preparatory Meeting, which set the dates and decided on other aspects of the Quito festival. The meeting was sponsored by the World Federation of Democratic Youth, an umbrella organization whose primary focus is organizing these anti-imperialist gatherings every several years. The last festival, which took place in South Africa in 2010, drew 15,000 participants.

Three years further into the world crisis, one of its sharpest manifestations is the levels of youth unemployment that wrack the semicolonial world and imperialist centers of Europe and America alike. In the U.S., real unemployment among youth is approaching 25 percent, and double that for youth who are Black. In Greece it officially stands at 59 percent, Spain 56 percent. Here in South Africa about half of youth are jobless. And the figure is well over 60 percent in neighboring Namibia. This stark reality will be among the broad range of social problems and struggles — from imperialist wars to women's rights — that will be discussed at festival workshops, seminars and social activities.

The preparatory meeting here took place just weeks after the U.S. military began its annual joint military maneuvers with South Korean forces aimed at the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and after the U.N. Security Council, under prodding from Washington, passed yet another round of crippling financial sanctions against the North. The meeting affirmed its solidarity with the Korean people and DPRK in face of these imperialist provocations and decades of unremitting economic and military pressure from Washington, which maintains tens of thousands of troops in the South.

The meeting here also approved a statement reaffirming support for the international fight to free the Cuban Five. Condemning "the decision of the U.S. government, in violation of the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, to deny visits by Cuban diplo-

Meeting in Havana discusses plans for int'l youth festival



Juana Carrasco

HAVANA — Delegates from more than 20 youth organizations from across Latin America building Dec. 7-13 World Festival of Youth and Students to be held in Quito, Ecuador, gathered here April 28 to discuss themes for the festival, called at a meeting in Pretoria, South Africa, in March. Proposals included using the festival to step up the international fight to free the Cuban Five and demanding U.S. hands off Cuba, Venezuela and elsewhere in Latin America, including an end to the U.S. embargo against Cuba. Speaking is Yuniasky Crespo Baquero (center), first secretary of the Union of Young Communists of Cuba.

—JACOB PERASSO

matic staff to René González," who has been forced to remain in the U.S. under court supervision since he was paroled in October 2011, the statement noted the Five are "now in their 15th year of imprisonment for their actions to defend Cuba from counterrevolutionary terrorists operating from U.S. soil. The frame-up trial, draconian sentences, and other extraordinary punishments imposed on the Five are aimed at punishing the people of Cuba for making and defending their socialist revolution in face of decades of aggression from Washington and its allies."

The living example of the socialist revolution in Cuba will be the subject

of many of the discussions among delegates. The electoral victories of left bourgeois parties in a number of Latin American countries has sharpened the debate between those who see reforming capitalism as the way forward for working people and those who point to the example of the socialist revolution in Cuba, where workers and farmers broke the economic, military and political power of the ruling class and its imperialist backers and overturned capitalist property relations.

Young workers and students interested in attending the festival can contact one of the *Militant* distributors listed on page 8 for more information.



Militant/Tom Baumann

Delegations from Swaziland and United Kingdom march together during closing demonstration at 17th World Festival of Youth and Students, Dec. 21, 2010, in Pretoria, South Africa.

THE MILITANT

Support workers' fights for higher wages

Hundreds of fast-food workers took to the streets in New York and Chicago last month demanding a union and \$15 an hour — winning support and capturing the imagination of other working people. The *'Militant'* backs this and other fights by workers for higher wages.



Militant/Emma Johnson

Rally in New York April 4 by fast-food workers demanding \$15 an hour and union.

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

Workers conference

Continued from front page
in building a fighting working-class movement.

A number of miners and other workers at the St. Louis rally said they were interested in being part of a fighting workers conference.

Kevin Cantwell, a mail handler from Florissant, Mo., who took time during his vacation to march with the miners, was interested in having more discussion on such a conference. "I'll see if I can get time off work to be part of this," he said.

P.C. Long, a retired miner from Bevier, Mo., said he wanted to get together soon to discuss plans for such a gathering. He worked at a Peabody mine for more than 10 years before it closed. "We fought Peabody the day we got hired. We fought them all the time we were working. And now we're retired and still fighting them," he said.

Estela Galarza, a meat packer from Louisville, Ky., who came to support the miners, signed up for a *Militant* subscription as she returned to her bus. She said it was a good idea to have a gathering of workers interested in organizing and strengthening unions and fighting for immigrant rights. "You can call me to talk more about it."

In the course of two days of activity related to the miners' rally — which included sales at a mine portal, door to door in working-class neighborhoods, in hotels and at the action itself — *Militant* supporters sold 56 subscriptions, 80 single copies and 10 books, including three copies of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions* and one copy of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*. The two are among nine books offered at

reduced prices with a subscription. (See ad below.)

Six subscriptions were sold on a bus going to the rally from southern Illinois, including one to a longtime reader who renewed his subscription. *Militant* supporters sold seven subscriptions going door to door and at a restaurant in nearby Marissa, Ill., a coal-mining town of some 2,000 people.

Two *Militant* supporters from Atlanta sold 20 copies of the paper at the Oak Grove mine portal near Birmingham, Ala., on their way to the protest.

Carol Strate, a friend of a miner's widow from Illinois, bought a subscription before the rally started. She was struck by the article about former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher contained in the May 6 issue sold at the action, especially Thatcher's description of the British miners as "the enemy within" during their 1984-85 strike.

After reading an article in the same issue on the fight led by 1,300 sugar workers against a 20-month lockout by American Crystal Sugar in North Dakota, Minnesota and Iowa, she commented, "These kind of things have to stop."

The conference's content and format — the presentations, discussions, workshops, classes, and other activities — will be determined by participants themselves, by the struggles they have been part of, their concerns and interests, and by their active input into planning and building it. Reservations have been made for July 18-20 in Oberlin, Ohio.

As part of the subscription drive, *Militant* supporters are raising the need for a conference like this with fighters at union struggles, protests in defense of immigrant rights, against police



Militant/Laura Anderson

Retired miners and supporters make stop during bus trip from Taylorville, Ill., to UMW protest in St. Louis April 29. Glass factory worker Leroy Watson (right) from Chicago talks with miners and sells *Militant* newspaper. Gary Brown (left) signed up for subscription and bought copy of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions*.

brutality, in defense of a woman's right to choose abortion, and at actions demanding freedom for the Cuban Five.

Socialist Workers Party candidates across the U.S. are strengthening this effort, inviting workers to join them as they participate in union battles, take part in candidates' debates and speak out on the big political questions facing working people in the U.S. and worldwide.

If you are interested in joining these efforts, call *Militant* distributors in your region. (See directory on page 8.)

