

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

'Capitalists use elections to mask exploitation and their class rule'
— PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 77/NO. 42 NOVEMBER 25, 2013

Readers step up effort to win 2,500 subscribers

BY EMMA JOHNSON

"Just called in to say that 12 cab drivers signed up for subscriptions at their rally here today," Paul Pederson reported from Washington D.C. Wednesday afternoon.

This is one more example of how the pace in the books and subscription campaign has picked up considerably over the past two weeks and put us on a footing to fight for the goal of winning 2,500 new and renewing subscribers by Dec. 10.

"We have sold 16 subscriptions over eight days of stepped-up campaigning," said Annalucia Vermunt, reporting from Auckland, New Zealand, Nov. 11. "We're now close to where we should be. And we sold several Pathfinder titles, including *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* and *Women and Revolution: The Living Example of the Cuban Revolution*."

Sales of nine books on special of—
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Fall 'Militant' subscription campaign Oct. 12 - Dec. 10 (week 4)

Country	quota	sold	%	2,500
UNITED STATES				
Lincoln	22	12	55%	
Boston	65	33	51%	
Philadelphia	130	66	51%	
San Francisco	180	87	48%	
Seattle	160	76	48%	
Twin Cities	135	64	47%	
Atlanta	160	71	44%	
Los Angeles	160	71	44%	
New York	380	145	38%	
Chicago	180	68	38%	
Des Moines	160	53	33%	
Washington	90	28	31%	
Miami	95	29	31%	
Houston	110	32	29%	
Omaha	220	49	22%	
Total U.S.	2247	884	39%	
PRISONERS	15	8	53%	Should be 1,104
UNITED KINGDOM				
London	150	63	42%	
Manchester	100	48	48%	
UK Total	250	111	44%	
CANADA	110	40	36%	
NEW ZEALAND	80	36	45%	
AUSTRALIA	75	25	33%	
Total	2777	1104	44%	
Should be	2500	1250	50%	

NSA 'revelations': US gov't spies to further interests of ruling class

BY JOHN STUDER

A new round of leaks from Edward Snowden, the former contractor who had access to top-secret U.S. government files, documents the massive extent of National Security Agency spying on government officials and others around the world, including in Germany, France and Mexico. The leaks set off a round of official complaints, accompanied by more discreet pressure for new trade and diplomatic privileges from Washington. The revelations reaffirmed increasing skepticism among workers towards the U.S. government and its enormous spy network.

"All states subscribe to the principle enunciated by Lord Palmerston, the 19th century British foreign minister and prime minister," conservative writer Max Boot said in the Oct. 25 issue of *Commentary*. "We have no eternal allies, and we have no perpetual enemies," Palmerston said. "We" — he meant each country's capitalist rulers — have "interests" (rival class interests, he diplomatically demurred)
Continued on page 9

Philippines social disaster wrought by capitalism

Thousands killed, gov't organized no evacuation



Reuters/Erik De Castro

Town of Palo in central Philippines, Nov. 12, four days after typhoon hit. The government made no attempt to evacuate beforehand and very little aid is reaching those in dire need.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Once again the social relations of capitalism are responsible for the devastating impact and lasting disaster wrought on working people for what is painted as a "natural disaster."

For hundreds of thousands of working people in the Philippines — particularly those in the most vulnerable low-

lying areas — no attempt was made to evacuate them. Instead they were left to fend for themselves in face of the powerful Typhoon Haiyan that ripped through the archipelago nation Nov. 8.

As of Nov. 13, government figures

**MASSIVE AID TO PHILIPPINES!
CANCEL ITS FOREIGN DEBT!**

— See editorial page 9

Prison hunger strikers face reprisals as papers that back them are censored

BY JOHN STUDER

Since some 30,000 California prisoners launched a hunger strike July 8 against the practice of long-term solitary confinement and other abuses, participants have faced punitive retaliation and censorship of newspapers and other media that backed their fight.

Abuses continued after prisoners suspended the strike Sept. 5, following promises from elected officials to begin legislative hearings into prison

conditions and from state prison authorities to convene talks on inmates' demands.

The hunger strike was widely re—
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Court decision on Texas law allows attack on women's right to abortion

BY CINDY JAQUITH
AND SETH GALINSKY

An Oct. 31 decision by a U.S. appeals court that could lead to the shutdown of more than one-third of abortion clinics in Texas is the latest assault in a steady campaign to undermine women's right to choose in the U.S.

The court reinstated an onerous and medically unnecessary requirement that doctors have admitting privileges at a hospital within 30 miles of any clinic performing abortions. "At least 13 of 36 clinics in the state are no longer providing abortions," said Heather Busby, executive director of NARAL Pro-Choice Texas, in a phone interview from Austin.

One of the most restrictive state laws against women's right to abortion was passed in Texas July 12

put the number dead at just over 2,300, but the real toll is widely assumed to be far higher, with many thousands still missing. More than 600,000 lost their homes, according to government reports and 30 percent of the country's provinces are without electricity.

Hardest hit were lowlands near
Continued on page 9

DC taxi drivers join union, fight city gov't attacks

BY PAUL PEDERSON

WASHINGTON — Some 150 taxi drivers gathered outside the District government Wilson Building here Nov. 4 to protest the city's moves to foist the cost of modernizing the taxi fleet onto the drivers. More than 1,000 of the city's 6,500 cab drivers voted a week earlier to join the D.C. Taxi Operators Association, which is affiliated with the Teamsters union, to
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with support from both Democratic and Republican legislators. In addition to the admitting privilege rule, it bans abortions after 20 weeks of
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Indebted Caribbean islands sue former colonial rulers over slavery

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Fourteen Caribbean nations are suing the former colonial powers Britain, France and the Netherlands for reparations for centuries of slavery. The case, which could be heard before the International Court of Justice in The Hague starting next year, points to the lingering legacy of the Atlantic slave trade for centuries of underdevelopment.

The case takes place under the impact of a deepening economic crisis and growing burdens of debt owed to the capitalist ruling families in the imperialist countries of the U.S. and Europe.

Among those filing the suit are the former British colonies of The Bahamas, Barbados, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago; the former French colony of Haiti; and Dutch-ruled Suriname, which is in Latin America.

The case is being pursued by the British law firm Leigh Day, which won \$21.5 million in compensation last June for some 5,000 Kenyans tortured by British forces during the 1950s anti-colonial uprising in Kenya.

"The suit is a just cause," Terry Marryshow, chairman of Maurice Bishop and October Martyrs Foundation, told the *Militant* in a phone interview from St. George's, Grenada, Nov. 8. "The impact of the slave trade has been tremendous at the time it took place and still continues. Compensation was never paid to victims, only slave owners."

Between 1500 and 1900, tens of

millions of West Africans were enslaved and shipped to Latin America, the Caribbean and the U.S. to work on plantations and fields producing cotton, tobacco, sugar and other products bound for Europe. The British Parliament abolished the Atlantic slave trade in 1807, but the law was not put into effect until 26 years later, when legislators spent \$32 million to compensate slave owners.

In Grenada "unequal trade and unequal balances of trade continue today," said Marryshow. With a population of some 100,000, the country is saddled with a \$2.1 billion debt. "The government has practically declared bankruptcy and is discussing with the International Monetary Fund imposing higher taxes through its 'structural adjustment fund.'"

"The Caribbean is one of the world's most heavily indebted regions," wrote Gail Hurley for the Sheffield Political Economy Research Institute Oct. 28. "Many Caribbean countries spend far more on debt service than on key social expenditures."

In Jamaica debt payments accounted for nearly 50 percent of government expenditures over the past four years, while health and education amounted to 20 percent, Hurley wrote. In Grenada, debt service this year is about 41 percent of government expenditures, education and health combined just 16 percent.

