

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

1953 cease-fire in Korea:  
victory over US war aims  
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 77/NO. 33 SEPTEMBER 23, 2013

## Cambodia garment workers fight for wages, safety, union



Mak Remissa/Epa/Corbis

Workers at SL Garment Processing in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, demand wage increase Sept. 5.

BY EMMA JOHNSON

In hard-fought battles, garment workers in Cambodia are pressing for higher wages, safer workplaces and union protection. The number of strikes are at record numbers and violent clashes between workers and repressive forces of the bosses and their government have been frequent.

Investment in Cambodia's garment industry is surging. The sector accounts for 80 percent of the country's total exports, which rose by 32 percent last year.

Singapore-owned SL Garment Processing (Cambodia) Ltd employs 6,000 workers in the capital Phnom Penh and produces for Gap, H&M and Levi's.

On Aug. 12 workers struck the company demanding a monthly wage of \$150, up from the present \$80, the government-set minimum. Other de-

mands included lunch stipend of \$3, removal of military police inside the plant and the firing of a recently hired company adviser who had brought in the cops.

"We tried to negotiate, but the company didn't listen," Ath Thorn, president of the Coalition of Cambodian Apparel Workers Democratic Union, told the *Militant* Sept. 9 in a phone interview from Phnom Penh. The union is one of three in the plant.

"This factory was established in 1996," he said. "In 2010 we went on

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## Solidarity with Syrian workers and farmers!

### Obama stalls push for military strike

BY JOHN STUDER

Efforts by President Barack Obama and Russian President Vladimir Putin to cobble together an agreement that would bring the Syrian regime's chemical weapons under "international control" has stalled momentum toward a U.S. military strike. Meanwhile, imperialist threats persist and the Bashar al-Assad government in Syria presses ahead with its murderous war to retain its grip on power, which is taking a devastating toll on workers and farmers.

"Over the last few days we've seen some encouraging signs in part because of the credible threat of U.S. military action as well as constructive talks that I had with President Putin," Obama said in a televised speech Sept. 10, adding that he "therefore asked the leaders of Congress to postpone a vote to authorize the use of force."

"I've ordered our military to maintain their posture," Obama said, "to be in a position to respond if diplomacy fails."

Government officials in Paris and London, as well as congressional leaders in the U.S., have backed the shift.

Moscow and Damascus are trying

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### No to Assad butchery! No to US intervention!

The following statement was issued Sept. 10 by the Socialist Workers Party candidates for Des Moines City Council — Margaret Trowe, at-large; Ellen Brickley, Ward 1; and David Rosenfeld, Ward 3. It was released nationally the next day by John Studer, organizer of the party's national campaign committee. The three working-class candidates were informed Sept. 6 they will appear on the ballot.

#### SWP CAMPAIGN STATEMENT

We stand shoulder to shoulder with millions of workers across Syria who have been mobilizing for two and a half years against brutal assaults and repression carried out by the Assad regime. Workers of a broad range of nationalities and faiths — Sunnis, Shiites, Palestinians, Kurds, Christians and others — have said,

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## 'Militant' brings Syrian toilers' fight to workers door to door

BY EMMA JOHNSON

Supporters of the *Militant* and Socialist Workers Party candidates took advantage of President Barack Obama's Sept. 10 televised address on Syria to campaign door to door that night in working-class neighborhoods.

In Des Moines, Iowa, supporters used an SWP campaign statement to initiate the discussion (see above). Most workers wanted to discuss the situation in that country, city council candidate David Rosenfeld said, and almost all were opposed to any U.S. military action. Their opposition,

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## Program ended that brought abortion pill to Iowa rural areas

BY DAVID ROSENFELD

DES MOINES, Iowa — Seventy-five supporters of Planned Parenthood's telemedicine program, which expanded access to abortion services into rural areas of Iowa, rallied at the state Capitol building here Aug. 28 and then delivered more than 1,200 petition signatures backing the five-year-old program to the office of Gov. Terry Branstad.

Later that day, the Iowa Board of Medicine held an open hearing to discuss a proposal to shut the program down, which the board decided to do two days later. A vigil opposing women's right to choose also took place in

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## Meetings in Malaysia, Indonesia build solidarity with Cuban Five



Militant/Baskaran Appu

Cuban Ambassador to Malaysia Rubén Pérez speaks at Aug. 23 event demanding freedom for Cuban Five in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. At left, Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press. At right, Manuel Guzmán, Venezuelan ambassador to Malaysia.

BY LINDA HARRIS  
AND PATRICK BROWN

JAKARTA, Indonesia — Two successful meetings building solidarity with the Cuban Revolution were held in the Southeast Asian countries of Malaysia and Indonesia last month. The events in Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta demanded freedom for the Cuban Five, who were framed up and

imprisoned in the United States 15 years ago.

Speaking Aug. 23 during a "Conversation on Experiences in U.S.- Cuba Solidarity Work," Cuban Ambassador to Malaysia Rubén Pérez noted that "very little is known about the broad solidarity movement inside the U.S. that has been in existence

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# Need big raise in minimum wage says socialist candidate in Houston

BY CINDY JAQUITH

HOUSTON — Michael Fitzsimmons, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for Houston mayor, has won a spot on the ballot.

"I'm the only worker in this race for mayor," Fitzsimmons told a meeting at the campaign headquarters here August 23. "The current mayor, Democrat Annise Parker, touts her ability to bring businesses to Houston and provide jobs. But the success story she talks about is not the reality the working class in Houston lives.

"Almost 25 percent of working people in this city live below the poverty line and more are without health insurance," Fitzsimmons said. "And we know what attracts business here — the small number of unions, which makes it easier for the bosses and their government to disregard safety and environmental hazards. The number of workers killed on the job in Texas over the last year rose by nearly 100 to 433." More than 100 of those who died were construction workers, many of them undocumented.

The socialist campaign has been going door to door visiting workers to discuss the need for a big raise in the minimum wage and a massive, government-funded public works program to provide jobs for millions thrown out of work building schools, housing, hospitals, day care centers and other things workers need. "These demands strike a chord with workers we've met, whether they are employed or unemployed," Fitzsimmons said. "Many have also told us that they or another family member

are unable to get a job because of jail time they did in the past."

Attending the SWP campaign meeting was Adriana Ruiz, whose husband works at a fast-food spot. "I'm for a big increase in the minimum wage, but we shouldn't stop there," Ruiz said during the discussion. "Unionization would help make sure workers are treated fairly and to deal with problems like being denied scheduled pay raises. People argue that raising wages will cause inflation, but prices have been going up for a long time and wages haven't!"

Fitzsimmons has also been discussing the fight of fast-food workers and the need for a higher minimum wage with co-workers at the Houston oil-tool factory where he works. "The fast-food workers have a point about wages. And what you said about their fight being in the interests of all workers is true. We should get behind them," co-worker Kenneth McBeath, 27, told Fitzsimmons.

Co-workers, unionists and other campaign supporters donated \$1,250 to meet the required filing fee.

The SWP campaign will join with all those forces fighting to reverse attempts to gut the Voting Rights Act in the wake of the June Supreme Court ruling that struck down a key section of that law, Fitzsimmons said. Already, the mayor of Pasadena, emboldened by the high court, has proposed redistricting plans that will make it harder for candidates to be elected from Black and Hispanic communities.

"We oppose anything that makes it more difficult for workers to participate in politics," the socialist candidate said,



Militant/Cindy Jaquith

Mike Fitzsimmons, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Houston, right, discusses need for solidarity with Syrian workers who confront both repressive regime and threats of U.S. intervention with electrician and Militant subscriber Darrell Williams, Sept. 8.

"whether it be redistricting or the Texas Voter ID law."

Wherever the socialist campaign goes, Fitzsimmons said, it introduces workers to the fight to free the Cuban Five. (See article on front page.)

"The Cuban Five are an example

for U.S. workers of the kind of working class revolutionaries that the Cuban Revolution has produced," Fitzsimmons said. "They are an example for all of us, and their fight particularly resonates with those who have experienced the cops, courts, and prisons up close."

## Workers send 'on-time' blood money bonuses to SWP fund

"Blood money" contributions to the Socialist Workers Party Capital Fund have totaled \$620 over the summer. The ongoing fund helps finance the long-range work of the revolutionary party.

"Blood money" is a term communist workers use to describe one-time payments from bosses — safety, attendance and production bonuses, contract-signing incentives, holiday gifts and other such bribes — intended to pressure workers to accept speedup, wage cuts, concession contracts and dangerous working conditions. Class-conscious workers turn them into contributions to the Capital Fund.

"Enclosed are two 'blood money' checks," wrote John Benson and Janice Lynn, who work at a food preparation facility near Atlanta. Their quarterly bonus checks for \$465 are based on the bosses' tally of "productivity, appearance, on-time delivery, etc." Their goal with the bonuses "is to try to get workers to work faster," wrote Benson and Lynn. "The result? More workers with aching backs, wrists, knees, etc."