If you want to help circulate the socialist newsweekly, you can contact the *Militant* at (212) 244-4899 or themilitant@mac.com.

Maggie Trowe from Des Moines, Iowa; Frank Forrestal from Minneapolis; and Alyson Kennedy from Chicago contributed to this article.



Militant/Cheryl Goertz

John Benson (right), SWP candidate for mayor of Atlanta, campaigns at April 10 demonstration for immigrant rights there.

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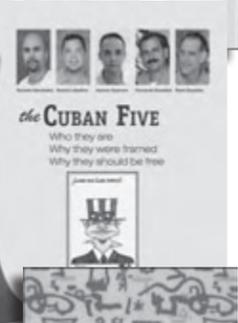


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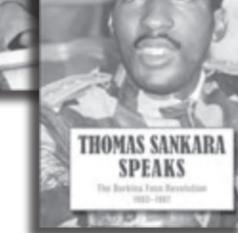


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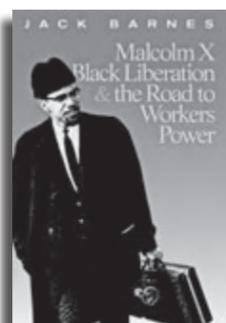
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Thomas Sankara Speaks

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See distributors on page 8



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

by Jack Barnes

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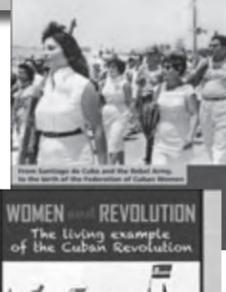


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Women and Revolution

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—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

NEW YORK

Manhattan

The Character of the World Economic Crisis and Its Consequences for Working People. Speaker: Paul Mailhot, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., May 11. Dinner 6 p.m.; program 7:30 p.m. 307 W. 36th St., 10th floor. Tel.: (212) 629-6649.

CANADA

Montreal

Rulers Attack Our Rights in Canada After Boston Bombing. Defend Workers Rights! Speaker: Joe Young, Communist League. Fri., May 10, 7:30 p.m. 7107 St-Denis, room 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

Defend Workers Rights. Speaker: Mike Tucker, Communist League. Fri., May 10, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5 waged, \$2 unwaged. 4/125 Grafton Road. Tel.: (09) 369-1223.

—CALENDAR—

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Rally to Support Compassionate Release for Lynne Stewart. Thurs., May 9, 7-10 p.m. Performers: S.O.T., Higher Soul Power, Sun Gad Thunder; others. Theatre 80, 80 St. Marks Pl. between 1st and 2nd Avenues. Sponsored by Lynne Stewart Defense Organization.

Victory for workers rights

Continued from front page

In 1973, amid revelations of government spying and harassment in the wake of the mass proletarian struggle for Black rights and anti-Vietnam War mobilizations, the SWP filed a suit against the FBI and other police agencies demanding such disruption be ruled unconstitutional. Thirteen years later the party won in federal court.

Drawing on evidence from that case, Krinsky and Frank described how “the FBI amassed over 8 million documents” on the party, targeted it for disruption by the FBI Cointelpro Program, wiretapped its supporters and carried out at least “204 black bag jobs, i.e., burglaries” of party offices.

Especially since Sept. 11, 2001, the letter explained, the FBI and other federal, state and local police agencies — in the name of “homeland security” against “terrorism” — have been utilizing “stepped-up spying, use of undercover informers, and other measures aimed at organizations and individuals engaged in constitutionally protected political activity.”

The SWP presented evidence since 2009 of dozens of cases of firings, surveillance, threats, harassment by cops and right-wingers, and discriminatory treatment:

— Lisa Potash, SWP candidate for mayor of Atlanta in 2009, lost two jobs when her bosses found out about her campaign.

— Frank Forrestal was accosted by a person while petitioning to put the SWP on the ballot in Omaha, Neb. “You deserve to die you commie bastard,” the thug said, phoning a friend: “Come down right away. We need to beat the shit out of him.”

— “We can put you on the no-fly list. Report you to Homeland Security,” two Philadelphia cops warned Osborne Hart, SWP candidate for mayor, and a supporter, both of whom were campaigning at the Sunoco Oil refinery plant gate there.

— “The president of the campaign must leave town now or he will be shot on sight” threatened a caller to the New York SWP headquarters.

— When Maura DeLuca, the SWP’s 2012 vice presidential candidate, traveled to speak at a campaign event in Montreal, she was stopped by Canadian border cops. Putting her name in the computer, they pulled up a

dossier, held her for a couple of hours, and interrogated her about reporting trips to Cuba, her membership on the SWP National Committee, and other speakers at the meeting she was going to attend.

The FEC ruling “is a victory not only for the SWP but for the right of workers and our organizations to engage in political action free from government, employer and right-wing interference,” Clark said. “This includes workers, unionists, and others involved in labor battles and social protests in the interests of the working class running election campaigns independent of and against the Democratic, Republican and other capitalist parties.

“As we defend and rebuild our unions to bring the power of our solidarity and numbers to bear,” the SWP campaign chair said, “independent working-class political action is a pressing necessity in face of escalating attacks by the bosses and their government and political parties on our wages, our job conditions, our political rights and our very dignity as human beings.

“SWP election campaigns set an example for workers and our unions of what needs to be done,” Clark said.

“Unique” but “irrelevant”?

In a concurring opinion, FEC Chair Ellen Weintraub, a Democrat, agreed the exemption remains “warranted.” She pointed to “the SWP’s unique history” of facing “widespread harass-



Militant photos by Michael Fitzsimmons, Arlene Rubinstein
The FEC ruling is a victory for the right of workers to engage in independent working-class political action, said Steve Clark, chair of the Socialist Workers National Campaign Committee. “That’s a pressing necessity in face of escalating attacks by the bosses and their government. SWP elections set an example for workers and our unions of what needs to be done.” Above, James Harris, SWP presidential candidate in 2012, marches to back janitors in Houston, July 2012. Inset, Norton Sandler, SWP 2013 candidate for mayor of Los Angeles, petitions for ballot spot at November 2012 action in defense of workers at Walmart.



ment and intimidation, perhaps more than any other minor party.” At the same time, she argued that the SWP has “exceptionally limited activity,” giving the government little interest in what the party does or who backs it.

Weintraub’s dismissive portrayal was echoed in the capitalist media’s

coverage of the ruling. National Public Radio called the SWP “small and inconsequential”; the *Washington Post*, “largely irrelevant to the modern political process”; and the *Wall Street Journal*, “impotent.”