The circumstances are pushing Caribbean governments into closer congruence with the anti-imperialist positions of revolutionary Cuba and the

Australia backers of women's rights oppose fetal 'personhood'



Christine Smith, Women's Abortion Action Campaign

SYDNEY — More than 100 supporters of a woman's right to choose abortion joined a rally and march through the city center here Nov. 3. To chants of "Abortion rights are under attack, what do we do? Stand up, fight back!" and "Not the church, not the state, women will decide their fate," they got a positive response from many bystanders.

The demonstration was called to protest a bill under debate in the New South Wales Parliament that would "recognize the existence of the fetus of a pregnant woman that is of at least 20 weeks' gestation as a living person." The bill dubbed "Zoe's Law" was introduced Aug. 29 by Liberal Party member Christopher Spence. Zoe was the name Brodie Donegan planned to give her baby before she was hit by a vehicle in 2009, causing a stillbirth.

While backed by opponents of women's rights, the proposed law does not explicitly target abortion and includes an exception for medical procedures or anything done by or with the consent of a pregnant woman. But supporters of women's rights see it as an opening wedge directed against the fundamental right to abortion, as has been the aim of all similar "personhood" laws pushed by right-wing opponents of women's emancipation in the U.S.

— LINDA HARRIS AND JOANNE KUNIANSKY

Venezuelan government, to the ire of Washington.

Since 2005 the Venezuelan government, through its energy cooperation agreement PetroCaribe, has provided countries in the Caribbean, including Cuba, with oil at preferential prices, weakening the economic stranglehold of imperialist-dominated oil conglomerates.

The growing friction between the governments of the U.S. and Europe and those of the Caribbean was demonstrated at the 2012 Cuba-Caricom summit in Trinidad and Tobago. While Cuban President Raúl Castro was welcomed on the island with a 21-gun salute, the Barack Obama administration forced the conference to

move from the government-owned but U.S.-managed Hilton to another location because of Cuba's participation.

Earlier this year, the July 26 revolutionary celebration in Cuba was attended by heads of state and other high-ranking officials from Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and St. Lucia, as well as from five Latin American nations. Government representatives spoke about the impact and example of the Cuban Revolution on the region, including its role in standing up to imperialism and in providing medical aid and other assistance to Caribbean, Latin American and other oppressed nations around the world.

THE MILITANT

Free the Cuban Five!



Fernando González, Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, René González

The 'Militant' champions the international fight to free these five working-class fighters. They, and the socialist revolution they were jailed in the U.S. for defending, stand as examples for working-class fighters worldwide.

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

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

Subscription campaign

Continued from front page
fer with a subscription (see ad below) also increased during the week and are an integral part of the campaign.

"You can be a mirror for the people when you write in a paper, so everyone knows about the conditions we're living under," Jaspreet Singh, who is a Sikh and puts out a fortnightly community newspaper in Punjabi, told Janet Roth and Felicity Coggan Nov. 8 after they knocked on his door in the working-class suburb of Papatoetoe, south Auckland.

Campaigners sold two subscriptions while participating in a Nov. 9 protest of some 50 people from Auckland's Tamil community marking the killing of tens of thousands of Tamils during the 1983-2009 Sri Lankan civil war.

Supporters in Des Moines, Iowa, also took big steps forward, signing up 28 subscribers, Margaret Trowe reported.

In addition to going door to door in Des Moines together with supporters who joined them from Omaha, Neb., they joined two countermobilizations against the ultrarightist National Socialist Movement in Kansas City, Mo., selling 12 subscriptions to participants.

Supporters in Boston continued an upward trend from the week before, selling 13 subscriptions and climbing into the bold on the scoreboard, joining Lincoln, Neb., and Philadelphia.

Militant Business Manager Lea Sherman joined them Nov. 9 going door to door in the Dorchester neighborhood and campaigning at a demonstration by school bus workers in defense of four of their union leaders who were fired after a job action in early October.

"We got a great response to the paper and books from bus drivers and other

workers at the action," Sherman said. "We sold eight subscriptions and 24 books, 19 in French. Many of the drivers are Haitians."

Top sellers were books by Thomas Sankara, leader of the 1983-1987 revolution in the West African country of Burkina Faso. Two titles by Sankara are part of the special offer with a subscription.

During the weekend this worker correspondent traveled to Washington, D.C., and Socialist Workers Party leader Tony Lane went to Houston to join campaigners there.

Supporters in New York have sold five copies of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*, reported Deborah Liatos, including one to a co-worker at an electronics plant in New Jersey. The book records the SWP's experiences building a proletarian party in the U.S. during the closing decades of the 20th century. Seven workers there have subscribed or renewed so far.

Supporters in San Francisco have had two good weeks, bringing them close to being on schedule. Betsey Stone reported meeting Luz Hernandez, 15, and other members of her family, knocking on doors in Santa Rosa, Calif.

Luz, who is a student at Montgomery High School, pointed to the article on protests against the Oct. 22 killing of Andy López by a deputy sheriff. She told Stone she had marched in a number of the actions.

The family signed up for a subscription and got *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* in both English and Spanish and *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* in Spanish.

John Steele in Montreal wrote that Guillaume Imbeault, a student there,



Militant/John Staggs
Chris Hoepfner, left, talks with and sells *Militant* subscription to Polo Serrano, truck driver, and Lisa Serrano, respiratory specialist at Einstein Hospital, in Philadelphia Nov. 2.

went out campaigning for the first time Nov. 9. He met supporters of the paper at a march against the anti-working-class, anti-immigrant Charter of Quebec Values proposed by the provincial government. "This won't be the last time I do door to door," he said.

Expanding the number of read-

ers taking part is key to bringing the campaign home in full and on time.

Join the effort to expand the *Militant's* readership. See page 8 for a distribution center near you or contact the *Militant* at 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, New York, NY 10018 or call (212) 244-4899.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

San Francisco

Arrest, Prosecute the Cop Who Killed Andy López. Sat., Nov. 23, 7:30 p.m. 5482 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

ILLINOIS

Chicago

A Working-Class Answer to the Increasing Violence and Coarsening of Life Under Capitalism — A Contrast to Cuba From the Sierra Maestra, to Angola to Today. Speaker: Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Nov. 22, 7:30 p.m. 806 W. Washington Blvd., Room 202. Tel.: (312) 455-0111.

IOWA

Des Moines

Farmers and Workers, Not 'American Agriculture,' Can Feed the World: Building a Fighting Workers and Farmers Alliance. Speaker: Helen Meyers, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Nov. 22, 7:30 p.m. 3707 Douglas Ave. Tel.: (515) 707-1779.

MINNESOTA

Minneapolis

The Capitalist Economic Crisis and the Road to Independent Working-Class Political Action: Discussion on Meaning of New York City Mayoral Election. Speaker: David Rosenfeld, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Nov. 23, 7:30 p.m. 416 E. Hennepin Ave., Suite 214. Tel.: (612) 729-1205.

NEBRASKA

Omaha

A Working-Class Answer to the Increasing Violence and Coarsening of Life Under Capitalism. Speaker: Jacquie Henderson, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Nov. 22, 7:30 p.m. 3302 Q St., 2nd floor. Tel.: (402) 779-7697.