United Airlines worker Eric Simpson from San Francisco sent in \$90, from three bonuses the company gave him, "rewards" to the workforce for "on-time" takeoffs," he wrote. "But 'customer satisfaction' with the airline is reported to be at 30 percent! Members of our union, the Machinists, weren't too 'satisfied' with the latest contract the company proposed and we turned it down overwhelmingly. Send the companies' 'blood money' bonuses to the working-class movement and get 100 percent 'worker satisfaction!'"

To make a contribution to the Capital Fund, write to or call the Militant distributor nearest you. The directory is on page 10.

— SUSAN LAMONT

## THE MILITANT

### Fight to prosecute and jail killer cops!

*Under capitalism, police beat and kill working people in the course of carrying out their basic function of keeping us in line and repressing struggles against exploitation and oppression. The 'Militant' covers fights to push back this unceasing brutality. Don't miss an issue!*



Aug. 13 march in Toronto demands arrest of cop James Forcillo who shot Sammy Yatim.

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

# 'Militant' door to door

Continued from front page however, was largely in the framework of what's good for "America," he said.

"It's like the Gulf War and what happened in Afghanistan," Kathy Dawson, who is self-employed, told campaigner Helen Meyers. "We go over there to war and are told it would help the economy like World War II, but it didn't. We're fighting a losing battle."

Des Moines campaign supporters explained that working people in the U.S. need to start with the situation facing Syria's toilers, who are part of the "we" of the international

working class — not the false "we" of "America" promoted by the U.S. capitalist exploiters. Syria's workers and farmers are not simply victims, but are fighting for political space to organize in their own interests against the Assad tyranny. U.S. intervention of any kind would be aimed against those aspirations, in an attempt to shore up U.S. imperialism — a common enemy of working people here and there alike.

"Several people commented that they had never thought of it that way," Rosenfeld said. Campaigners sold five copies of the *Militant* and got a \$2 contribution.

In Omaha, Neb., socialist campaigner Rebecca Williamson met Guille García, an unemployed worker, on her doorstep. The wars cost a lot of money and soldiers fight valiantly and just die, she told Williamson.

"I showed her the *Militant* and said we come with the perspective of solidarity with the struggles of workers and farmers in Syria and that this is different from 'we Americans,' which is really talking about the interests of the rich. She nodded her head in agreement," Williamson said.

In a little more than an hour of door to door campaigning in Seattle, socialist campaigners sold one *Militant* subscription, six single copies and got a \$32 donation, reported SWP mayoral candidate Mary Martin.

Patrick Burningham, who collects salvage building materials and resells them, listened to John Naubert, SWP candidate for Port Commissioner, ex-



Militant/Dan Fein

Seth Galinsky, SWP candidate for Queens borough president in New York City, campaigns in Woodside, Queens, Aug. 25. Tomasa Reyes, a babysitter, signs up for *Militant* subscription.

plain why working people in the U.S. should have as their starting point the interests of fellow workers in Syria in opposing Washington's bombing threats.

"Well, I haven't really looked at this in class terms," Burningham responded. "I was thinking, hasn't the U.S. done something like this before and will any-

thing we do really change anything?"

Mikala Woodward, who works at a museum, bought a *Militant* subscription from Martin.

"As a Quaker, I'm opposed to war," she said. "But even if war were justified, bombing the Syrian people won't change anything or do any good and it has unintended consequences."

## SWP campaign statement

Continued from front page

"Enough!" to decades of abuse. The recent chemical weapon attack comes as part of a widening civil war that has left 100,000 dead and more than 6 million internal and external refugees.

We unconditionally oppose U.S. government intervention in Syria or anywhere in the Middle East. The capitalist rulers of the United States are a deadly

enemy of working people at home and abroad. For decades they have intervened repeatedly in the Middle East and North Africa seeking to keep workers and farmers from gaining control of the patrimony of their lands, to reap the profits flowing from oil in the region, and to impose stability for the capitalist world order.

The working people of Syria are fighting for political space and against a brutal regime as they also fight to block reactionary Islamist-jihadi forces seeking to take advantage of the war to broaden their field of operations in the region. We call on working people in this country to stand in solidarity with this fight.



Militant/Jacob Perasso

Rebecca Williamson (right) shows *Militant* and discusses solidarity with workers' fight in Syria with Guille Garcia, Sept. 10 in Omaha, Neb.

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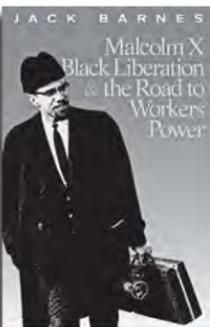
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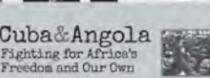
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## MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

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Abortion Is a Woman's Right. Fri., Sept. 20, 7:30 p.m.

Egypt and Syria: What Is the Road Forward for Working People? Speaker: Mary Martin, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Sept. 28, 7:30 p.m. Both events at 5482 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

### Corrections

In issue no. 31, the article "Egyptian Army Kills Hundreds, Imposes Curfew, Martial Law," quotes from an April 6 Youth Movement statement dated Aug. 15, not April 15. The article "Farmers in Egypt Press Fights for Land, Debt Relief?" includes a quote from Farag but does not identify who he is. Hashem Farag is a farmer from the village of Bernesht, south of Cairo. The "Locked-Out Steelworkers in Canada Reject 'Final Offer'" article in the On the Picket Line column should have said that U.S. Steel bosses dropped their initial demand to end seniority rights for job openings and instead demanded changes in contract language to give them free reign to contract out union jobs.

# Obama stalls military strike

Continued from front page  
to diffuse pressure on the Assad regime and drown the domestic opposition in blood.

Led by Washington, the imperialists powers aim, one way or another, to remove Assad and have a hand in reshuffling a government in Syria that is more allied with their interests and capable of establishing “stability” — a code word for an overriding goal shared by both sides — by keeping a lid on the struggles of workers and farmers.

Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Moallem said Sept. 10 that the regime would “cease production of chemical weapons and disclose the locations of its stockpiles to the United Nations, Russia and others,” the *Wall Street Journal* reported. This is the government’s first admission that it holds such weapons.

The same day, the Syrian army launched assaults on working-class neighborhoods in Damascus suburbs held by opposition forces, including Mouadamiya, one of the areas hit by poison gas attacks Aug. 21 that killed some 1,400 people and touched off the Obama administration’s drum beating for military retaliation.

“Syria’s top leaders amassed one of the world’s largest stockpiles of chemical weapons with help from the Soviet Union and Iran, as well as Western European suppliers and even a handful of American companies,” the *New York Times* reported Sept. 8.

In addition to what Assad got from abroad, he has developed production factories to produce toxic chemicals at home. The regime has stockpiles of mustard gas, VX nerve agents and sarin — the chemical agent reportedly used in the Aug. 21 attacks. (The U.S. and Russia maintain the world’s largest stockpiles of chemical weapons.)

Before the current discussions opened between Washington and Moscow, Obama had ordered the Pentagon to significantly expand the number of potential targets for Tomahawk cruise missile and bomb-

ing attacks to “deter and degrade” the Assad regime.

## Assad’s assaults hit toilers

For decades Assad and his father before him have maintained dictatorial control over Syria, backed by governments of Russia and Iran. The Assad regime is based on a narrow layer of capitalist families, most from the Alawite Muslim minority, a branch of Shiite Islam representing about 12 percent of the population.

In 2011, inspired by the massive mobilizations in Tunisia and Egypt that brought down despotic regimes there, workers, farmers, youth and others organized street demonstrations across Syria demanding political rights and, increasingly, for the end of the Assad government. The growing actions were swiftly met by furious repression. In addition to attacks on the protests, whole cities were shelled in efforts to pacify the population.

As the slaughter grew and space for public street actions closed, some began to organize armed resistance. Bourgeois figures run these resistance forces as their political base. Some deeply reactionary al-Qaeda groups seeking a territorial base of operations are also fielding substantial armed units against the Assad government.

Over the last two and a half years, more than 100,000 have been killed in a nation of 22 million. The U.N. reports that more than 2 million have fled the fighting and destruction, take refuge in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq. There are 720,000 in Lebanon, which has a population of 4.4 million, and over half a million in Jordan, where the massive Zaatari refugee camp is now that country’s fourth largest city.

Some 4.25 million more have been driven from their homes but remain inside Syrian borders. Like the vast majority of workers and farmers there, they face continuing threat of military attack and denial of basic political rights.

Thousands of Kurds, victims of



Zaatari refugee camp (Aug. 20, top, April 2, inset), one of growing camps sheltering some 2 million Syrians forced to flee their country. With more than 120,000 Syrian refugees, Zaatari has quickly become fourth largest city in Jordan.



national oppression under Assad, as they are in Turkey, Iraq and Iran, have won a measure of control over some of the areas where they are a majority in northern Syria. Many have fled to the autonomous Kurdish Regional Government in northern Iraq.

## Tel Aviv backs missile strike

“Mr. Obama’s limited strike proposal has one crucial foreign ally: Israel,” the *New York Times* reported Sept. 5.

Among the Israeli rulers’ major concern is the growing base of operations in Syria for Hezbollah, an armed Islamist group sponsored by Tehran. For decades Tel Aviv tolerated and even counted on the Assad regime because of its role in maintaining the status quo in the region, which includes a history of murderous betrayals of Palestinian refugees, keeping Hezbollah in check and helping ensure Israel’s quietest and most secure border, buffered by the Israeli-controlled Golan Heights.