But the FEC chair and bourgeois
Continued on page 9

Rulers use jihadist terror in Boston to expand cop spying

BY JOHN STUDER

Since the deadly bombing in Boston April 15 killing three and maiming more than 260, figures in bourgeois politics have taken advantage of evidence that the two immigrant Chechens implicated in the bombing had ties to Islamist jihadists to call for more spying on Muslims in the U.S. and new restrictions on immigrant rights. They are urging stepped-up cop surveillance across the country.

“Our laws and our interpretation of the Constitution, I think, have to change,” New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg told a press conference April 22. “We’re going to have more cameras and that kind of stuff.”

The 1,000-member-strong New York

Police Department’s intelligence squad — and its spy and frame-up operations — is being held up as an example nationwide. Judith Miller wrote glowingly in the *Wall Street Journal* about the cops “aggressively monitoring groups and individuals suspected of radicalization” and their “network of tipsters and undercover operatives” targeting neighborhoods where large numbers of Muslims live.

Miller boosted the NYPD’s “Ring of Steel,” a network of “sophisticated security cameras that feed information into a central monitoring system to detect questionable or unlawful activity.”

“Drones are a great idea,” Boston Police Commissioner Edward Davis told the press April 24. He said drones should be used for aerial surveillance at next year’s marathon and other events.

Officials in Boston announced May 1 that three additional people — including two identified as fellow students of Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, who has been charged in the bombing — have been arrested for allegedly helping him afterwards.

The rulers’ campaign, along with revulsion at the carnage in Boston, has provoked discussion among working people.

“I really don’t like the way the government used the events in Boston to lock down the city and clamp down on political rights,” Dan Ventor, who works cleaning up toxic sites, told supporters of the Socialist Workers Party campaign in Seattle. “I have an ongoing discussion with some of my friends who think it’s OK to sacrifice democratic rights in the name of ‘security.’”

According to a poll taken a week after the bombing by the *New York Times* and CBS News, one-fifth of those ques-

tioned said they think “the government had gone too far in restricting civil liberties in the fight against terrorism, while 26 percent said it had not gone far enough and 49 percent said the balance was about right.”

News reports indicate growing evidence tying Dzhokhar Tsarnaev and his brother Tamerlan, killed in a shootout with police, with Salafist Islamist forces. Dzhokhar “told interrogators in handwritten answers that the brothers acted as jihadists and out of Muslim religious anger at the U.S.,” the *Wall Street Journal* reported April 24.

The capitalist press increasingly refers to the Tsarnaev brothers as “radicals” and “militants,” suggesting an amalgam with workers battling boss attacks or opponents of Washington’s wars. But their jihadist views and actions have nothing in common with battles by working people against capitalist exploitation or national oppression in the U.S., Chechnya or elsewhere. These reactionary, anti-working-class forces carry out acts of terror, whether in Boston or the Middle East, against workers and others they oppose.

On April 16, Josefina Vidal, director of Cuba’s Foreign Ministry North American Affairs Division, delivered a note from the country’s revolutionary government to the U.S. Interests Section in Havana, saying Cuba “rejects and condemns unequivocally all acts of terrorism, in any place, under any circumstance, and with whatever motivation.”

The Cuban statement offered “the most heartfelt condolences of the people and government of Cuba to the people and government of the United States, particularly those directly affected by this tragedy and especially to the relatives of the victims.”

FBI on Trial

The Victory in the Socialist Workers Party Suit Against Government Spying
by Margaret Jayko

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution

by Jack Barnes

The Socialist Workers Party’s 1986 victory against cop spying and disruption, recounted in *FBI on Trial*, affirmed that workers have the right to organize and act against the capitalist government.

We can emulate in the U.S. what Cuban workers have shown since 1959 — that socialist revolution is not only necessary, it can be made. That’s the lesson of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*.

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Fight to free Oscar López from US prison ‘is fight for all of us’

BY CANDACE WAGNER
AND MARTÍN KOPPEL

NEW YORK — “Fighting for the freedom of Oscar means fighting for the freedom of all of us,” Luis Nieves Falcón told an April 19 meeting here at the El Maestro Cultural and Educational Center in the Bronx, to celebrate the publication of *Between Torture and Resistance* by Oscar López Rivera. A Puerto Rican independence fighter, López has been in prison in the United States since 1981 on trumped-up charges of “seditious conspiracy.”

Nieves Falcón is editor of the book, which was released in English by PM Press in March. The book includes López’s statement during his trial, excerpts from letters and a forward by retired South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu. It is being used to further the campaign to free Lopez.

The son of a small farmer, López grew up in the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico. When he was 14 his family joined his father in Chicago. Nieves Falcón said López’s experiences as a draftee in Vietnam “radicalized him.”

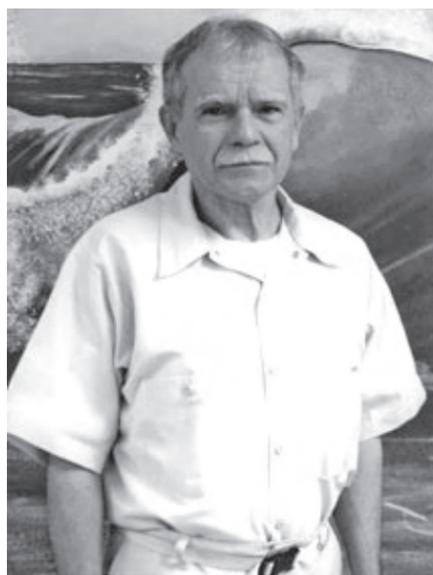
Upon returning to Chicago, López was active in struggles for bilingual education and promotion of Puerto Rican culture, housing and against po-

lice brutality. He helped organize the Committee to Free the Five Puerto Rican Nationalists, who were jailed in 1954 for carrying out an armed pro-independence demonstration in Congress.

Nieves Falcón described the conditions López has faced in prison, including 12 years of solitary confinement, sleep and sensory deprivation, limited visits, inadequate medical care and frequent strip searches.

“The goal is to isolate the prisoner so no solidarity develops,” López writes in the book in one letter about solitary. “They want to make us as mute as the walls and steel bars.”

“What has allowed Oscar to resist so many years?” Nieves Falcón asked. “Number one, his conviction that he is fighting for a just cause; number two, the example of other women and men



Left, Puerto Rican political prisoner Oscar López, jailed by U.S. government for 32 years on trumped-up conspiracy charges. Right, meeting in Philadelphia April 13 to celebrate publication of his book *Between Torture and Resistance*. Speaking is book’s editor Luis Nieves Falcón.

who have suffered the same thing for the independence of Puerto Rico; and three, the support for his fight to be released, which is especially strong in Puerto Rico.”

Nieves Falcón also spoke at meetings in Chicago and Philadelphia.