TEXAS

Houston

The Crisis in Health Care: What Obamacare Means for the Working Class. Speaker: Mike Fitzsimmons, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Nov. 22, 7:30 p.m. 4800 W. 34th St., Suite C50L. Tel.: (713) 476-0733.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

Unify the Working Class: What Has Been Gained in Recent Struggles by Farmworkers, Machinists and Teamsters. Speakers: Ramon Torres, president, Familias Unidas por la Justicia; Cliff LaPlant, chief shop steward, IAM Local 79 at Belshaw Adamatic; Sydney Coe, member of Teamsters Local 117 at Davis Wire; Socialist Workers Party representative. Sat., Nov. 16. Dinner, 5:30 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. Donation: Dinner \$5; program \$10. Bethany United Church of Christ, 6230 Beacon Ave. (at Graham St.). Tel.: (206) 323-1755.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

'Natural Disasters,' Capitalism and the Debate on Climate Change. Speaker: Ron Poulsen, Communist League. Fri., Nov. 22, 7 p.m. Donation: \$4 waged, \$2 unwaged. Upstairs, 3/281-287 Beamish St., Campsie. Tel.: (02) 9718-9698.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

The 1913 General Strike in New Zealand: How Unions Were Built Through Class Combat. Speaker: Mike Tucker, Communist League. Fri., Nov. 22, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5 waged, \$2 unwaged. 4/125 Grafton Road. Tel.: (09) 369-1223.

Special offers with 'Militant' subscription

The Cuban Five

Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free
from pages of the 'Militant'
\$3 with subscription (regular \$5)

The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions
by Jack Barnes
\$10 with subscription (regular \$24)

The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning

The Fraud of Education Reform Under Capitalism
by Jack Barnes
\$2 with subscription (regular \$3)

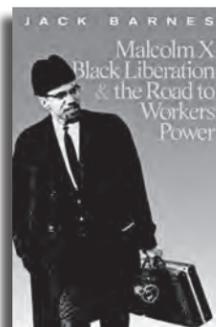
We Are Heirs of the World's Revolutions

by Thomas Sankara
Speeches from the Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-87
\$5 with subscription (regular \$10)

Thomas Sankara Speaks

The Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-1987
\$10 with subscription (regular \$24)

See distributors
on page 8



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

by Jack Barnes
\$10 with subscription (regular \$20)



Cuba and Angola

Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own
by Nelson Mandela, Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro; Cuban generals and combatants; Gabriel García Márquez
\$6 with subscription (regular \$12)



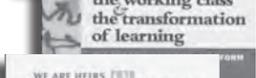
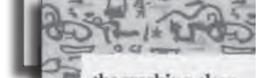
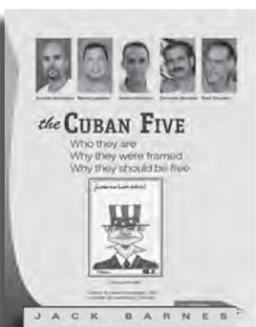
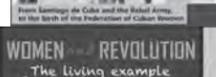
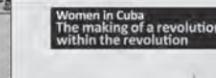
Women in Cuba

The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution
by Vilma Espín, Asela de los Santos, Yolanda Ferrer
\$10 with subscription (regular \$20)



Women and Revolution

The Living Example of the Cuban Revolution
by Asela de los Santos, Mary-Alice Waters and others
\$3 with subscription (regular \$7)



Fight of Cambodia garment workers enters third month

Gov't backs bosses, cops fire on union demonstration

BY EMMA JOHNSON

As workers at one of the world's largest garment plants in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, enter the third month in a drawn-out fight with SL Garments Processing, the government has stepped up its backing of the garment bosses, with police opening fire Nov. 12 on a union demonstration. One bystander was killed and at least 20 workers injured.

The garment workers are pressing for higher wages, safer workplaces and union protection. The Singapore-owned plant employs nearly 6,000 workers, producing for H&M, Gap and Levi's. On Aug. 12 workers went on strike over eight demands, including a raise in the minimum wage from \$80 to \$150 a month, a \$3 lunch stipend, removal of military police from the plant and that the company fire and sever ties with adviser and shareholder Meas Sotha, whom the workers identify with use of military cops in the plant.

Workers ended their strike Aug. 30, following a meeting among union representatives, company officials and the Phnom Penh municipal government. Four days later, the company fired 700 workers. The next day 4,000 workers marched to Phnom Penh City Hall to demand government intervention, after which the city government ordered SL Garment to reinstate all the workers. The company responded by shutting down production and effectively locking the workers out.

Since then negotiating sessions monitored by government officials have occurred between the company and the Coalition of Cambodian Apparel Workers Democratic Union — the biggest of three unions in the plant with more than 2,500 members. Officials from the International Labor Organization's Better Factories Cambodia and Cambodia's Arbitration Council Foundation have sought to function as mediators.

"The two groups proposed putting 19 union leaders and activists before the Arbitration Council to decide whether they would be reinstated," Kong Athit, vice president of the union, said in a Nov. 11 phone interview from Phnom Penh. "We did not accept this. The company wants to dismiss these workers, it's part of a union-busting plan. It's the whole union committee they want to get rid of."

Athit said the most important issue for the union all along has been to get rid of the cops and shareholder Meas, who brought them into the plant.

"After we said no to put our members before the Arbitration Council, the company came up with the proposal that if we agree to dismiss the 19, they will dismiss Mr. Meas," Athit said. "We said no. We have to push this back. After that we can start talking about other things. Tomorrow we are going to march again to the prime minister's residence to press for a solution."

The following day, some 1,000 workers took part in the march. Hundreds of riot police swarming the streets of the capital attacked the demonstration with water cannons, tear gas, rubber bullets and live ammunition. A woman selling rice on the roadside was killed and more

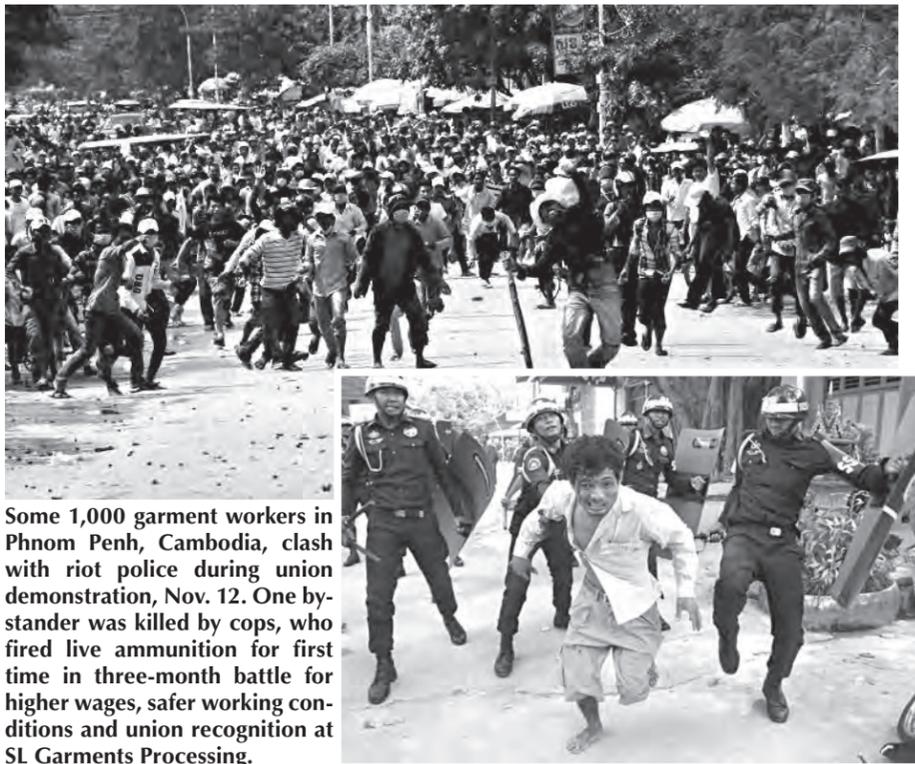
than 20 others rushed to the hospital with gunshot wounds.