“This is a playoff situation in which you need both teams to lose, but at least you don’t want one to win — we’ll settle for a tie,” Alon Pinkas, former Israeli consul general in New York, told the *Times*, referring to the Assad regime and the heterogeneous opposition. “Let them both bleed, hemorrhage to death.”

Some commentators in Israel welcomed the Russian-U.S. negotiations.

“If it also includes moves to dismantle chemical weapons, that is no small thing,” Giora Eiland, a former Israeli national security adviser, told Reuters. “For us it is a good result, without our having had to do anything.”

## Obama’s foreign policy

Obama has long pressed to cut back U.S. armed forces and disengage from U.S. military engagement. Obama’s election and course have coincided with a period of deep war-weariness in the U.S., induced by drawn-out and inconclusive wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“I was elected to end wars, not start them,” Obama told a press conference in St. Petersburg, Russia, Sept. 6. “I’ve spent the last four and a half years doing everything I can to reduce our reliance on military power.” His foreign policy has been marked by an apparent belief that he can negotiate a different world in which the mounting crises and conflicts bred by capitalism can be negotiated away.

When the real world gets in the way, Obama has sought to “lead from behind” and relied on special operations forces, squads of drones and targeted killings. The course has condemned the administration to endless frustrations and left it unprepared for crises — with the potential to lash out in unpredictable ways, with dangerous and unintended consequences for the world’s workers and farmers.

## Militant Labor Forum in NY: ‘Stand with workers in Syria’

BY SUSAN LAMONT

NEW YORK — “Workers around the world, especially here in the U.S., need to stand in solidarity with our working-class brothers and sisters in Syria, who are fighting for political space and to end the tyranny of Bashar al-Assad,” Dan Fein, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New York mayor, told the audience at a Sept. 7 Militant Labor Forum here. “That solidarity is the starting point for our unequivocal opposition to any intervention — of any kind — by U.S. imperialism in Syria.”

Some 35 people attended the meeting, one in a series of forums taking place in U.S. cities and internationally, hosted by supporters of the *Militant* newsweekly, in solidarity with the toilers of that country and against Washington’s threat of a military strike.

“We completely oppose those who say, ‘Let them all kill each other, it’s not our problem,’ Fein said. “The Syrian toilers are part of the interna-

tional working class, struggling and fighting against the Assad dictatorship at the same time they fight to prevent anti-working-class al-Qaeda-linked forces from getting a bigger toehold in the area. We support them in that struggle — they are us, their fight is our fight.”

“I’ve been campaigning door to door, discussing Obama’s bombing threats with working people,” Fein said. “Most people I met say they are opposed to the U.S. bombing Syria. But it’s not from a working-class perspective. Some say they are tired of war, that things didn’t work out too well for ‘us’ in Iraq and Afghanistan — with the ‘us’ meaning ‘America.’ But ‘us’ didn’t carry out those wars, I explain. The U.S. capitalist class and their government and military did, and it had nothing to do with the interests of the toilers in Iraq, Afghanistan or the U.S. If ‘things had worked out better’ for the U.S. capitalists, would that mean workers should favor bombing

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AP Photo/Narciso Contreras

Rebel-controlled area of Aleppo, Syria’s largest city, November 2012, one week after government airstrikes. Destroyed buildings included Dar Al-Shifa hospital. Apartment on third floor of standing building is illuminated by fire used by one family to keep warm.

## ON THE PICKET LINE

### Fast-food workers in Atlanta join actions for \$15 and union

ATLANTA — Picket lines and rallies starting at 6 a.m. took place outside several fast-food chains here Aug. 29, as part of demonstrations in some 60 cities across the country pressing for a \$15-an-hour minimum wage and unionization. The first such actions began last November in New York. This is the first time rallies have taken place in Atlanta.

“We are now speaking up for ourselves and we’ll do this over and over again until we get our \$15,” said Frederick Hambrick, 51, who has worked at Church’s Chicken for 15 years and makes \$8.25 an hour.

“Sometimes it gets real rough,” Calvin Strong, 50, a worker from TJ’s Sandwiches, told the *Militant* at the early morning rally. Strong, who has worked in fast food for 20 years, is paid \$8.50 an hour. “When it gets slow, they cut the hours,” he said.

There are 77,248 fast-food workers in Atlanta. Their median wage is \$8.59 per hour, according to Atlanta Jobs with Justice, one of the organizers of the demonstrations.

Outside a downtown Burger King some 100 protesters, including about a dozen fast-food workers, gathered for an afternoon rally chanting, “Hold the burgers, hold the fries, make our wages super-size” and “Low pay is not OK.” A number of workers passing by joined in.

— Janice Lynn

### Quebec: Locked-out worker hit with car on picket line

Gilles Lavigne, a 64-year-old worker locked out by Kronos, a chemical manufacturer at Varennes near Montreal, was seriously injured when the driver of a SUV ran him over Aug. 22 as he was participating in a union picket line in front of Robert Transport, the main trucking company used by Kronos.

Lavigne suffered serious injuries to his face and foot. The driver of the SUV, an employee of Robert Transport, has been charged with assault with a weapon.

François Morin, a spokesperson for the union at Kronos, said Robert Transport “continues to collaborate with the activities of an employer who treats us with contempt.”

“We deplore that the demonstrators have come to disrupt the work of our employees in an effort to provoke difficult situations and settle the conflict between them and their employer,” said a statement released by Robert Transport officials.

The 320 Kronos workers, members of the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN), were locked out June 13 after they rejected concessions demanded by the bosses by 93 percent. Company demands included outsourcing 100 jobs and cuts to the pension plan.

— Joe Young

### After 4-month lockout, Ontario Steelworkers vote for contract

MONTREAL — The four-month lockout by U.S. Steel Corp. of 1,000 workers at its Lake Erie Works in Nanticoke, Ontario, ended Aug. 30 when union members voted 57 percent to accept a revised contract offer. Some 79 percent of the workforce, members of United Steelworkers Local 8782, cast ballots.

The lockout, the second in three years, began April 28 after workers voted down by 70 percent the bosses’ concession demands. In a second vote imposed on the union July 31, unionists rejected the company’s so-called “final offer” by a similar margin.

One key reason was opposition to U.S. Steel’s demand to eliminate contract language protecting workers against contracting out union jobs.

While the approved five-year contract contains a number of concessions, the company backed off from its demand for the right to contract out workers’ jobs, as well as a move to gut the seniority system in plant job postings. The bosses also dropped a demand for increased copayments for prescription drugs.

Workers will receive no wage raise and terms of the cost-of-living allowance were weakened. Vacation time has been cut back and workers’ health care costs increased.

“I feel this offer addressed a lot of the issues we were trying to maintain in our contract, but the COLA issue fell short of what we anticipated,” John Swart, a desulf operator who pours iron into 230-ton ladles, told the *Militant*. “I felt for that reason we should have turned it down in order to renegotiate the COLA.”

“The contract cost us vacations and the COLA, which were big issues,”



Militant/Laura Anderson

Some 200 fast-food and retail workers and supporters rally Aug. 29 at Federal Plaza in Chicago for big wage raise and a union. Similar actions took place that day in some five dozen cities, including Atlanta, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, Milwaukee, New Orleans and Seattle.

said millwright Graham Hartwell. “We didn’t keep everything, but the company didn’t get as much as they wanted.”

U.S. Steel did not respond to a *Militant* request for comment.

— John Steele and Joe Young

### UK bakery workers strike against temp agency contracts

WIGAN, England — More than 200 workers at the Hovis bakery here went out on a seven-day strike Aug. 28 against the introduction of workers employed by temporary agencies on “zero-hour” contracts, which give no guarantee of hours or pay each week.

“Hovis made 26 workers redundant [laid off] in April,” Geoff Atkinson, organizing secretary of the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union and spokesperson for the strikers, told the *Militant*. “And 48 hours after the last one left, agency workers on zero-hour contracts were brought into the plant. The company is using this to cut hours and pay.”

The union had agreed to a reduction in hours and wages. But then Hovis reneged on its promise not to replace workers under full contract with agency staff. Two further weeklong strikes are planned during September.

“Using agency is widespread across the food industry and nothing

unusual,” Premier Foods, the owner of Hovis bakeries, said to the online website just-food Aug. 22.

More than 1 million workers in the United Kingdom are estimated to work on zero-hour contracts. Many will be among the estimated 1.4 million agency workers out of a 29 million strong U.K. workforce. Use of these contracts has mushroomed in recent years, while real wages have fallen — down 5.5 percent since 2010 alone.

“It really cheered me up when I saw these workers going on strike, it’s the first time in a generation I see workers standing up like that,” John Bibby, who was a shop steward at the plant 25 years ago, told *Militant* distributors when they met him Aug. 31 going door to door near the plant. “I am really proud that someone is fighting the zero-hour contracts. I hope that all unions in the country will back them up!”