Write to Oscar López at: 87651-024, FCI Terre Haute, PO Box 33, Terre Haute, IN 47808.

Sanitation workers strike over hours, pay, ‘respect’

BY JANICE LYNN

MCDONOUGH, Ga. — “We want a fair wage, to be treated with respect, and to cut down some of the hours we have to work, sometimes between 12 and 15 hours a day,” Terry Robertson told the *Militant* on the picket line at

Republic Services Inc. here April 19.

The 40 drivers, helpers and mechanics, members of Teamsters Local 278, went on strike April 15 and returned to work April 22 after the company agreed to continue negotiating. The workers joined the Teamsters in 2011, but do not have a contract.

They were protesting the company’s firing of a worker and moves to stop paying drivers for time spent returning their trucks to the yard. Several workers talked about working with unsafe trucks and equipment.

“They want to cut our pay and ignore seniority,” driver Mondrez Flemister said. “We just need one big fist,” he said, referring to the unity workers need to meet the employers’ anti-union assaults.

In a news release, Local 728 President Randy Brown reported the McDonough workers have not had a wage increase in four years.

Over the last year or so, workers at a number of Republic Services facilities across the country have either been fighting for union recognition or involved in contract disputes. Republic is the second largest waste

collection company in the U.S. with 30,000 employees at 800 locations.

Several workers said they took an unpaid day off to march in the sanitation workers contingent at the Martin Luther King Day parade in Atlanta Jan. 21, along with other Republic workers from Tennessee, Florida, and Alabama.

More than 70 DeKalb County sanitation workers attended an April 9 County Commission meeting to press the demand of 411 workers who have petitioned for Teamster union recognition.

Recent strikes at several locations across the country began March 27 after workers at Republic’s landfill in Youngstown, Ohio, walked off the job. Like the strike here, workers in Youngstown returned to work April 22. According to *Teamster Nation*, thousands of Teamsters in 25 cities across the country had honored picket lines either in solidarity with the Youngstown strike or around local issues over the last several weeks.

Workers at Republic facilities in Memphis, Tenn., were still on strike as of April 22, *Teamster Nation* reported.

Canadian gov’t presses new attacks on workers rights with ‘terrorism’ law

BY JOE YOUNG

MONTREAL — Seizing on the April 15 Boston Marathon bombing, the Canadian government is pressing new attacks on democratic rights.

On April 24 the Combating Terrorism Act was given a third reading by the House of Commons, which means it will become law. Two days earlier, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police announced they had arrested two men — Chiheb Esseghaier of Montreal and Raed Jaser of Toronto — for allegedly plotting to derail a Via passenger train in the Toronto area.

Without presenting any evidence, RCMP Assistant Commissioner James Malizia declared the suspects were receiving “guidance and direction” from “al-Qaeda elements located in Iran.” Citing two U.S. officials, the *Wall Street Journal* said Canadian authorities accelerated the arrests in light of the Boston bombing despite requests from

Washington to wait for further investigation.

The Combating Terrorism Act will give police the power to detain Canadians for up to three days without charges. The person can then be put under certain probationary conditions for up to a year and imprisoned for up to 12 months without charges if they refuse to answer questions from an investigative hearing judge. Some of the provisions were voted into law after Sept. 11, 2001, but expired after five years.

The New Democratic Party, the official opposition, is opposing the law. The Liberal Party, which introduced the measures, voted for the bill.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



May 13, 1988

Thousands of workers at the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk, Poland, went on strike May 2. They are demanding wage increases, restoration of the banned Solidarity union, and the rehiring of all workers who were dismissed under martial law. About 25 Solidarity leaders have been arrested since the end of last month. Members of the union’s national executive commission have gone into hiding.

The Solidarity union was banned and martial law declared in Poland following widespread strikes, factory occupations, and protests by workers in 1982.

An estimated 3,000 of the 12,000 workers at the Lenin shipyard have occupied the grounds. The strike comes on the heels of other work stoppages throughout the country.



May 13, 1963

One of humanity’s great battles is taking place in Birmingham, Ala. Five weeks ago, for the first time in the history of the South’s steel city, Negroes there began exercising the right of peaceful protest against segregation by means of picket lines, sit-ins and marches. For five weeks the city officials of Birmingham — utilizing mass arrests, fire hoses and dogs — have shown the world that the elementary civil liberties such as free speech and assembly do not exist for Negroes in Birmingham.

Meanwhile the Kennedy administration persists in the ridiculous claim that the federal government doesn’t have the right to intervene in Birmingham because no federal court order is being violated.



May 14, 1938

The economic crisis, plunging deeper and without prospects of alleviation, automatically endangers the position of the trade unions and sternly imposes upon them a policy of preparedness for coming storms. [O]rganized and determined assaults of the employers to batter down wages and destroy the unions are on the order of the day.

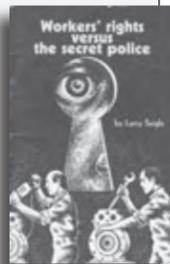
In the newly formed organization in the big industries the problems are complicated by the inexperience of the workers and by the concentrated power of big capital arrayed against them.

Trade union democracy alone can provide the arena for the responsible discussion of these differences and the disciplined execution of majority decisions.

Workers’ Rights versus the Secret Police

by Larry Seigle

Since the inception of the modern revolutionary workers movement in 1848, the ruling classes have responded with police spies, agents provocateurs and political frame-ups. —\$5



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Boss, gov't disregard for safety behind plant explosion in Texas

BY STEVE WARSHHELL

WEST, Texas — Twisted metal and scorched earth mark where the West Fertilizer factory used to be in the northeast corner of this working-class town of 3,000 people. Nearby buildings, including an apartment complex, are completely destroyed. Visible structural damage to walls and foundations can be seen for a mile, and windows were blown out for blocks beyond that.

More information continues to come to light that points to the culpability of company owners and government agencies for the April 17 factory explosion that killed 15, injured at least 200 and destroyed a large part of the town here. The circumstances surrounding the explosion mirror those of other fatal disasters in the state's petrochemical industry

in recent decades that have taken place alongside the bosses' drive for "productivity" and profits.

Officials announced that for the first time since the disaster residents in areas close to the blast could see their homes April 27 under police supervision.

"I was at home about five miles from the plant when it exploded," Tara McGoldrick, a 17-year-old student at West High School who works at a local bakery, told the *Militant* April 29. "I have many friends who lost their homes. It's changed everything. Cops are now everywhere. TV reporters won't get their cameras out of our face. We now have to travel to Connally for classes because our high school was badly damaged and what's still usable has been taken over by



AP Photo/The San Antonio Express-News, Tom Reel, Pool

Remains of working-class housing complex 400 feet from West Fertilizer plant in West, Texas.

state police. We've been told we can't use tap water for anything."