This was the latest of several actions the union has organized since workers at SL Garments went on strike. Police have put up roadblocks and tried to stop them previously from holding rallies outside the prime minister's residence. On Aug. 27, workers broke through the barriers. On Sept. 27 the cops stopped them. Workers have kept demonstrating outside the plant since the strike started Aug. 12, despite repeated attacks by the military cops on the premises. On Oct. 31 and Nov. 1 there were violent clashes with 10 workers injured.

Kong Athit said some workers have drifted back to work during the three months and about 1,500 are now working with some production going on.

"Some have just left, they haven't been paid for three months and are now looking for work elsewhere," he said. "Members of the Apparel Workers Union are the backbone of the fight."

The garment industry, which ac-



Some 1,000 garment workers in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, clash with riot police during union demonstration, Nov. 12. One bystander was killed by cops, who fired live ammunition for first time in three-month battle for higher wages, safer working conditions and union recognition at SL Garments Processing.

counts for 80 percent of Cambodia's total exports, 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. Ninety percent of the factories are without contracts.

The Labor Ministry reported that 1,600 workers fainted at some 20 factories last year due to heat, lack of ventilation, malnutrition, chemical exposure and long workdays. Unions give a higher figure.

Strikes and demonstrations at garment factories have increased fourfold over the past year.

Former Calif. prison hunger strikers face reprisals

Continued from front page

ported in the national and international press, including in publications that back the fight for the rights of workers behind bars, such as the *San Francisco Bay View*, *Prison Legal News* and the *Militant*.

On Sept. 9 the *Militant* received notice from Santa Rosa Correctional Institution in Florida that they had impounded the July 22 issue reporting on the launching of the hunger strike from a subscriber there. Since then, two other prisoners — another from Florida and one in Washington state — reported to the paper they too were denied issues of their subscription.

The *Militant*, with the help of the American Civil Liberties Union, fought this censorship. So far, authorities at the two Florida prisons have been pushed back and delivered the inmates' papers. Efforts to win the same are underway in Washington.

On Oct. 18, four leaders of the prisoners' fight confined in Pelican Bay State Prison Security Housing Units wrote a letter to Juan Méndez, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture, asking that he meet with them and undertake to "bring both our conditions and our human rights movement to the attention of the international community."

"Over 3,500 prisoners remain isolated in California's SHUs with almost no human interaction, little opportunity to exercise or even see the sun, and forbidden from contact visits or telephone calls with their families," the four — Todd Ashker, Arturo Castellanos, Antonio Guillen and Sitawa Nantambu Jamaa — wrote. "They join thousands of others who are held in different forms of solitary confinement throughout the system."

"I believe the prisoners should have newspapers," Marie Levin, sister of Sitawa Nantambu Jamaa, told the *Militant*. "My brother's writings have been reprinted in the *San Francisco Bay View*. That is how prisoners keep informed.

"The people running the prisons try to keep newspapers with prisoners' point of view from going in, papers such as the *Rock*, the *Bay View*, the *Militant* and *Prison Focus*," she said. "Especially during the hunger strike they wanted to keep the prisoners from knowing what is happening."

"When I heard the *Militant* had won a victory, I wasn't surprised," Levin said. "They had no valid reason to keep the paper out. They just wanted to put a roadblock in the way. You have to stand up to them. If you don't, they'll continue to block it."

Thousands of former hunger strik-

ers, both those in solitary and in the general population, have received Rules Violation Report notices. These disciplinary reports can extend your time in solitary, lead to imposition of a host of other restrictions, or become the basis for being denied parole.

Backers of prisoners' struggles are organizing to get letters protesting the victimizations to Michael Stainer, director of the Division of Adult Institutions at California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Stainer's address at the CDCR is P.O. Box 942883, Sacramento, CA 94283, or Michael.Stainer@cdcr.ca.gov.

Collection pace picks up for SWP Party-Building Fund

BY TONY LANE

More than \$12,000 came into the Socialist Workers Party Building Fund in the last week, the biggest collection so far and a step forward in the effort to reach the goal of \$100,000 by Dec. 17. All but two local areas sent in checks.

San Francisco is on schedule this week with \$5,622 collected. "We have \$11,000 pledged and are closing in on our \$13,000 quota," said Joel Britton, who helps lead the drive there.

John Hawkins from Chicago reports that half of the eight new contributors to the party there were met while selling the *Militant* door to door. "When you described the kind of paper you were promoting I answered," John Kirkpatrick, a teacher, told *Militant* distributors. In addition to donating to the party fund, Kirkpatrick signed up for a *Militant* subscription and bought three Pathfinder books on special — *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*; *Malcolm X, Black Liberation*, and *the Road to Workers Power*; and *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free*.

To be reflected on the weekly scoreboard payments need to reach the SWP National Office by Monday.

Militant readers and supporters can send contributions to the fund to the location nearest you listed on page 8 or directly to the SWP National Office at 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Party-Building Fund Week 3 of 9			
Area	Quota	Collected	%
Lincoln	\$200	\$100	50%
Boston	\$3,500	\$1,625	46%
San Francisco	\$13,000	\$5,622	43%
New York	\$20,000	\$5,041	25%
Atlanta	\$8,800	\$2,145	24%
Des Moines	\$2,600	\$506	19%
Los Angeles	\$8,200	\$1,511	18%
Washington, DC	\$7,500	\$1,335	18%
Twin Cities	\$5,750	\$1,000	17%
Seattle	\$8,800	\$1,325	15%
Omaha	\$2,500	\$271	11%
Miami	\$3,000	\$311	10%
Philadelphia	\$4,200	\$320	8%
Chicago	\$9,200	\$591	6%
Houston	\$3,000	\$46	2%
Other		\$200	
Total	\$100,250	\$21,949	22%
Should Be	\$100,000	\$33,333	33%

DC taxi drivers join union

Continued from front page
press this fight.

"We have as corrupt and rude a government in this city as you can get," said Lee Mason, a taxi driver since 1968. "They forced me to put about \$1,000 into my car to comply with these rules. But the money's not the only thing, it's the way they treat people. They treat us cab drivers like dirt."

Most of the drivers own or lease a cab. The new regulations require them to paint their cars red and grey, install new dome lights on the roof and install city-approved credit card machines. According to the union, drivers often work 12-hour days and average \$25,000 to \$30,000 a year.

The cab drivers marched to Mayor Vincent Gray's office to present a letter from the new association demanding a moratorium on fines and impoundment of cabs for non-compliance with the regulations; reimbursement for some of the costs of compliance; and a driver representative on the taxi commission. A representative of the mayor's office came out and said the mayor's schedule was "very dense," but he would get the message.

"Thirty years ago you could spend more time with your family and still make ends meet," said Jesse Black, who has driven cabs for 40 years. "But the costs have soared out of control."

Bililigne Senbet said that on his way to the rally his cab was towed for not having the new city-mandated dome light. He will have to shell out money for the \$100 fine to get his car out of impoundment and to tow it to one of the 10 shops in the city contracted to install the dome lights.

"I already spent three days trying

to get the new lights," Senbet said. "But there were none available."

"They don't even pay us our money," said Elizabeth Sebhat, the one female driver at the action. She said she has waited a month to get \$1,600 in credit card payments owed to her. It is now parked while she tries to get a new dome light. According to some reports, the installation was initially going for \$180, but now it costs a minimum of \$475. Sebhat said some shops charge up to \$600.

"The policemen and hackers [cab inspectors] abuse us," she said. "I like to work and earn my money, but they want to send us for the food stamps."