The assault on the bakery workers in Wigan comes in the wake of Premier Foods’ closure of three other bakeries following a decline in bread sales and rising wheat prices resulting from a U.S. drought and a poor harvest in the U.K. Much of the work from the closed bakeries is expected to come to Wigan.

— Caroline Bellamy

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



September 23, 1988

DES MOINES, Sept. 14 — More than 70 people gathered at the Mark Curtis Defense Committee office here tonight to protest today’s conviction of Curtis on frame-up charges of third-degree sexual abuse and first-degree burglary. Those present vowed to expand the international campaign to get out the truth about this defense effort, led by the Des Moines-based defense committee.

Rally speakers charged that Curtis didn’t get a fair trial. He was presumed guilty from the beginning despite the overwhelming evidence of his innocence. He was unable to introduce key evidence that could further discredit the prosecution’s case. The judge rejected the jury’s request to have trial testimony read to it during its deliberations, and the composition of the jury precluded the possibility that the verdict was decided by a jury of Curtis’ peers.



September 23, 1963

A mass meeting held at the Sixth Avenue Baptist Church on Sept. 16 was guarded by volunteer corps of Negroes who regularly checked all parts of the building, inside and out, for explosives such as those which killed four young Negro girls at the 16th Street Baptist Church the previous day.

The self-defense measures taken by Birmingham’s Negroes constitute the only protection they have. All the official “law-enforcement” bodies not only offer them no protection, but are their worst enemies and a constant threat to their safety.

This makes it urgent that throughout the country Negroes and all whites who are really for civil rights immediately put pressure on President Kennedy to force him to deputize these Negro self-defense guards and send federal troops to occupy Alabama.



September 24, 1938

New York’s 100 percent effective drivers’ strike is added testimony to the fact that the men rolling the nation’s commerce over the highways and in the cities are leading the labor movement in organization and militancy.

Within a few days after negotiations with employers for a revision of the present agreement bogged down, strikers went into action and tied up the city’s traffic tighter than a drum. The strike has been called “wild cat” because it was called into being by a ground-swell of rank-and-file pressure.

This description of the strike is entirely misleading and calculated only to break it up. The overwhelming majority of Locals 807, 282, and 816 have voted for the strike. The unanimity of the walkout has compelled city officials to formally request of the union that it allow delivery of newsprint.

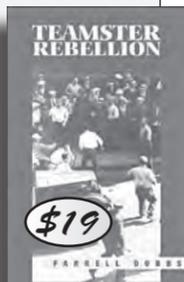
### Teamster Rebellion by Farrell Dobbs

The 1934 strikes that built the industrial union movement in Minneapolis and helped pave the way for the CIO, as recounted by a central leader of that battle. First in a four-volume series.

The other books are *Teamster Power*, *Teamster Politics* and *Teamster Bureaucracy*.

Also in Spanish, Swedish, Farsi, French.

*PathfinderPress.com*



# California prisoners suspend hunger strike after 2 months

BY BETSEY STONE

SAN FRANCISCO — After 60 days on hunger strike, leaders of the fight against long-term solitary confinement in the California prisons announced the strike is suspended. At its conclusion, the strike was being carried on by some 100 determined inmates.

The decision was made Sept. 4 after prisoners received news that Assemblyman Tom Ammiano and State Sen. Loni Hancock, chairs of the California Assembly and Senate Public Safety committees, announced plans to hold hearings starting in October to address the issues raised by the hunger strikers.

A public statement signed by 16 of the prisoners who helped organize the strike said that, although their main demands have not yet been met, “we’ve gained a lot of positive ground” and “our resistance will continue to grow until we have won our human rights.”

This was the third and largest hunger strike organized by the prisoners over the last two years, reaching 30,000 at the high point. It was also the longest, lasting from July 8 to the end on Sept. 5. Many prisoners lost what was becoming life-threatening amounts of weight.

The actions put a spotlight on the inhuman conditions faced by nearly 12,000 inmates in solitary in California. Prisoners’ demands include ending long-term solitary confinement, abolishing a snitch system that puts inmates accused of gang affiliation in solitary until they finger others, and for the right to phone calls, adequate food and warm clothing.

From the beginning of the strike California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation administrators refused to negotiate with the strike leaders. Instead they punished them, moving them into even harsher conditions in cold cells without TV or radio or adequate clothing. They justified this by characterizing the strike as the work of violent prison gangs, out to terrorize and win power over other prisoners.

In a letter sent out to supporters, Mutupe Duguma, one of the strikers, wrote that on Aug. 23 prison authorities transferred two busloads of strik-

ers from Pelican Bay State Prison, the heart of the strike, on an eight-hour trek to the state prison in Sacramento. No medical personnel were sent to accompany them. Duguma reported he had lost 63 pounds during the strike.

In an unprecedented step, the four strike leaders remaining at Pelican Bay were permitted to hold a meeting of 18 strike organizers in the prison’s law library, Anne Weills, a lawyer for some of the strikers, told a press conference in Oakland Sept. 5. They voted to end the strike. Then they called strike leaders who had been transferred to Sacramento, who organized a discussion there and also voted to end the protest.

Family members and others at the press conference saluted the hunger strikers for their courage and unity in standing up to the CDCR. By the final days of the strike, Weills said, officials had finally contacted the strike leaders and agreed to come to Pelican Bay to discuss their demands.

“I’m proud of my brother’s stance in this cause,” Marie Levin, the sister of Sitawa Nantambu Jamaa, one of the strike leaders, told the *Militant*. “Not just my brother, but the whole group. It’s a team. A unity of the nationalities that has got them to where they are today.”

Levin said that her brother and others in long-term solitary began more than a decade ago to work to unite prisoners across racial lines in opposition to gang violence in the prisons. She said the prison authorities didn’t like this, because it undercut their policy of divide and rule.

“The fact is that Governor [Jerry] Brown and CDCR Secretary [Jeffrey] Beard have responded to our third peaceful action with typical denials and falsehoods, claiming solitary confinement does not exist and justifying the continuation of their indefinite torture regime by vilifying the peaceful protest representatives,” the strike leaders said in their public statement.

“The leaders have their arms locked together,” Levin said. “They are saying we are not about fighting one another. They are saying to the CDCR the violence is something you are perpetuating.”

Some of the organizers of the hunger strike are plaintiffs in a lawsuit filed by



Militant/Betsy Stone

Marie Levin addresses Sacramento, Calif., protest against solitary confinement, July 30. Her brother Sitawa Nantambu Jamaa was a leader of hunger strike at Pelican Bay prison.

the Center for Constitutional Rights on behalf of prisoners who have spent between 10 and 25 years in solitary confinement. The suit argues that long-term isolation in windowless cells, with denial of phone calls and contact visits, amounts to “cruel and unusual punishment” prohibited by the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution.

Families of prisoners and other supporters have mobilized repeatedly in support of the hunger strike.

Sylvia Rogokos, whose brother has been in solitary at Pelican Bay for over two decades, participated in a vigil in Norwalk Sept. 8 organized by California Families to Abolish Solitary Con-

finement. “The press took the side of the CDCR,” she said. “They get three meals, cable, mail, what are they complaining about? But solitary confinement is real. The mental deprivation is real. And the fight against it continues.”

Another participant was Dolores Canales, a member of the hunger strikers’ mediation team, whose son was one of the hunger strikers in Pelican Bay. “We have to be prepared to mobilize for the hearings in Sacramento so that our side is heard,” she said.

Arlene Rubinstein contributed to this article.

## New abortion restrictions in Iowa

Continued from front page  
a church near the Capitol.

Since the first-in-the-nation telemedicine program began in 2008, women in rural areas of the state have been able to receive drugs to end a pregnancy after an ultrasound test and physical examination at a local clinic followed by an interview with a doctor in Des Moines via video hookup. The doctor can then dispense the pills to the clinic by computer. Some 8,000 women in Iowa have used the telemedicine program to obtain abortions.

These programs have recently become a flash point in the national fight over women’s right to choose abortion.

The 10 members of the Iowa medical board were recently appointed by Governor Branstad, an outspoken opponent of abortion rights. Two years ago, the board, with an entirely different make-up, ruled that the program could operate legally in the state.

During the hearing, about 30 speakers debated the proposal to ban telemedicine abortions. Several board members voiced opposition to the program.

Board chairman Dr. Greg Hoversten called the program an “experiment on Iowa women.”

“Teled is often the only way rural women can access abortion services,” Natalie Scarpino, from the Crisis Intervention and Advocacy Center, which serves several rural counties, told the hearing.

“Attacks on a woman’s right to choose abortion have focused on denying ever larger layers of women access to abortion,” Margaret Trowe, Socialist Workers Party candidate for city council in Des Moines, said at the hearing. “The proposals being consid-

ered by the Iowa Board of Medicine are part and parcel of this assault on women’s rights.”

Dr. Daniel Grossman told the board that a study he conducted showed the rate of complications for telemedicine and in-person visits is identical. There is a medical risk in restricting telemedicine, he added, because it could lead to later abortions and more surgical abortions, which have a slightly higher rate of complications.

Two days after the hearing, the board voted 8-2 to ban Planned Parenthood’s telemedicine program.