"We've been without water for 10 days," said waitress Hailie Huggins, who lives with her grandmother here.

While the blast also blew out the windows of their home, they had nowhere else to go, she explained. "Day by day, little by little we're trying to get back to normal."

The *Dallas Morning News* reported April 23 that the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality knew 2,400 tons of explosive chemicals were being processed and stored at the fertilizer plant and raised no concerns. In 2007 the agency issued the plant a permit to process volatile chemicals to produce fertilizer after determining there was no dust hazard. The potential danger of explosion was not considered in the decision. Several other state agencies, including the Department of State Health Services and the Office of the Texas State Chemist, also knew but did not raise any concerns about the risks involved.

When a fire started April 17, it spread to a structure next to the shed housing a massive container of explosive ammonium nitrate.

Between 1987 and 1991, 12 explosions in the state's oil industry killed 79 people and injured 933. These disasters took place side by side with a union-busting campaign that included a "productivity" drive alongside mass layoffs. Between 1982 and 1991 more than 40,000 jobs were cut in the refining industry, leaving about 115,000 refinery workers. An additional 30,000 hourly jobs were eliminated in the chemical industry.

From 2001 to 2010, there were 69 offshore oil rig deaths, 1,349 injuries, and 858 fires and explosions in the Gulf of Mexico alone, according to the federal Minerals Management Service. More than 500 fires occurred since 2006, including the April 2010 blast on the BP Deepwater Horizon that killed 11 and poisoned large sections of the Gulf.

Meanwhile, some 850 United Steelworkers union members at Exxon Mobil's Baytown, Texas, oil refinery — the second-largest in the U.S. — are threatening to strike in mid-June over safety concerns. The union has pressed for greater safety measures at the refinery since June 2011, after a worker suffered burns on 25 percent of his body, due to a faulty steam vent valve.

The union and Exxon management will meet again May 3, following the company's refusal in April to accept the union's safety proposals, already in place at several other Exxon refineries. The union reports that management has plans for a lockout if no agreement is reached, according to the *Wall Street Journal*.

The West Fertilizer plant was non-union.

Bangladesh garment factory collapse kills hundreds

Continued from front page

the shoddy building — which housed five garment factories, a few shops and a bank — caved in.

Enraged demonstrators, who forced a virtual shutdown of garment production in and around Dhaka, have been met with police tear gas and rubber bullets. In face of ongoing protests, government officials arrested the building owner along with a couple of factory bosses and building engineers.

At the same time, the government has ignored demands for tools from the mostly volunteer rescue teams, and on April 28 demanded a halt to rescue efforts. Two days earlier, volunteers — who had been moving rubble with crowbars, picks and their bare hands — were photographed holding up placards requesting electric drills, surgical masks and other rescue equipment. "We're struggling for equipment and supplies," volunteer Mehdi Hasan told the *Guardian* April 26.

"It looked like an earthquake had hit," Nazma Akter, president of the Bangladesh Combined Garment Workers Federation, said in a phone interview from Dhaka April 25.

Akter said garment workers had been sent home from the Rana Plaza the day before because a large crack had been discovered in the outer wall of the building. But bosses ordered them to come to work the following morning.

"The bank and the shops told their people to stay away because it wasn't safe," Akter said. "For an hour workers refused to go in. Then the bosses told them they wouldn't get paid if they didn't go to work, so they did. An hour later the building collapsed."

Among those arrested are factory owners Bazlus Samad and Mahmudur Rahaman Tapash and landlord Sohel Rana, a local politician and member of the governing Awami League party, who was captured at the Indian border trying to flee the country.

Most factories in the Dhaka area, comprising 60 percent of the garment industry in the country, were closed by protest strikes. Demonstrators set fire to two garment factories and damaged at least five others, the *New York Times* reported. By April 27 protests spread to Chittagong, Bangladesh's second-largest city, also a major industrial center.

The Rana Plaza disaster comes just five months after a fire killed more than 120 workers at the Tazreen Fashions factory in Dhaka's Ashulia industrial area.

At an action outside the headquarters of The Gap Inc. in San Francisco April 25, garment worker and Tazreen fire survivor Sumi Abedin, 24, described that disaster. "We dashed down the stairs, but the factory manager had locked the door," she told the *Militant*. "I jumped from the third floor, not to save my life, but so my family could have a proper burial."

Abedin was touring the U.S. with Kalpona Akter, executive director of Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity, to win support for the fight of garment workers in Bangladesh. Abedin said she was working 11 to 13 hours per day, six days a week for about \$62-\$65 a week. "I'm here to call for full compensation, to demand a safe workplace for us," she said. "We want doors to the factories to be left open and the stairways left unblocked."

Workers at Tazreen Fashions were trapped inside the building when the fire broke out. The exits were locked, fire extinguishers didn't work and highly flammable stacks of yarn and clothes blocked stairs leading to the exit.

According to Kalpona Akter, more than 900 workers have been killed in fires and building collapses since 2005. "They didn't die," Akter said, "they were killed by these retailers."

Bangladesh's more than 5,000 garment factories produce clothing for well-

known international retailers, including Walmart, Sears, H&M, Benetton, Gap and others. The industry employs more than 3.6 million workers, mostly women. Garments account for 80 percent of Bangladesh's manufacturing exports. Over the last decade, the country has become the world's second biggest garment exporter after China.

Garment workers in Bangladesh are the lowest paid in the world, with a minimum wage of \$37 a month, which was raised from \$20 after a strike in 2010. In June last year, more than 300 factories in Ashulia were closed down for a week as workers demanded higher wages and better conditions.

Leaders of workers' struggles and union-organizing efforts in the garment industry have been targets of repression and intimidation by bosses and their government. Aminul Islam, one of the leaders of the 2010 fight, was tortured and killed in April last year. No one has been charged with this murder.

Kalpona Akter and other leaders of the solidarity center were framed up in July 2011 on charges related to a June 2010 protest at a garment factory. She spent one month in jail and the charges are still hanging over her.

There were no unions in the Rana plants or in Tazreen Fashions. Only a couple dozen of the country's factories have unions.

Eric Simpson and Betsey Stone in San Francisco contributed to this article.



AP Photo/A.M. Ahad

Garment workers block road in Dhaka, Bangladesh, during April 27 protest strike.

Canada Steelworkers organize meetings for Cuban 5

Union convention pledges fight to win freedom for five revolutionaries framed up by Washington

BY JOHN STEELE

TORONTO — Some 1,000 people heard Adriana Pérez speak about the international fight to free the Cuban Five at meetings here and in Vancouver. The April 15-20 tour was organized by the United Steelworkers, one of the largest unions in Canada, in collaboration with Cuba solidarity organizations.