Neville Waters, the Public Information Officer for the District of Columbia Taxi Commission, told the *Militant* that 5,000 of the 6,500 cabs in the district have the new dome lights. "As we approach the deadline, those who ... procrastinated are now facing the pressures of the market," he said.

"The city has not been clear on the deadlines for these upgrades," Teamsters



Militant/Paul Pederson

Taxi drivers rally outside D.C. government building Nov. 4 to protest city's moves to put cost of modernizing taxi fleet on drivers. Week before, some 1,000 voted to join Teamsters.

Press Secretary Galen Munroe said to the *Militant*. "This is price-gouging and profiteering on the part of the city-appointed vendors."

Waters said that the mayor's office pushed the upgrades because "many thought we had a third-world cab sys-

tem. The cabs were unclean, the drivers rude."

"For him to say that is insulting to these drivers, most of whom are of East African origin," Munroe said. "We have a real problem with the racial undertone of this."

Bay Area transit workers ratify new contract

BY JEFF POWERS

SAN FRANCISCO — Members of Service Employees International Union Local 1021 and Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1555, who work for Bay Area Rapid Transit, ratified a four-year agreement with BART Nov. 1 after a brief strike, during which two employees were killed after being hit by a scab train.

Transit bosses backed off some of their demands in the contract, which was approved by more than 85 percent.

On Oct. 19 contractor Laurence Daniels and Christopher Sheppard, a member of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 3993, which organizes salaried employees and was not part of the walkout, were struck by a train and killed while inspecting track.

Prior to this most recent strike, the 2,400 station agents, train operators, clerical workers, mechanics and maintenance workers at BART organized a four-day walkout in July. That action ended when the transit unions agreed

to return to work for 30 days, followed by a court-ordered 60-day "cooling off" period.

"During the negotiations management kept telling us they wanted the 'freedom to manage,'" Des Patten, a member of the bargaining committee and president of the BART Professional Chapter of SEIU Local 1021, told the *Militant*.

"They wanted to be able to change job descriptions without notification and prior approval and they wanted freedom to change people's work schedules from five eight-hour days to four 10-hour days on a weekly, even daily basis," Patten said.

Management also proposed that "extra-board" employees, workers with lower seniority who are on-call, could be assigned to work at any yard spanning the 55-mile system, instead of a set location.

"None of these new work rules are in the new agreement," Patten said.

The new agreement includes a 15.38 percent wage increase over four years.

Workers health care contributions were raised \$37 per month and, for the first time, workers will pay an annual 1 percent employee contribution to pensions.

The two employees killed during the strike were working to company regulations called "simple approval," which put all the responsibility on track workers to avoid being hit by incoming trains. One track worker was supposed to look out for trains traveling up to 70 miles per hour, which gives them about 15 seconds to get out of the way.

BART management, which claimed it kept employees "alert," resisted changing this policy even after a BART track worker was killed in 2001 and another in 2008.

On Oct. 31, the California Public Utilities Commission established safety regulations that include mandatory three-way radio communication between track workers, train operators, and central command; and slower speed limits and warning flags for work areas.

Grocery workers in DC oppose cuts in benefits

BY PAUL PEDERSON

WASHINGTON — Some 17,000 unionized grocery workers at Safeway and Giant Food stores in the metro area here face threatened cuts to their health and pension benefits as their contract expires Nov. 15.

About a dozen workers, members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 400, leafleted outside a Giant store in Greenbelt, Md., Nov. 6 to get out the word about the contract dispute.

The contract had been scheduled to expire in March 2012. But the two sides agreed to a 19-month extension.

"They want to take out spousal support and make people pay more for their benefits," Kathy Mason, a shop steward at a Giant store in Hyattsville, Md., told the *Militant*. "And they are giving part-timers under 20 hours so that they won't have to provide benefits. It's getting very hard to get a full-time position."

Union members say that the grocery chains are responding to provisions in the Affordable Care Act by increasing part-time work to avoid paying for employees' health insurance.

"What kind of a society are we offering our kids if they can't get work that will allow them to go out on their own," said Mary Ervin, who works as a meat wrapper at Giant. "I mean, 16 hours a week will pay for a cellphone bill, but it won't help them get on their feet."

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



November 25, 1988

Just one week after the November 8 elections, 80,000 farmers received notices giving them 45 days to show cause why their farms should not be taken from them.

The notices from the Farmers Home Administration were the result of Reagan administration regulations that became effective October 14. The warnings were sent to 40 percent of the farms that have received FmHA loans.

The latest threats to working farmers come in the midst of an upturn in the capitalist business cycle that has stuffed the coffers of big capitalist farm operations.

Unions and other organizations should join farmers in protesting the foreclosures. In the wake of the drought, an immediate moratorium on debt payments is needed.



November 25, 1963

LOS ANGELES, Nov. 18 — Several thousand members of the Communications Workers of America in this area have been on strike since Sept. 18 against the General Telephone Company. The union is asking for the same working conditions presently enjoyed by employees of Pacific Telephone and Telegraph.

Gen Tel's phone rates have for years been higher than those of Pacific Telephone. Yet it still refuses to pay its employees equal to those at Pacific.

This is the first strike against Gen Tel in 10 years. Gen Tel has no friends in this battle. It faces strikers who are in a strong moral position and an antagonistic public which wants to see its phones put in order, a state the phones have seldom been in before.



November 26, 1938

From every sounding board of the administration, from President Roosevelt down to Mayor LaGuardia, through the press, and over the radio, the American people are being prepared for the greatest armament program in history.

On Nov. 15 Roosevelt proclaimed the new slogan of "continental defense." He explained that this meant that the land, naval, and air forces of the United States would be brought up to the level needed for action anywhere from the Arctic Circle to Cape Horn.

The same day, Roosevelt engaged in a bit of convenient indignation against the anti-Semitic pogroms in Germany. What he is interested in is the utilization of the legitimate indignation of the American masses over the Nazi terror to create an effective war psychology.

SKorea president seeks to ban opposition party

Gov't anti-labor assault targets teachers' union

BY SETH GALINSKY

After framing up and arresting leaders of the opposition Unified Progressive Party on conspiracy charges a few months ago, the government of South Korean President Park Geun-hye is moving to ban the party outright. The attack on free speech and the right to political association at the same time includes an anti-union assault directed at the Korean Teachers and Education Workers Union.

Along with disbanding the party, the government wants to kick its six legislators out of the National Assembly and cut off \$630,000 in state subsidies the party receives for being in parliament. The last time the government banned an opposition party was in 1958, when U.S.-backed dictator Syngman Rhee arrested opposition leader Cho Bong-am and dissolved his Progressive Party.

In its demand that the Constitutional Court outlaw the party, the Justice Ministry cited the 1960 South Korean Constitution, which bans parties whose activities "are contrary to the fundamental democratic order."

In late August and early September four Unified Progressive Party officials, including legislator Lee Seok-ki, were arrested and charged with "conspiracy to commit a rebellion and violating the National Security Law." South Korea's spy agency, the National Intelligence Service, cited as evidence a speech made by Lee at a party meeting in May. The Korean press also plays up that participants sang the "Red Flag" song that it associates with the North.

The Justice Ministry charges that the party's program is "identical to the arguments coming from Pyongyang." It cited its goal of "overcoming foreign domination and dissolving South Korea's dependence on the alliance with the U.S.," and its characterization of South Korea as "not a society where the workers are master, but the reverse, one where a privileged few act as masters."

The main bourgeois opposition to Park's New Frontier Party, the Democratic Party, which was previously in an electoral alliance with the Unified Progressives, has said little about the proposed ban except to call it "very regrettable" and to hope for "a wise decision" from the court.