In recent years, laws or regulations barring doctors from using videoconferencing to prescribe abortion drugs have been enacted in 17 states. Although telemedicine “is increasingly popular in other medical settings, abortion is the only context in which states have sought to ban it,” reported Linda Greenhouse in the Sept. 4 *New York Times*.

The U.S. Supreme Court decided June 27 to review a case from Oklahoma that involves limits on access to drug-induced abortion. The court accepted the state of Oklahoma’s appeal of a December 2012 decision by that state’s Supreme Court to strike down a law limiting doctors’ ability to prescribe the drugs used in medical abortions.

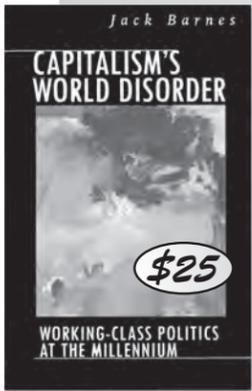
“The medical abortion regimen, often referred to as RU-486, was approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 2000 as a safe and effective alternative to surgical abortion early in the first trimester,” wrote Greenhouse. “It has been used since then by close to two million American women, currently about 200,000 a year out of some 1.2 million abortions performed annually.”

## For further reading ...

### Capitalism’s World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium by Jack Barnes

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

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# NY Militant Labor Forum

Continued from page 4  
Syria today?

“Broadly supported protests for democratic rights and against the Assad regime started in early 2011,” Fein said.

“These were not protests based on religious identity, nor did they spring from traditional oppositionists or Islamist groups. And they did not spring from the CIA or some other ‘foreign influence,’ as Assad and his backers claim,” Fein said. “They were protests involving broad layers of working people. Syria is a young country, with 60 percent of the population under 40 years of age — it was young men and women who spearheaded the revolt.”

The response of Assad’s regime was ever-greater use of military violence to crush all resistance, leading to armed resistance and civil war. “Our people, the toilers of Syria, are paying dearly for the bloodbath Assad has unleashed, bearing the enormous weight of casualties and dislocation,” Fein said. “When Assad discovered an area, a neighborhood or a town where there was discontent, he ordered the army to annihilate it. The main enemy of Syria’s toilers is the Bashar al-Assad regime.

“At the same time, I urge those I talk with campaigning door to door to oppose Obama’s threats to bomb Syria,” Fein said. “U.S. imperialist military or political intervention in Syria would only make things worse for toilers there.”

## No support to ‘anti-war’ protests

During the discussion period after his presentation, one forum participant asked Fein about upcoming protests against Obama’s plan to carry out a military strike against Syria.

“Today in Times Square, in front of the White House and at other locations, various petty-bourgeois ‘left’ and liberal groups, including some who call themselves socialist, had rallies,” Fein said. “Some of their signs read, ‘War Against Syria — Built on a Lie,’ as if Assad hadn’t actually used chemical weapons. Some of these groups support Assad and try to portray the mass opposition inside Syria as being caused by outside forces.

“Others, like the Black Caucus in Congress, argue that a U.S. strike would cost too much money, that ‘we’ could better use the money here in the U.S. Framed as an ‘anti-war’ stance,

such views go completely against the interests of the working class in Syria and in the U.S. The SWP campaign does not support or identify with these kind of ‘anti-war’ protests.”

“There is no revolutionary workers party in Syria today,” Fein said. “That will take time and come through struggle and further experience. It’s true the workers and farmers face difficult conditions in the fight to bring down Assad. But look at Egypt! The workers and farmers of that country — in the space of less than two and a half years — overthrew both the hated Mubarak government and then the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood regime that replaced it, winning more political space to organize and defend their interests and keep fighting. Solidarity with the Syrian toilers to do the same!”

## Cambodia garment workers fight for union

Continued from front page

strike for the first time. In 2012 we organized a union. But the company still refuses to recognize or negotiate with it.”

Workers who assembled outside the plant during the strike were harassed by the military cops, Thorn said.

On Aug. 27 some 4,000 workers rallied at the Ministry of Social Affairs, demanding removal of the military police. The cops put up roadblocks, but marchers broke through and reached the ministry. Three days later workers ended the strike following a meeting between the union, the company and the Phnom Penh municipal government.

“But nothing was settled,” Thorn said. “We have no agreement on improved conditions. We tried to negotiate, but the company responded Sept. 4 by dismissing more than 700 workers.”

The day after the firings 4,000 workers marched to Phnom Penh’s City Hall, demanding government intervention. The government ordered SL Garment to reinstate the workers.

“All have been reinstated,” Thorn said. “But we still have no agreement. And if the company continues to refuse to listen, there will be new strikes.”

The industry employs 500,000 workers in more than 500 garment and shoe factories, with an average size of 1,000. More than 90 percent are women from rural villages moving into newly created industrial production centers. Some 450 of the 500 factories produce for export, primarily to big retailers in imperialist countries.

It’s not uncommon for workers to faint on the shop floor because of heat, lack of ventilation, malnutrition, chemical exposure and long workdays. The Labor Ministry reported that last year more than 1,600 workers fainted at some 20 factories. Unions give a higher figure.

## Short-term contracts

“The question of short-term contracts is my number one issue,” said Kong Athit, vice president of the Apparel Workers Union, in a Sept. 10 phone interview. “Workers have no employment protection, they get one month, then another month, then another. In the older companies, some 30 percent are on temporary contracts, in the newer ones it is often all the workers. Companies use short-term contracts to get rid of those who fight for improvements.”



Broad protests to defend workers’ political space and oppose Assad’s dictatorial rule began in early 2011. Above, demonstrators march in Homs, Syria, on April 22 that year.

Athit said raising the minimum wage to \$150 is needed to keep up with high inflation.

“Today 90 percent of the factories are without contracts,” he said. “Bosses want to keep it this way and they retaliate against workers who start organizing unions.”

From January to July garment workers in Cambodia have mounted 83 strikes, according to the Garment Manufacturers Association. Last year there were 121 strikes, the highest figure since records started being kept in 2003.

“Workers overexercise their rights. You see so many strikes in Cambodia,” Ken Loo, secretary-general of the association said to the July 8 *Wall Street Journal*.

“This is what happens when companies refuse to listen to the workers, re-

fuse to negotiate with the unions,” Athit said. Through such struggles workers won an increase in the minimum wage in 2010 and again this year, he said.

“The garment workers have weight in the economy,” Athit continued. “In the national elections earlier this year all the parties wanted our vote, so they were very friendly to us and made promises. But what we have won, we have fought for ourselves. It never stops, if we don’t keep pushing, they will take it back. And there is so much more we need.”

Athit pointed to another factor working to the benefit of the workers: competition between companies for workers. “Supply of skilled workers is a problem. Most existing factories are running at full capacity,” Kaing Monica of the Garment Manufacturers Association told Reuters June 6.

## West Coast longshore union disaffiliates from AFL-CIO

BY SETH GALINSKY

“It is with regret but resolve that we have come to the point where the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) must cut formal ties with the AFL-CIO,” ILWU President Robert McEllrath announced in an Aug. 29 letter to AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka.

In the letter McEllrath points out that unions affiliated to the AFL-CIO labor federation over the last several years have crossed ILWU picket lines when the longshore workers had been locked out by the shipping bosses, as well as used the courts to “sabotage our bargaining.”

In the 1950s during the McCarthyite witch hunt, the ILWU was kicked out of the Congress of Industrial Unions, which it had helped found. The ILWU did not join the merged AFL-CIO until 1988.

A “particularly outrageous raid” took place in 2011, McEllrath writes, when the union was locked in battle with EGT shipping company, which wanted to open the first ever non-ILWU-organized terminal on the West Coast in Longview, Wash.

The Operating Engineers Local 701 acted as replacement workers during ILWU Local 21’s eight-month-long fight against EGT’s lockout. The national AFL-CIO instructed the Oregon State

Federation to withdraw support for the embattled ILWU workers, who nonetheless won a contract and forced the company to back down.

Crossing of ILWU picket lines and other actions against the longshore union by AFL-CIO affiliates have increased in recent years, McEllrath said.

McEllrath also said the AFL-CIO’s backing of President Barack Obama’s health care law, which imposes steep taxes on many union-won health insurance plans, as well its positions on immigration, labor law reform and international labor issues, were “a great disservice to the labor movement and all working people.”

“The immigration bill you recently asked us to support imposes extremely long waiting periods on the path to citizenship and favors workers with higher education and profitability to corporations, as opposed to the undocumented workers such as janitors and farmworkers,” McEllrath noted.

The longshore union “will continue to provide whatever aid and support we can for our fellow trade unionists and workers everywhere,” McEllrath wrote. “We are committed to working in solidarity with all unions and labor groups, including the Federation and its affiliates, for the advancement of workers, worker rights, and progressive issues everywhere.”

New International  
A MAGAZINE OF MARXIST POLITICS AND THEORY

Washington’s assault on Iraq  
OPENING GUNS OF  
WORLD WAR III  
— by Jack Barnes —

1945: WHEN U.S. TROOPS  
SAID ‘NO!’ — by Mary-Alice Waters

\$14 — 7 — SPECIAL WAR  
ISSUE

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# Solidarity with Cuban 5

Continued from front page

for years.” Pérez made the remark in introducing Mary-Alice Waters, the invited speaker at the events in both cities. Waters is president of the New York-based socialist publishing house Pathfinder Press.