Pérez is the wife of Gerardo Hernández, who is serving a prison term of double life plus 15 years — the longest sentence meted out to the five framed-up revolutionaries. After the Five were arrested by the FBI in 1998, Pérez, along with Olga Salanueva, wife of René González, has been barred entry to the U.S. to visit her husband.

In Vancouver, Pérez spoke to the 650 delegates attending the April 16-18 USW national convention, which unanimously adopted a resolution pledging that the “USW will continue working with Workers Uniting to secure the prompt freedom of the Cuban 5.”

On the eve of the convention some 100 people, the majority Steelworkers, came to a public meeting with Pérez.

In Toronto, 200 attended an April 20 meeting at the Steelworkers hall organized by the USW and Friends of the Cuban Five committee. The event was endorsed by the United Food and Commercial Workers union and other organizations.

Pérez spoke about the impact of the

struggle on the Five and their families and about the importance of the solidarity movement.

“They and their families have stayed strong thanks to people like you,” she said. “These men need us now to bend every effort to win their freedom.” U.S. President Barack Obama “will not free them because he is a good guy,” Pérez continued. It will take a “jury of millions” to win their freedom.

Steelworkers National Director Ken Neumann sent greetings reiterating the union’s support for the Five, which were read by Mark Rowlinson, USW assistant to the national director. A message was also read from Olivia Chow, New Democratic Party Member of Parliament in Ottawa, who called on Washington to drop the immigration restrictions on Pérez that prevent her from visiting Hernández in prison.

Other speakers included author and Cuban solidarity activist Keith Bolender, who recently published *An Oral History of Terrorism Against Cuba*, and lawyer Juan Carranza, who outlined the defense habeas corpus motion for a new trial based on evidence that dozens of journalists were on the U.S. government payroll when they broadcast or wrote prejudicial material against the Five during their trial in Miami.

French edition of Cuban Five book will ‘reach more people’

BY MICHEL DUGRÉ

MONTREAL—The first French edition of *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free*, is coming off the press the first week of May. It will add a powerful weapon in the international battle to get out the truth and broaden support for the fight to free the five revolutionaries among those around the world whose first language is French.

The Five are being held “hostage to the Cuban people’s refusal to renounce their socialist course and go down on bended knee before Washington,” says Pathfinder Press President Mary-Alice Waters in the book’s introduction.

Working people in the U.S. in particu-



Militant photos by John Steele

Top, audience at meeting to free Cuban Five April 20 at Steelworkers hall in Toronto. Adriana Pérez (left), wife of Gerardo Hernández, was featured speaker. Several days earlier Pérez addressed 650 delegates at USW national convention in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Responding to questions from the audience, Pérez talked about the harsh conditions the Five have endured in U.S. prisons and the rapport and respect the revolutionaries have earned among fellow workers behind bars.

Like many workers incarcerated, long

periods of solitary confinement have been among the methods used by prison officials to try to break the spirit of the Five. “In Angola the experience of living underground in a small space helped prepare Gerardo for his 17 months in solitary confinement at the beginning of his term in prison,” Pérez said.

Hernández, Fernando González and René González were among some 375,000 Cuban combatants who volunteered to be part of an internationalist mission that lasted from 1975 to 1991 to help repel military invasions of newly independent Angola by the white-supremacist regime of South Africa.

Once, Pérez said, Hernández was invited by an inmate to eat with a group of African-Americans in his unit. When one objected on the basis of Hernández’s race, the prisoner responded, “This white man fought for us in Angola!” and Hernández sat down to join them.

The Steelworkers resolution calling on Washington to free the Five “is an example of international solidarity,” Carolyn Egan, president of the USW Local 8300, said from the floor during the discussion period. “We got a unanimous vote. It is our hope that this resolution will help unions in the United States do the same thing.”

“People ask, what can we do in Canada?” Javier Dómokos Ruiz, Cuban Consul General in Toronto, said in concluding remarks. “We can use the example of the USW. This is the kind of commitment the Cuban Five need.”

Ruiz and Pérez both called for a big contingent at “Five Days for the Cuban Five” actions in Washington, D.C., May 30-June 5, which includes a June 1 rally in front of the White House.

Organizations that built the meeting sold literature on the Cuban Five at the back of the hall before and after the event, including a collection of poetry by Antonio Guerrero. At the end, Morteza Gordzadeh of the Toronto Forum on Cuba took the floor to urge participants to pick up a copy of *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free* (see ad on this page and page 3). Thirty copies of the book were sold off the Toronto Forum on Cuba table.



Militant/John Steele

Javier Dómokos Ruiz, Cuban Consul General in Toronto, speaking at April 20 meeting.

Who are the Cuban Five?

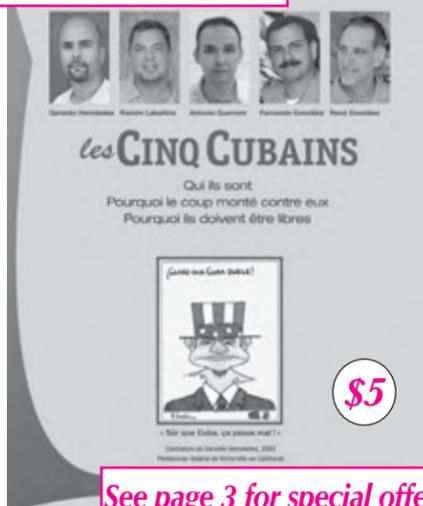
Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González are Cuban revolutionaries who during the 1990s accepted assignments from the Cuban government to gather information on the activities of Cuban-American counterrevolutionary groups operating in southern Florida. These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

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

Hernández was also convicted of conspiracy to commit murder based on the pretext that he bore responsibility for the Cuban government’s 1996 shoot-down of two aircraft flown by the counterrevolutionary group Brothers to the Rescue that had invaded Cuban airspace in disregard of Havana’s repeated warnings. He is serving two life terms plus 15 years.

All but René González remain in prison. In October 2011 he began serving a three-year “supervised release.” On the pretext of his dual citizenship, his request to return to Cuba has been denied. His wife, Olga Salanueva, is barred from entering the United States, as is Adriana Pérez, the wife of Hernández.

Now in French



Integration into social production key to women's emancipation

Below is an excerpt from *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, one of *Pathfinder's Books of the Month for May*. The book by Frederick Engels, first printed in 1884, follows the historical development of the basic institutions of capitalist society — the family, private property and the state. Engels traces the evolution of social relations through distinct stages of human society, determined by increasing levels of labor productivity and changing property relations.