Some government opponents say that the National Intelligence Service is going after the Unified Progressive Party to distract attention from a brewing scandal over revelations that the spy agency had orchestrated a campaign to smear Park's opponents during the presidential elections.

The *Korea Herald* applauded the government's move. "We hope the government's unprecedented action brings an opportunity to rein in anachronistic pro-North Korea elements in the South."

The *Hankyoreh*, another major daily, said Nov. 6 that "the misguided effort by a government to disband a particular political party is a complete denial of constitutionally guaranteed values, including the right of the people to vote."

The Constitutional Court has not yet ruled on the government's request.

On Oct. 24, the Ministry of

Employment and Labor stripped the Korean Teachers and Education Workers' Union of its legal status for allowing fired teachers to keep union membership, contrary to government anti-union laws. On Nov. 13 a Seoul court granted a temporary injunction against the ministry until the court issues a final ruling.

The Teachers and Education Workers' Union has been accused by the government in the past of being "pro-North Korea."

Some 68 percent of the union's 60,000 members voted Oct. 16-18 to reject the ministry's demand. The union was founded in 1989, when the government banned teachers and other public workers from participating in politics or expressing their own political views, but didn't have official recognition until 1999.

"There is a long history in South Korea of accusing people who don't agree with the government of being communist," Hyunsu Hwang, international secretary



AP/Lee Jin-man

Police and security guards surround Unified Progressive Party legislators and members at National Assembly in Seoul, South Korea, Sept. 4. Assembly voted to strip party leader Lee Seok-ki of immunity that day, opening door to his arrest on frame-up conspiracy charges.

of the union, told the *Militant* by phone from Incheon, South Korea, Nov. 12. "If you say anything about reunification of the North and South they say you are for North Korea. It's McCarthyism."

"The Unified Progressive Party didn't do anything violent," Hwang said. "How could they be trying to organize a coup d'état when they don't have any military force? It's ridiculous."

"Personally, I am not a supporter of

this party, but the government action is not in line with a democratic society. The ruling party wants to go back 30 years," Hwang said, referring to previous dictatorial regimes in South Korea.

Hwang said the attack on the union is backfiring. "Hundreds of teachers have joined the union since the government began its threats," he said. "The ruling party thinks they can control the Korean people, but they can't."

Court decision on Texas anti-abortion law

Continued from the front page

pregnancy; requires clinics to match the standards of hospital surgical facilities beginning October 2014; and in effect bans drug-induced abortions for women more than seven weeks pregnant.

U.S. District Judge Lee Yeakel issued an injunction Oct. 28 against the admitting privilege requirement and restrictions on medication-induced abortions after Planned Parenthood and other abortion providers filed suit against those two aspects of the law. Three days later, the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals overturned the injunction on the admitting privilege regulation.

"It's devastating for women's health in the state," Betty Pettigrew, director of the Routh Street Women's Clinic in Dallas, told the *Militant*.

Routh Street clinic has doctors with admitting privileges. But hospitals have declined requests for admitting privileges at many other clinics, particularly in rural areas. Since the court ruling, several hundred women from Texas, Oklahoma and Louisiana have called the clinic to make appointments after their procedures were canceled elsewhere, Pettigrew said.

"Women with financial means will find a way to get an abortion," Rocio

Villalobos, with the pro-choice group Rise Up Texas in Austin, said by phone Nov. 7. "But when you look at those who can't afford to go far, they're going to turn to unsafe methods."

While the Fifth Circuit overturned the injunction in Texas, it let stand an injunction on a similar admitting privilege requirement in Mississippi, where there is only one clinic that performs abortions in the entire state, Jackson Women's Health Organization in Jackson. A hearing on the Mississippi law is scheduled for March.

So-called right to life groups have been trying to close down the Jackson clinic for years, Laurie Roberts, president of the Mississippi chapter of the National Organization for Women, told the *Militant* Nov. 6.

"Ten years ago there were five clinics that performed abortions in the state," said Roberts. But the Mississippi legislature approved legislation that forced most of the clinics to go out of business, she said. In Mississippi, abortion is illegal after 16 weeks of pregnancy, clinics have to follow the same building codes as hospitals, and women have to attend a counseling session and then wait 24 hours before having an abortion.

Women's rights supporters are determined to fight any attempt to close the

clinic.

"Just this weekend about 45 people defended the clinic because the so-called right to life group Operation Save America was in town," Roberts said Nov. 5. "And yesterday we did a pro-choice caravan through downtown."

On Nov. 4 the U.S. Supreme Court refused to review an Oklahoma Supreme Court ruling that a state law banning drug-induced abortions was unconstitutional.

"It won't be surprising if the legislature goes back and writes the law in a different way," Martha Skeeters, president of the Oklahoma Coalition for Reproductive Justice, said by phone. "And unfortunately many Democrats as well as Republicans do vote against women's reproductive rights."

Skeeters has joined demonstrations in Texas and other states as well as in Oklahoma in defense of women's right to choose.

"When I started out a few years ago, I was a pessimist, pulled along by my outrage," she said. "But in going to all kinds of events with literature and buttons and speaking out I found out that if you stand up there will be unexpected openings."

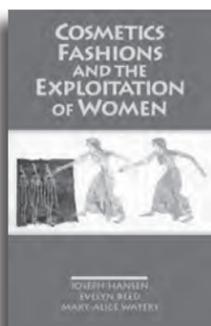
In Ohio a new anti-abortion law that went into effect in early October includes a provision forcing women to have an ultrasound test before any abortion.

Opponents of legal abortion have been pushing many of these restrictions under the guise of health and safety or the need for women to make an informed decision. But advocates for women's rights say the clear goal of these forces is to reverse the 1973 Supreme Court *Roe v. Wade* decision that recognized a woman's right to control her own body.

"It's totally deliberate," Roberts said. "They want to chip away at this right. If they can get a new restriction passed, then it's easier for them to move on to the next one."

Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women

by Joseph Hansen, Evelyn Reed, Mary-Alice Waters



Why do ever-changing standards of beauty always reflect those of the ruling class? How do the wealthy owners of the cosmetics and fashions "industries" play on women's insecurities to rake in profits? When did women become the "second sex" and what social forces have the power to end this second-class status? \$15

Abortion Is a Woman's Right!

by Pat Grogan, Evelyn Reed

Why abortion rights are central not only to the fight for the full emancipation of women, but to forging a united and fighting labor movement.

Available in English and Spanish: \$6



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‘Capitalists use elections to mask exploitation and their class rule’

Militant Labor Forum discusses socialist campaigns, 2013 elections

BY JOHN STUDER

NEW YORK — The Socialist Workers Party ran candidates for public office around the country in the 2013 elections and used them to put forward an independent working-class voice, said Steve Clark, a member of the party’s National Committee, at a Militant Labor Forum here Nov. 8.

“But for class-conscious workers, these election campaigns are political *detours* on the road to independent working-class political action. The capitalist rulers use elections to camouflage class relations of exploitation and the class struggle.”

Speaking on the results of the 2013 mayoral election in New York and opportunities to build the party today, Clark introduced the candidates who stood for the SWP against the Democrats, Republicans and other capitalist parties — Dan Fein for mayor, John Studer for comptroller, Deborah Liatos for public advocate, and Sara Lobman, Róger Calero and Seth Galinsky for Borough presidents in Manhattan, Bronx and Queens.

The campaigns were a subordinate part of other party-building activities, Clark said. We used them to engage working people, whose lives and outlook have been shaken by the capitalist crisis, in a discussion of working-class politics, to focus attention toward the class struggle and away from the misconception — promoted by the capitalist rulers — that politics has to do with choosing among the politicians of the bosses’ twin parties, the Democrats and Republicans.