Among the 30 people attending the meeting at Cuba’s Kuala Lumpur embassy were the undersecretary responsible for the Americas of Malaysia’s foreign ministry; the ambassadors from Venezuela, Chile and Uruguay; representatives of the embassies of Argentina and Ecuador; and the president of the Malaysian Friends of Cuba Association. Also present were several Malaysian students on break from their medical studies in Cuba — together with family members — and three supporters of Pathfinder from New Zealand and Australia accompanying Waters on her visit to Malaysia and Indonesia.

“Today is one of the stronger moments in the recent history of the movement in solidarity with the Cuban Revolution in the United States,” Waters said, explaining that the international campaign demanding release of the Cuban Five is at the center of today’s solidarity efforts. Waters said that her political party, the Socialist Workers Party, has worked to defend the revolution — and tell the truth about achievements of Cuba’s working people — since the revolution’s first days, helping found the Fair Play for Cuba Committee and leading actions against U.S. aggression in the early 1960s.

Waters was in Kuala Lumpur for a conference of the International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas (ISSCO), at which she had spoken about Chinese immigration in Cuba and the U.S. (See the *Militant*, Sept. 9, 2013.)

She pointed to the success of the “Five Days for the Cuban 5” in Washington, D.C., May 30-June 5 this year, organized by the International

Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban 5. The program — which actually lasted seven days — involved the collaboration of broad forces from solidarity organizations to political parties, church groups, trade unionists, prominent artists, musicians and authors, parliamentarians from a number of countries, and others. It was “the most significant activity so far in the U.S. in support of the campaign to free the Five,” she said.

The conduct of the five revolutionaries themselves, in front of the courts and in prison, is key to the campaign’s growing appeal, Waters said. They have won respect among many, including other workers behind bars, for their “exemplary steadfastness, courage, integrity and dignity — qualities that mark the Cuban Revolution itself.”

Waters noted that opportunities to win new support are growing as working people find ways to resist the blows being dealt by the owners of industry and their governments — attacks on wages, working conditions and political space, driven by capitalism’s worldwide crisis of production and trade. Reinforcements for the defense campaign will come from those who are drawn to these battles, she said. “Men and women who are changed by these struggles will make up what Gerardo Hernández, one of the Five, has called the ‘jury of millions’ that will eventually win their freedom.”

A lively discussion followed the remarks, covering questions about the legal options before the Five and the debate within the Cuban population in Florida over U.S. policies aimed at



Militant photos by Bakaran Appu

**Above**, participants at opening of exhibit of drawings by Gerardo Hernández, one of Cuban Five, in Jakarta, Indonesia, Aug. 27. “You can imprison the body but not the mind,” said Bagus from Urban Poor Association, foreground with cap, during discussion period. Seated to his right is Gani Bugis from Social Development Foundation in Maluku. **Left**, Haris Azhar, national executive coordinator of Kontras, welcomes people to event. Others, from left: Hegel Terome, organizational deputy of Kalyanamitra; Rena Herdiyani, Kalyanamitra program director; and Mary-Alice Waters.



crushing the revolution. Commenting on the latter point, Ambassador Pérez noted the “big changes in the Cuban community” as counterrevolutionary groups, which have long profited from “the anti-Castro-industry,” have less and less influence.

When one participant expressed doubt about prospects for the release of the Five, given the U.S. government’s implacable hostility, Waters pointed to the example of the 1979 release of Puerto Rican independence fighters who had been held in U.S. prisons for 25 years. As an international solidarity campaign gathered momentum in the context of a mass struggle for Black rights in the United States and revolutionary victories in Vietnam, Grenada, and Nicaragua, and other anti-imperialist movements, she said, the U.S. rulers concluded “the political price was too high. They had more to gain by releasing them.”

Following the meeting participants viewed a display of political cartoons by Gerardo Hernández, drawn during his time inside maximum-security prisons as he serves a sentence of two life terms plus 15 years.

## Exhibit in Indonesia

The collection entitled “Humor from My Pen” received its first broad public showing in Indonesia a few days later. The Aug. 27 event in Jakarta was cosponsored by Kontras — acronym in Indonesian for the Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence — and Kalyanamitra, a resource and communications center for women in Indonesia. Over 40 people came to view the drawings and join a discussion about the case of the Five.

The artwork was attractively mounted in an exhibition room at the Kontras headquarters in Jakarta. A handsome floor-to-ceiling banner prepared by Kalyanamitra announced the event.

Haris Azhar, national executive coordinator of Kontras, opened the event, saying they were happy to make the Kontras facilities available. “Many here do not know the story of the five Cubans,” he said. “The exhibit is a good starting point.” Introducing Mary-Alice Waters, Kalyanamitra’s program director Rena Herdiyani declared support for the defense campaign, and opposition to the prison treatment to which the Five have been subjected, including the 15-year refusal of the U.S. government to allow the wives of Gerardo Hernández and René González to enter the country to visit them. She welcomed “the opportunity for everyone to learn more and have a fruitful discussion.”

The history of the Five really begins with the victory of the Cuban Revolution in 1959, said Waters. “The U.S. government set out to crush and destroy the revolutionary power of Cuba’s workers and farmers. That has been Washington’s unrelenting policy for almost 55 years. That is why the Cuban Five were framed and convicted, despite the lack of evidence. They are in prison because of the determination of the U.S. government to punish the Cuban people for their revolution.”

Waters added, “The cartoons drawn by Hernández capture in a powerful way his humor and spirit, unbroken by prison conditions.” The meeting was bilingual, with translation from Bahasa Indonesia to English and vice versa.

Those listening to the presentations and viewing the cartoons came from a number of organizations, including several women’s rights groups, organizations fighting discrimination against Indonesia’s many oppressed minorities, one of the trade union federations and the Indonesia-Cuba Friendship Association.

In the wide-ranging discussion, Bagus, from the Urban Poor Association in Jakarta, thanked the speaker for bringing information about the case. “Fifteen years is a long time,” he said, referring to the years

**Continued on page 11**

## Who are the Cuban Five?



Fernando González, Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino and René González are Cuban revolutionaries who during the 1990s accepted assignments from the Cuban government to gather information on the operations and plans of Cuban-American paramilitary groups based in southern Florida. These rightist outfits, organizing on U.S. soil with virtual impunity, have a long record of carrying out bombings, assassinations and other 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 shootdown of two Brothers to the Rescue aircraft that had invaded Cuban airspace in disregard of Havana’s repeated warnings. He is serving two life terms plus 15 years. His wife Adriana Pérez is barred from entering the United States.

All but René González remain in prison. He was allowed to return to Cuba in May this year, half-way through a three-year term of supervised release.

# 1953 cease-fire in Korea – victory over US war aims

How Korean workers and farmers began resistance to US domination, forced partition of nation

BY STEVE CLARK

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the Korean people's triumph over Washington's murderous 1950-53 war to conquer that country. The consequences of that war — and the unresolved national division of Korea — continue to reverberate across the Pacific and the world class struggle today.

This summer a Socialist Workers Party leadership delegation of Tom Baumann, James Harris, and me visited Pyongyang, the capital of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, to join celebrations there of the July 27, 1953, cease-fire that registered that historic victory.

## PART I

Among the anniversary events was the inauguration of a new building and park that substantially expand the Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum, first built in 1953. Although most of the new exhibits were not yet open to the public, we visited the outdoor pavilions displaying captured U.S. and South Korean planes, helicopters, tanks, armored vehicles and ordnance from the Korean War, as well as from military actions by Washington and Seoul right up to recent years.

The exhibits included several bombs dropped by U.S. planes during the war. More than 635,000 tons of bombs, as well as 32,557 tons of napalm, were unleashed against Koreans over those three years — 25 percent more than dropped by Washington in the entire Pacific theater during World War II. Some 428,000 bombs were hurled on Pyongyang alone, roughly one per person, according to museum figures.

In towns and cities across northern Korea, and in parts of the South as well, the vast majority of homes, hospitals, schools, factories and other structures were leveled. Only three major buildings were left standing in Pyongyang, and 18 of the 22 largest cities in the North were 50 to 100 percent destroyed.

After Chinese troops joined the DPRK's fight against Washington's war of conquest on the peninsula in October 1950, Gen. Douglas

MacArthur ordered destruction of every "installation, factory, city and village" in the North up to the Yalu River. Gen. Curtis LeMay, head of the U.S. Strategic Air Command at the time, later wrote, "We eventually burned down every town in North Korea ... and some in South Korea too. We even burned down [the South Korean city] Pusan — an accident, but we burned it down anyway."