Showing that the oppression of women is neither "natural" nor everlasting but arose at a specific stage of human history side by side with private property, Engels explains how the development of the modern working class creates the material basis to end that oppression. Copyright © 1972 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



"The first premise for the emancipation of women is the reintroduction of the entire female sex into public industry," wrote Engels. Above, women sewers in woolen factory in Leicester, England, 1923. Inset, picket line during strike of 20,000 mainly women garment workers in New York starting in November 1909.



BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY FREDERICK ENGELS

Our jurists, to be sure, hold that the progress of legislation to an increasing degree removes all cause for complaint on the part of the woman. Modern civilized systems of law are recognizing more and more, first, that, in order to be effective, marriage must be an agreement voluntarily entered into by both parties; and second,

that during marriage, too, both parties must be on an equal footing in respect to rights and obligations. If, however, these two demands were consistently carried into effect, women would have all that they could ask for.

This typical lawyer's reasoning is exactly the same as that with which the radical republican bourgeois dismisses the proletariat. The labor contract is supposed to be voluntarily entered into by both parties. But it is taken to be voluntarily entered into as soon as the law has put both parties on an equal footing on paper. The power given to one party by its different class position, the pressure it exercises on the other—the real economic position of both—all this is no concern of the law. And both parties, again, are supposed to have equal rights for the duration of the labor contract, unless one or the other of the parties expressly waived them. That the concrete economic situation compels the worker to forego even the slightest semblance of equal rights—this again is something the law cannot help.

As far as marriage is concerned, even the most progressive law is fully

satisfied as soon as the parties formally register their voluntary desire to get married. What happens behind the legal curtains, where real life is enacted, how this voluntary agreement is arrived at—is no concern of the law and the jurist. ...

The position is no better with regard to the juridical equality of man and woman in marriage. The inequality of the two before the law, which is a legacy of previous social conditions, is not the cause but the effect of the economic oppression of women. In the old communistic household, which embraced numerous couples and their children, the administration of the household, entrusted to the women, was just as much a public, a socially necessary industry as the providing of food by the men.

This situation changed with the patriarchal family, and even more with the monogamous individual family. The administration of the household lost its public character. It was no longer the concern of society. It became a private service. The wife became the first domestic servant, pushed out of participation in social production.

Only modern large-scale industry again threw open to her—and only to the proletarian woman at that—the avenue to social production; but in such a way that, when she fulfills her duties in the private service of her family, she remains excluded from public production and cannot earn anything; and when she wishes to take part in public industry and earn her living independently, she is not in a position to fulfill her family duties. What applies to the woman in the factory applies to her in all the professions, right up to medicine and law.

The modern individual family is based on the open or disguised domestic enslavement of the woman; and modern society is a mass composed solely of individual families as its molecules. Today, in the great majority of cases, the man has to be the earner, the breadwinner of the family, at least among the propertied classes, and this gives him a dominating position which requires no special legal privileges.

In the family, he is the bourgeois; the wife represents the proletariat. In the industrial world, however, the specific character of the economic oppression that weighs down the proletariat stands out in all its sharpness only after all the special legal privileges of the capitalist class have been set aside and the complete juridical equality of both classes is established.

The democratic republic does not abolish the antagonism between the two classes; on the contrary, it provides the field on which it is fought out. And, similarly, the peculiar character of man's domination over woman in the modern family, and the necessity, as well as the manner, of establishing real social equality between the two, will be brought out into full relief only when both are completely equal before the law. It will then become evident that the first premise for the emancipation of women is the reintroduction of the entire female sex into public industry; and that this again demands that the quality possessed by the individual family of being the economic unit of society be abolished.

May BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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Organize! Unionize! No deportations!

The world capitalist crisis is intensifying competition among working people and driving the propertied rulers' unremitting assaults on us. Millions are unemployed. Those with a job feel the lash of employer speed-up. From Bangladesh to West, Texas, we're paying with life and limb for the bosses' profit drive.

The employing class is looking to weaken our solidarity and to pit worker against worker: employed against jobless, young against old, Caucasian against Black, male against female, native-born against foreign-born. Meanwhile, the size and strength of our unions continue to decline, as they have for decades. Less than 7 percent of privately employed workers in the United States are union members, the smallest percentage since before the battles that built the industrial unions in the 1930s.

These facts and the working-class resistance taking place today — from fights by the United Mine Workers union in Appalachia and Utah to battles of sanitation workers against Republic Services — sharply pose the need to build and strengthen our unions. We need to bring union power to bear, to reach out and organize the tens of millions of unorganized and to champion social struggles that cut across boss-fostered divisions. We need to strengthen the unity, confidence and combativeness of the working class.

That's why it's a life-or-death question that all of labor join the fight against the firings, deportations and criminalization of the more than 11 million workers who lack "proper" government papers.

To the capitalist rulers all working people are "illegal." We're all a class of outlaws — from immigrants to "felons," from striking or locked-out employees, to African-Americans stopped and frisked for making "furtive movements," to "white trash" who in the

words of the U.S. president "cling to guns or religion."

We are one working class. We need to act as one and say with a united voice:

"We don't care what language you speak, what side of the border you were born on or whether you did time in prison. Your 'papers' have meaning only to the bosses and their government.

"Let's organize, stand up and fight together. For higher wages, for health care for all, for a massive public works program to put the jobless to work at union-scale wages, and for knocking down any kind of prejudice and discrimination, all of which strengthen the hand of the bosses against the working class."

The Democratic and Republican party politicians who wrote the immigration reform bill now before Congress have a different goal: maintaining a super-exploitable layer of workers with fewer rights, as the rulers step up their policing of working people.

That's why the bill expands so-called guest worker programs, allocates billions for more *la migra* cops and stricter border enforcement, and imposes mandatory E-Verify by bosses to check the immigration status of every worker they hire. It's why the bill takes steps toward a national ID card to use to blacklist and victimize militant workers. All this while holding out a decade-plus-long, twisting, pothole-filled "road to citizenship."

From the coal mines to the fields, from meatpacking plants and garment shops to steel mills and fast-food restaurants, we need to demand: No firings or deportations. No E-Verify or other "background checks." No "guest worker" or other second-class status. Release the tens of thousands of workers detained by the immigration cops.

Strengthen solidarity in action.

Organize! Unionize!

Socialists' campaign disclosure victory

Continued from page 4

press all beg the question. If the SWP is insignificant, why have government spies, cops and right-wing thugs targeted it for more than 70 years? Why has the SWP succeeded in winning an exemption from the FEC time and again?