Supporters of the socialist ticket integrated the campaign into efforts to expand readership of the *Militant* and books on working-class politics, as well as into active solidarity with strikes and other union actions and participation in political demonstrations — from marches demanding prosecution of cops who kill and brutalize working people to protests against deportations of immigrant workers and rallies in defense of a woman’s right to choose abortion.

“Workers live under the dictatorship of capital,” Clark said. “In the United States, owners of capital exercise power through a two-party system, which is one of the ways they mask the reality of their class rule and divert workers from taking a revolutionary course.” They use the elections to get workers searching for the “best man or woman for the

job.” But our arena is not in their elections, but in the streets, in strikes and social protest battles — and that is where a revolutionary working-class movement will be forged, Clark said.

The mighty popular struggles that successfully established workers and farmers governments — in Russia in 1917, Cuba in 1959, Grenada and Nicaragua in 1979 and elsewhere — were the result of revolutionary working-class mobilizations. Workers in the U.S., too, must fight to take power out of the hands of the capitalist rulers.

A detour is something you take to get to a destination, Clark said. So workers’ parties selectively participate in bourgeois elections. Doing so provides an element of protection from the capitalist state, because under rule by the exploiters, workers’ struggles and organizations must fight to carve out and defend political space to operate.

Running socialist campaigns also give us an opportunity to get a little larger hearing, even though the rulers organize their elections to keep the working class from having a voice — with high petitioning requirements to keep workers’ parties off the ballot, refusal by the bosses’ media to cover SWP campaigns and more.

We celebrate tonight because the election is over, Clark said. Now those who support the *Militant* and the SWP can get back to leading with the socialist paper and books as we go door to door in workers’ neighborhoods and to workers’ struggles and other political events.

We find great openness and interest in communist politics today, said Clark. This is true despite an ebb in workers’ struggles due to the impact of high joblessness and decades of refusal by class-collaborationist trade union officials to lead workers in combat against bosses’ attacks on our wages, safety and dignity.

New York mayoral election

The successful campaign of Bill de Blasio for mayor of New York — with 74 percent of the vote — registers progress by a section of the rulers in legitimizing a “socialist” wing of the Democratic Party, Clark said.

Asked about de Blasio’s socialism on a NY1 television interview a couple



Militant/Larry Lukehart



Militant/Seth Galinsky

“Socialist election campaigns are political detours on the road to independent working-class political action,” said Steve Clark, above, member of Socialist Workers Party National Committee, at Nov. 8 Militant Labor Forum. “The elections are the capitalists’ arena. Our arena is the streets, in strikes and social protest battles.” Left, bus workers picket in the Bronx Feb. 2, during one-month strike.

days before the election, SWP mayoral candidate Fein said de Blasio “is a bourgeois socialist. He is a candidate that defends capitalism 100 percent.”

As the propertied rulers foist the burden of today’s capitalist crisis on the backs of working people, a change in outlook is developing among substantial numbers of workers. In response, a section of the ruling class wants to make room for a socialist wing within the Democratic Party in order to keep working people corralled within bourgeois, electoral politics.

The politics of de Blasio, and the Democratic left-wing he is part of, poses a challenge to the wing most prominently represented by former President Bill Clinton and former Secretary of State and Senator Hillary Clinton, Clark said. Clinton pushed the party to the center of the bourgeois political spectrum, redefining what a liberal Democrat was.

The Clinton administration led a bipartisan agenda that overturned “welfare as we know it” and stepped-up assaults on democratic rights, passing the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, the Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, among others.

De Blasio, Clark said, is Occupy Wall Street made flesh. “He was the candidate of the 99 percent and Occupy Wall Street and Zuccotti Park,” *New York Daily News* columnist Mike Lupica wrote after the election.

The *New York Times* was among the bourgeois voices most vigorously pressing de Blasio’s campaign. Just after he won the primary, assuring he would be the next mayor, the *Times* ran an article, “A Mayor Hopeful Now, de Blasio Was Once a Young Leftist,” describing how he raised food aid for Sandinista Nicaragua in 1988, advocated “democratic socialism” and honeymooned in Cuba. The purpose was not to scare people away from his campaign, but to attract readers to him.

With opposite intentions, Clark said, the *New York Post* ran a front-page picture of a hammer and sickle and picture of de Blasio the day before the election,

headlined “Back in the USSR!” The red-baiting attempt fell flat.

Irresistible political pull on ‘far left’

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and other Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe, fewer and fewer currents on the “left” even pretend to present perspectives from the Russian Revolution of 1917 or to chart a Marxist course in politics starting from the needs and interests of the working class, Clark said.

The Party for Socialism and Liberation, for instance, which ran for mayor of New York and Los Angeles in the last elections, did not field a candidate this year. This group held a meeting to discuss the de Blasio mayoral victory. Its flyer said that “the Republican message failed dismally among key social sectors, including youth, Black and Latinos, women and the LGBTQ community,” omitting reference to the working class (and by implication excluding the “sector” of the working class that is Caucasian).

“De Blasio positioned himself as a progressive on a range of social issues,” the flyer said, “but will he deliver on his promises?”

“For those of us who are skeptical about de Blasio,” said a Sept. 23 commentary in *SocialistWorker.org*, published by the International Socialist Organization, “our role should not be to dash these hopes (as if we could), but to try to channel them into the grassroots movements for change.” Instead of trying to convince people not to campaign for de Blasio, it said, we should “demand that *he* campaign for us.”

But class conscious workers don’t judge their course toward the bosses’ government based on how many promises a bourgeois candidate may or may not carry out. As we know, the answer is usually not many, said Clark. But we don’t know and it doesn’t change what we need to do.

We don’t encourage workers to be a pressure group nudging de Blasio to “the left.”

We start with a political course toward

Continued on page 9



“The labor movement can pursue a consistent class-struggle course only by breaking through the illusion that the problems confronting working people can be resolved within the bourgeois electoral setup. This electoralist illusion is promoted by the bourgeoisie and its labor lieutenants, who argue that ‘real’ politics is synonymous with election campaigns for public office.”

“Real politics is the opposite. ... It originates in what goes on every day in the clash of class forces in the factories, in the fields, in the streets, and on the battlefields of war.”

— Jack Barnes

See special offer page 3 or visit:
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US union organization lacked corresponding political advance

Below is an excerpt from *Polemics in Marxist Philosophy*, one of *Pathfinder's Books of the Month* for November. In this collection of essays George Novack explains why the materialist foundations and dialectical methods of Marxism offer the only scientific basis for working-class political action. The author of numerous titles on Marxist theory and politics, Novack joined the communist movement in the U.S. in 1933, and remained a member and leader of the Socialist Workers Party until his death in 1992. The piece is from the chapter "American Philosophy and the Labor Movement." Copyright © 1978 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY GEORGE NOVACK

"American philosophy and the labor movement. . . How odd to couple these two together?" we can imagine eminent heads in both fields exclaiming. "What can they have in common?"

It must be acknowledged that at present they make an incongruous, even ludicrous, juxtaposition. To most professors, philosophy has no special connection with either politics or the working class. Almost all union leaders believe the labor movement can get along very well without any philosophy. Here as elsewhere, extremes meet. The labor bureaucrats have as little regard for



In building industrial unions, CIO founders discarded craft union framework of AFL, wrote George Novack. But "union organization was not extended and fortified by equivalent advances in political practices, social views, or theoretical knowledge of union leadership." Above, AFL and CIO machinists strike at San Francisco Bethlehem Steel shipbuilding yard May 1941.

philosophy as the university mandarins have for the labor movement.