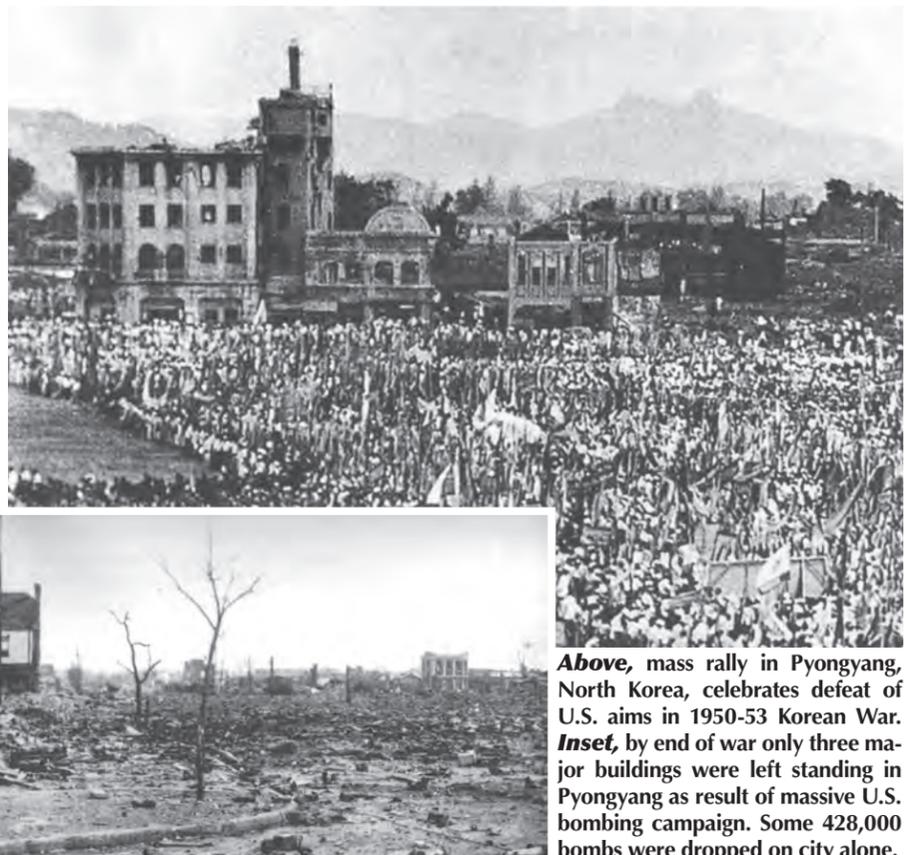
And we're not condemned to rely for facts on beribboned butchers like LeMay. A Pentagon-commissioned study while the war was still on documented U.S. firebombing in the South in summer 1950, as the DPRK's troops rapidly advanced down the peninsula. "So we killed civilians, friendly civilians, and bombed their homes; fired whole villages with their occupants — women and children and 10 times as many hidden Communist soldiers — under showers of napalm," the study reported, "and the pilots came back to their [aircraft carriers] stinking of vomit twisted from their vitals by the shock of what they had to do."

The bombardment continued right up to the July 1953 cease-fire. In the final months, U.S. planes bombed five major dams in the North, causing massive flooding, drowning civilians, destroying the rice crop and livestock for millions and knocking out bridges, railroads and electrical power.

### Korea divided in 1945

In September 1945, after a four-decade-long struggle against Japanese colonial brutality and plunder, Korea was ripped in half by Washington and Moscow at roughly the 38th parallel. This trampling on the Korean people's national sovereignty was the implementation of a joint "trusteeship" cooked up between President Franklin Roosevelt and Premier Josef Stalin as early as February 1945 at the Yalta conference of Allied Powers in World War II. Registering the military situation on the ground in September 1945, southern and northern Korea were occupied respectively by U.S. and Soviet troops.

Since 1905 Korea had been under de facto and then direct colonial rule by Japanese imperialism, with Washington's connivance. The quid pro quo was that Tokyo acquiesced in



**Above**, mass rally in Pyongyang, North Korea, celebrates defeat of U.S. aims in 1950-53 Korean War. **Inset**, by end of war only three major buildings were left standing in Pyongyang as result of massive U.S. bombing campaign. Some 428,000 bombs were dropped on city alone.

U.S. imperialism's colonial rule over the Philippines.

For decades Koreans had been required by Tokyo to speak Japanese rather than their own language, and in 1939 they were ordered to take Japanese names.

Hundreds of thousands of Koreans were enlisted as police or soldiers to enforce their people's national oppression and, in the 1930s and '40s, Japan's occupation of Manchuria in northern China. Millions were transported against their will to Japan to serve as forced labor in mines and

factories, or as "comfort women" sex slaves for Japanese soldiers. At the end of World War II, 10 percent of the Korean population was living in Japan.

Korean working people took advantage of Tokyo's defeat in World War II in August 1945 to advance their fight for national independence and dignity, as well as for land reform, for trade unions and labor rights, women's suffrage and the expropriation of factories and other workplaces. A revolutionary class struggle spread

**Continued on page 11**

### U.S. troops out of Korea! Korea is one!

*The following message from Steve Clark on behalf of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party was sent to Kim Jong Un, first secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea, on the 65th anniversary of the founding of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.*

The Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists send revolutionary greetings on the 65th anniversary of the September 9, 1948, founding of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We reaffirm our commitment to the fight to reunify Korea and to end the partition Washington sought to legitimize earlier that year with bogus UN-"supervised" elections imposing the Syngman Rhee tyranny on working people below the 38th parallel.

We condemned last month's "Ulchi Freedom Guardian" joint military exercises by US and South Korean troops. Washington's provocation flies in the face of recent DPRK initiatives, welcomed by the SWP and other supporters of Korea's national sovereignty, to reopen the joint Kaesong industrial zone and make it possible for divided family members to meet for the first time since the murderous 1950-53 Korean War waged by Washington and its client regime in Seoul.

The US rulers, who in their imperial arrogance claim the "right" to take military action against sovereign nations, are now threatening missile strikes on Syria, as workers and peasants resist the hated regime there. At the same time, US imperialism is bolstering its military power in the Pacific, with the DPRK and China foremost in its sunsights.

Nine nuclear-armed US submarines prowl Asia's seas, each one equipped with missiles and nuclear warheads equal in their heinous payloads to some 6,000 times the imperialist holocaust unleashed against Japanese and Korean residents of Hiroshima. The people of Korea, Asia, and beyond have no interest in these monstrously destructive weapons and aspire to a world free of them once and for all.

The global capitalist crisis is inflicting unemployment, debt, foreclosures, and job-related deaths and injuries on toilers the world over. It is among workers and farmers fighting such attacks that the Korean people find support for your struggle for national reunification.

US troops and weapons out of Korea and its skies and waters! For a peninsula and a Pacific free of nuclear weapons!

Korea is one!



Militant/Tom Baumann

Remnants of bombs and other U.S. weaponry on display at Korean War museum in Pyongyang. From left, James Harris and Steve Clark, part of Socialist Workers Party leadership delegation to events in Pyongyang celebrating 1953 cease-fire anniversary, walk through exhibits with guide. Harris was SWP candidate for U.S. president in 2012 elections.

# Cannon: 'All modern strikes require political direction'

Below is an excerpt from *The History of American Trotskyism, 1928-38*. The French edition is one of *Pathfinder's Books of the Month* for September. In 12 talks given in 1942 James P. Cannon, a founder of the communist movement in the U.S., recounts two decades of efforts to build a revolutionary proletarian party. Cannon was national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party from 1938 to 1953, and then national chairman until 1972. He died in 1974. The piece is from the chapter "The Great Minneapolis Strikes" of the mid-1930s. Copyright © 1944 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JAMES P. CANNON

In May the general strike burst into flames. The bosses, grown complacent from long unchallenged domination, were greatly surprised. The lesson of the coal strike had not yet convinced them that "something new" had been added to the trade union movement in Minneapolis. They still thought they could nip this thing in the bud. They tried stalling and maneuvering, and bogging our people down in the negotiations with the Labor Board where so many new unions had been cut to pieces. Right in the middle of the business, when they thought they had the union tangled in this web of negotiations for indefinite de-



Striking truck drivers and supporters push back cop attack in Minneapolis, May 1934. Inset, three leaders of struggle by Teamsters Local 574. From left: Bill Brown, Local 574 president; Farrell Dobbs, dispatcher of flying pickets during May strike; Carl Skoglund, veteran of the communist movement.



lay, our people just cut through it at one stroke. They hit them on the nose with a general strike. The trucks were tied up and the "negotiations" were taken to the streets. . . .

There was no essential difference, in fact I don't think there was any serious difference at all between the strikers in Minneapolis and the workers involved in a hundred other strikes throughout the land in that period. Nearly all the strikes were fought with the greatest militancy by the workers. The difference was in the leadership and the policy. In practically all the other strikes the militancy of the rank-and-file workers was restrained from the top. The leaders were overawed by the government, the newspapers, the clergy, and one thing or another. They tried to shift the conflict from the streets and the picket lines to the conference chambers. In Minneapolis the militancy of the rank and file was not restrained but organized and directed from the top.