In fact, an initial FEC draft opinion earlier this year, while granting the extension, would have laid the basis to later reject it, saying the SWP's evidence since 2009 "satisfies the requirement of demonstrating a reasonable probability of harassment, albeit barely." After the SWP and its attorneys replied, including with new sworn declarations, the FEC dropped "albeit barely." They also exempted the SWP for four years, as it asked, instead of three as in the first FEC draft.

How could an "irrelevant" SWP push them back?

Political continuity from 1917, 1959

The answer is that for close to a century, the Socialist Workers Party and its political forebears have been blood and bone of the international political movement the U.S. imperialist ruling families fear the most:

— The movement of the revolutionary workers and farmers who toppled the capitalists and landlords from power in Russia in October 1917, under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party led by V.I. Lenin, and established the world's first working-class government.

— Of the workers and farmers who, organized by the July 26 Movement and Rebel Army led by Fidel Castro, brought down a U.S.-backed tyranny in Cuba in 1959 and opened the socialist revolution in the Americas.

— And of the class-struggle-minded workers and farmers in the U.S. who have organized to emulate what working people accomplished in 1917 and 1959 by building the nucleus of a proletarian party able to lead the working class and its allies to the revolutionary conquest of power in this country.

The SWP's origins go back to the working-class militants who organized to found the Communist Party in the U.S. in the wake of the 1917 Bolshevik revolution. In 1928, after privileged social layers in the Soviet Union represented by Josef Stalin usurped po-

litical power there, those communists who fought to continue Lenin's revolutionary course were expelled and built what became the Socialist Workers Party.

Along this road to the fight for working-class power, the party has fought shoulder to shoulder with others in battles by workers, farmers and the oppressed. It has helped get out the truth about these struggles — and about the lessons of past working-class battles the world over — through the pages of the *Militant*, through books and pamphlets and through the SWP's independent working-class election campaigns.

Just in the past few months, this includes championing the fight of New York school bus workers fighting for their jobs; of coal miners resisting Patriot Coal's drive to use bankruptcy to scuttle retirees' pensions and health care and gut the United Mine Workers union; and of five Cuban revolutionaries framed up and imprisoned by Washington for nearly 15 years for keeping the Cuban government informed of activity by counterrevolutionary groups operating with impunity from U.S. soil to carry out bombings and other armed assaults on the Cuban Revolution.

This is what is "unique" about the Socialist Workers Party. And it is for these reasons the SWP has been and continues to be targeted for spying, disruption and threats by the rulers' government, cops and other enemies of the working class. The propertied rulers hate the example set by the SWP's consistent and unyielding revolutionary proletarian course.

Despite their demagoguery to rationalize restrictions on democratic rights and political space, the capitalist rulers aren't worried that reactionary, anti-working-class Islamist jihadists — who kill and maim innocent people in terrorist acts — will someday dethrone them and install a caliphate on the Potomac. What the rulers *do* fear are coming social and political battles by millions of workers and farmers, and the inevitable revolutionary challenge to their class rule.

In the next issue of the *Militant*, we'll look at the history of building a revolutionary workers party in the U.S. from 1917 to today, and the unceasing violence and disruption unleashed by the propertied ruling families to defend their dictatorship of capital.

Coal miners' fight

Continued from front page

Wesley White, a retired miner from West Virginia, told the *Militant*. "It was a way for Peabody to get rid of its responsibilities to us miners."

"In 2008 when the economy went down, I said, 'they're coming after the union,'" said Butch Epling, from Madison, W.Va., who worked at a Peabody-owned mine for 30 years. He came on a UMWA bus with seven family members. "They might be able to defeat the unions for a while, but they can't defeat the workers. We're going to keep fighting."

"We had a guarantee from the company, from the government, that we would have pensions and health care when we retire," Epling added. "Now they're saying those guarantees are worthless. That can't be called anything but thievery."

"This is my sixth time to St. Louis," said Jesse Williams, a retired miner from West Virginia and member of UMWA Local 9177. "These courts are for the companies, not for the working man, look at what happened at Hostess." Williams was referring to Hostess closing and selling its factories after declaring bankruptcy last November and plans by the new owners to reopen some plants, but without a union.

Miners also protested April 25 at Arch Coal's shareholders meeting in Wright, Wyo., and at Peabody's April 29 shareholder meeting in Gillette, Wyo.

Williams, who worked for Peabody for 33 years, said he didn't work "one day in a Patriot mine." More than 90 percent of "Patriot" retirees today never actually worked for the company.

"We have to support other unions," said Floyd Bell, a member of Communications Workers Local 6300 from Ballwin, Mo. "Anything that affects one affects all." At the rally were also members of UNITE HERE Local 74 from St. Louis; Service Employees International Union; American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; Transport Workers Union; Laborers union; United Steelworkers and more.

A group of miners from Australia's Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, which represents 5,000 workers at nine Peabody mines there also came. "We see this as an attack on the UMWA and all unions in the U.S.," Steve Smyth, president of the union's Queensland branch, told the crowd. "An injury to one is an injury to all."

Patriot filed for bankruptcy in July 2012, claiming it could no longer "provide health care for more than 23,000 employees, retirees and their dependents," according to its website. Patriot is seeking \$150 million in wage cuts and benefit and pension givebacks and the voiding of union contracts.

Patriot's lawyer Elliot Moskowitz told the bankruptcy court April 29 that if the company is not allowed to cut expenses "to the bone" it would liquidate.

The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reported April 11 that Patriot offered to extend retirees' health coverage for six months and give the UMWA 35 percent stock ownership in the company if the union would agree to the cuts. This proposal is similar to one implemented by the auto bosses following GM's bankruptcy in 2009.

The *Post-Dispatch* reported April 29 that the UMWA made a counteroffer of a 57 percent stake, which Patriot rejected.

Patriot did not return calls from the *Militant* requesting comment.

On April 24 the bankruptcy court approved a settlement with about 1,000 retired supervisors and their families, Patriot Coal Vice President Janine Orf told the *Charleston Gazette*.

Meanwhile, another fight by coal miners is taking place at the Deer Creek mine near Huntington, Utah. Last year Berkshire Hathaway bought the union mine. According to the March/April *UMWA Journal*, the new bosses are attempting to weaken health care benefits and undermine the union safety committee. The *Journal* says the company fired the union safety committee chair and wants to reduce the size of the committee "from 14 to three, none to be elected by the rank-and-file, all to be appointed by management."

Mine Workers locals 1769 and 2176, which organize the miners there, are planning protests in Des Moines, Iowa, May 3 and at the stockholders meeting of Berkshire Hathaway in Omaha, Neb., May 4.

The UMWA is organizing further protest actions against Patriot Coal May 21 in St. Louis and June 4 in the Evansville, Ind., area.