All modern strikes require political direction. The strikes of that period brought the government, its agencies, and its institutions into the very center of every situation. A strike leader without some conception of a political line was very much out of date already by 1934. The old-fashioned trade union movement, which used to deal with the bosses

without governmental interference, belongs in the museum. The modern labor movement must be politically directed because it is confronted by the government at every turn. Our people were prepared for that since they were political people, inspired by political conceptions. The policy of the class struggle guided our comrades; they couldn't be deceived and outmaneuvered, as so many strike leaders of that period were, by this mechanism of sabotage and destruction known as the National Labor Board and all its auxiliary setups. They put no reliance whatever in Roosevelt's Labor Board; they weren't fooled by any idea that Roosevelt, the liberal "friend of labor" president, was going to help the truck drivers in Minneapolis win a few cents more an hour. They weren't deluded even by the fact that there was at that time in Minnesota a Farmer-Labor Governor, presumed to be on the side of the workers.

Our people didn't believe in anybody or anything but the policy of the class struggle and the ability of the workers to prevail by their mass strength and solidarity. Consequently, they expected from the start that the union would have to fight for its right to exist; that the bosses would not yield any recognition to the union, would not yield any

increase of wages or reduction of the scandalous hours without some pressure being brought to bear. Therefore they prepared everything from the point of view of class war. They knew that power, not diplomacy, would decide the issue. Bluffs don't work in fundamental things, only in incidental ones. In such things as the conflict of class interests one must be prepared to fight. . . .

Our people had a commissary all fixed up. They didn't wait until the strikers were hungry. They had it organized beforehand in preparation for the strike. They set up an emergency hospital in a garage — the strike headquarters was in a garage — with their own doctor and their own nurses before the strike even broke. Why? Because they knew that the bosses, their cops, and thugs and deputies would try in this case, as in every other, to beat the strike down. They were prepared to take care of their own people and not let them be sent, if injured, to a city hospital and then placed under arrest and put out of commission. When a fellow worker was injured on the picket line they brought him to their own headquarters and doctored him up there.

They took a leaf from the Progressive Miners of America and organized a Women's Auxiliary to help make trouble for the bosses. And I tell you, the women made lots of trouble, running around protesting and scandalizing the bosses and the city authorities, which is one of the most important political weapons. The strike leadership organized picketing on a mass basis. This business of appointing or hiring a few people, one or two, to watch and count and report how many scabs have been hired, doesn't work in a real struggle. They sent a squad to keep any scabs from going in. I mentioned that they had their strike headquarters in a garage. This was because the picketing was put on wheels. They not only organized the pickets, they mobilized a fleet of picketing cars. Every striking worker, sympathizer, and trade unionist in town was called upon to donate the use of his car or truck. The strike committee thus had a whole fleet at its disposal. Flying squads of pickets on wheels were stationed at strategic points throughout the town.

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# Solidarity with Cuban 5

Continued from page 8

already served by the Five. But, he added, Gerardo's cartoons show that "you can imprison the body but not the mind."

Gani Bugis pledged the support of the Social Development Foundation in Maluku, eastern Indonesia, but said he feared the cost for the U.S. government of releasing the prisoners would be "too great." Other speakers also expressed admiration for the Five, but were pessimistic about prospects for their release.

"This fight can and will be won," Waters responded. "Already there have been some victories." She noted that four years ago when a Florida appeals court reduced the sentences of Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, and Fernando González, the federal government's lead attorney complained about the political "noise" around by the case. The government was in favor of "giving something up" in order to try to "quiet the waters of contentiousness that swirl around this case worldwide," the prosecutor told the judge — a backhanded tribute to the effectiveness of the international defense campaign.

At the events in both Malaysia and Indonesia, Waters called attention to the "important weapon" defenders of the Five have for explaining their case internationally — Pathfinder's popular book *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free*. The most recent edition of the book, which has been published in three languages with a fourth on the way, was first presented in Asia by Waters at the Sixth Asia-Pacific Regional Conference for Solidarity with Cuba, held in Sri Lanka last October.

As the Jakarta exhibition continued into the afternoon, participants bought copies of *The Cuban Five* at a literature table displaying Pathfinder titles and the *Militant* newspaper, from which the book's contents are drawn. The wide range of titles proved popular, including other books on the Cuban Revolution.

During their lunch break university students from all over Indonesia attending a two-week school sponsored by Kontras crowded around the table and eagerly bought dozens of Pathfinder books on world politics, the lessons of the modern working-class movement, women's rights and more.

The next day Waters and other Pathfinder representatives also par-

ticipated in an exchange of experiences on solidarity work and defense of the Cuban Five organized by the Indonesia-Cuba Friendship Association at the University of Indonesia's Faculty of Medicine.

Waters reported on the work in the U.S. and Dr. Samsuridjal Djauzi, president of the association, presented a slideshow depicting the association's activities, particularly its promotion of medical cooperation between Indonesia and Cuba and sponsorship of students from rural Indonesia studying medicine in Cuba. Cuban Ambassador to Indonesia Enna Viant, along with Consul Leonel González, also participated in the meeting and joined in the two-hour discussion that was followed by lunch and a visit to several centers of Jakarta's rich history.

## 1953 cease-fire in Korea – victory over US war aims

Continued from page 9

from one end of the peninsula to the other, pitting the vast working majority against Korean landlords and capitalists who had entrenched their own privileges and profits in collusion with the Japanese occupiers.

People's Committees were organized across Korea by individuals and organizations long active in the fight against Japanese colonialism. The committees varied in their class composition. Many were dominated by workers and poor farmers, while others were led by businessmen and landlords who opposed Japanese rule.

### Korean People's Republic

On Sept. 6, 1945, two days prior to the scheduled arrival of U.S. troops in Korea, delegates from these committees met and formed the Korean People's Republic, with Seoul as its capital. Some three-quarters of those proposed for positions in the new government were from groups linked to Moscow and the Communist Party of China and radical petty bourgeois and bourgeois currents of the nationalist movement in Korea.

The assembly of the People's Committees, however, also offered positions to a number of figures such as Syngman Rhee, who had spent all but a few years between 1905 and 1945 living in exile in the U.S. There, for close to four decades, Rhee's increasingly reactionary political course had been distinguished by pleading on bended knee for Washington to press Tokyo to grant Korean independence — to absolutely no avail — and to forging ties with missionary and various other Protestant Christian institutions. (Aside from the Philippines, where more than 80 percent of the population is Catholic, South Korea has among the highest percentage of Christians, mainly Protestant, anywhere in East Asia: some 10 percent in 1945 and nearing a third today.)

The Korean People's Republic released political prisoners, organized the distribution of food, and called for national elections as early as March 1946. It announced the confiscation of lands held by the Japanese occupiers and Korean collaborators; an agrarian reform on these and other lands; nationalization of mining, major industries, banking, and transportation; universal suffrage; and a minimum wage and eight-hour day.



Militant/Baskaran Appu

Participants at exhibit in Jakarta bought *The Cuban Five* and other books off Pathfinder literature table there. Above, university students from across Indonesia attending two-week school organized by Kontras, one of exhibit co-sponsors, snatch up books during their lunch break.

But the U.S. ruling families weren't about to allow the Korean people to establish a government that, as revolutionary struggles deepened, could develop into a workers and peasants power that would replace capitalist rule, and social relations based on class exploitation in countryside and city. They saw Korea as a prize for U.S. capitalism, as well as a stepping stone toward increased domination of China, with its vast lands, more than a half billion exploitable peasants and workers, and lucrative markets for the export of American capital.

### U.S. military government

So on Sept. 7, the day before U.S. occupation forces landed on Korean soil, their commander, General MacArthur, decreed that the entire administrative power in Korea south of parallel 38 was under his jurisdiction. The U.S. general warned that, "All persons will obey promptly all my orders and orders issued under my authority. Acts of resistance to the occupying forces or any acts which may disturb public peace and safety will be punished severely." During the period of military occupa-

tion, he said, Korea's official language would be English.

The U.S. military government refused to acknowledge the Korean People's Republic and continued enforcing the laws of the hated Japanese colonial administration. The U.S. occupiers even kept in place Tokyo's officials, including Gov. Gen. Abe Nobuyuki.

The Jan. 5, 1946, issue of the *Militant* ran an account by a U.S. soldier stationed in Korea. The U.S. military government, the GI wrote, "decided that the best thing to do was to freeze the status quo ... but the Koreans didn't see it that way. They just could not understand why the American army employed their hated enemies to continue the oppression of a 'liberated' people."

The establishment of the Korean People's Republic, the soldier wrote, was seen by the U.S. occupiers as "nothing short of a revolution, and as these people were definitely socialist, it was a 'communist' revolution. So we sent in our troops and threw these over-patriotic Koreans out and put back the Japanese and the Japanese collaborators."

(To be continued)

### for further reading

New International no. 12

## Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun

by Jack Barnes



Today's sharpening inter-imperialist conflicts are fueled by the opening stages of what will be decades of economic, financial, and social convulsions and class battles. Class-struggle-minded working people must face this historic turning point and draw satisfaction from being "in their face" as we chart a revolutionary course to confront it.

## Notebook of an Agitator

From the Wobblies to the fight against the Korean War and McCarthyism

by James P. Cannon

Contains three letters written by the author in 1950 and 1951 to then-President Harry Truman and Congress opposing Washington's intervention in Korea and demanding "withdraw the troops and let the Korean people alone."

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