Is this estrangement a fixed and permanent feature of American culture? Or is it the product of special, episodic historical conditions? To answer these questions, let us first examine the evolution of the mass labor movement in the United States on its theoretical side, in its two main stages: the Gompers-Green era and the subsequent period of the CIO.

One of the outstanding peculiarities of the American labor movement has been the immense disparity between its strength in industrial action and organization, and its political and theoretical weakness compared with working class movements in other countries.

The American workers possess in full measure all the remarkable qualities which distinguish the American people generally and have been responsible for its colossal achievements. They radiate dynamic energy; they excel in sustained labor and collective organization for the execution of given tasks; they are ingenious, free of routinism, highly cultured in modern technology. They have displayed these capacities not only in working for their bosses but also in the struggles which have created the

largest and most powerful trade union structure in the world. These magnificent traits can be counted upon to assert themselves even more forcefully in the decades ahead and will be the source of still greater accomplishments.

At the same time, the development of American labor has suffered from a pronounced unevenness. The growth of its self-awareness as a distinct social force with a world-historical mission has not kept pace with its union organization. Its creativeness in collective thinking has limped far behind its achievements through direct action. Along with its precious positive features our labor movement has inherited the meagerness and immaturity in theoretical matters rooted in the national past.

This defect was crystallized in the craft unionism of the old American Federation of Labor. The original AFL leaders deliberately turned away from any general conceptions of social development and class relations. In his autobiography Samuel Gompers tells how he consciously rejected the Marxism he knew in his younger days, as unsuited to American conditions.

The AFL heads scoffed not only at the ideas of socialism but at any philos-

ophy; such highfalutin matters were no business of organized labor. They lived from hand to mouth, from craft to craft, from contract to contract. The crude tenets of Gompers ("a fair day's pay for a fair day's work"; "reward your friends, punish your enemies") grew out of and corresponded to the primitive organizational setup and class-collaborationist methods of the AFL. When Adolph Strasser, coleader with Gompers of the Cigarmakers, was asked by the Senate Committee on Education and Labor what the ultimate objectives of AFL craft unionism were, he answered: "We have no ultimate ends. We are going on from day to day. We fight only for immediate objects — objects that can be realized in a few years."...

The founders of the CIO in the mid-1930s discarded the craft union framework of the AFL — but they did not break with its fundamental ideology. At this great turning point the regenerated ranks of labor needed four major improvements to carry forward their battles for a better life against monopolist rule. These were: an up-to-date union structure in the basic industries; a mass political party to challenge the capitalist two-party system on a national, state, and local level; a program, outlook, and theory on a par with this higher stage in its own development and corresponding to our revolutionary age of transition from one social order to another; and finally, a leadership capable of applying that program in action.

Under CIO auspices American labor succeeded in realizing only the first and most pressing of these objectives. In the 1930s and '40s it built powerful national unions in the key sectors of trustified industry; that has been the imperishable accomplishment of the CIO. But this higher grade of union organization was not extended and fortified by equivalent advances in the political practices, the social views, or the theoretical knowledge of the union leadership.

Even though they captained a far more dynamic and highly developed movement, the general policies and ideological equipment of the top-ranking CIO leaders were little better than those of the old-line AFL bureaucrats.

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Immediate and massive aid to Philippines!

Unfolding today in the Philippines, a nation with a population of 100 million, is a social catastrophe. The profit-driven capitalists in the Philippines — as well as the U.S. rulers to which they are beholden — bear responsibility for the thousands of deaths, hunger, disease and other severe hardships bearing down on hundreds of thousands of toilers there. The callous law of value that guides all their actions ensured Typhoon Haiyan would wreak massive and lasting devastation on the lives of workers, farmers and fishermen.

“Meteorologists say humans played a big role in this disaster — probably bigger than nature’s,” wrote the *New York Times*. “Factors in the unfolding tragedy include poverty and a tremendous growth in population, much of it in vulnerable coastal areas with poor construction.”

But it’s not “humans,” but the economic and social relations of capitalism that perpetuate the conditions that guarantee these disasters will happen over and over again; that forces workers and farm-

ers to live in harms way; that fails to adequately prepare; and that decides to “save money” rather than human beings.

In Haiti more than 200,000 were killed and more than 1 million left homeless in the immediate aftermath of a January 2010 earthquake from which working people have yet to recover. Only socialist Cuba — where no one is left to fend for themselves — provided any useful aid, which included a brigade of nearly 1,500 medical personnel, who treated some 100,000 Haitians in the first couple months.

U.S. “aid” has been superficial and, like it was in Haiti, prioritizes the protection of private property and restoration of “order.”

Workers worldwide should demand from Washington and other imperialist governments: immediate and massive provision of food, water, shelter and medical care; reconstruction aid with no strings attached; and cancelation of the Philippines foreign debt!

Philippines social disaster wrought by capitalism

Continued from front page

coastlines and river banks most prone to flooding. As usual, the land in these regions is low-value and densely inhabited by workers, farmers and fishermen living in houses made of wood and other light materials. In Tacloban, “poor neighborhoods fared especially badly, with virtually no structures left standing, other than government buildings,” wrote the *New York Times* Nov. 11. In 1991, a less powerful tropical storm killed 5,000 people in many of the same areas.

“Let us evacuate our homes if we are in danger zones,” President Benigno Aquino said in a televised address a day before the typhoon hit, but providing no means or place for hundreds of thousands to go. Many schools, gymnasiums and other buildings designated as evacuation centers in hard-hit areas were destroyed.

Evacuation centers became death traps, as people huddling in basements drowned from the storm surge.

Hundreds of thousands trapped in areas where roads are impassable or no longer exist face acute shortages of water, food and medicine, and unsanitary conditions.

“I know the incredible resiliency of the Philippine people and I am confident that the spirit of Bayanihan will see you through this tragedy,” President Barack Obama said in a Nov. 10 statement. He said the U.S. government is “already providing significant humanitarian assistance” — which, according to press reports, consists of \$100,000 from the U.S. Embassy and

a military cargo plane dispatched from Manila with a contingent of Marines, bottled water, generators, a forklift and two trucks.

The Defense Department announced in a Nov. 11 press release it was sending the aircraft carrier USS George Washington with “an array of aircraft designed to perform disaster relief as well as other functions,” to “support ongoing efforts led by the Philippines’ government and military.” The ships are expected to arrive Nov. 13-14. “The Defense Department is continuing to work closely with the Philippine government to determine what, if any, additional assets may be required,” the Pentagon reported.

Two days after the typhoon hit, President Aquino declared a “state of calamity,” which, according to the *Times*, represented “a first step in the release of emergency money.” But, the *Times* said, the emergency funds have already been “depleted” by other disasters, particularly the large earthquake that struck the center of the country last month. Meanwhile, hundreds of police and soldiers have been deployed to Tacloban in response to “rising fears of a breakdown of law and order after reports of widespread looting.”

Mark Fernando, a volunteer for the Philippine Red Cross, told Reuters that his relief team couldn’t get to Tacloban, because the government wouldn’t provide the space on military flights. “They said, ‘Our priority is to bring in soldiers and policemen,’” he said.

Elections used to mask dictatorship of capital

Continued from page 7

advancing the fight for workers power, and explain that every concession won by the working class along that road is a by-product of revolutionary struggle. We do this as we look to join with others in any struggle in the interests of workers.

De Blasio will preside over the New York Police Department, 50,000 strong, with an intelligence and counterterrorism unit of well over 1,000, with agents assigned all over the world.

He faces a \$2 billion budget shortfall and 152 expired contracts with some 300,000 city workers, who have received no raises in three or four years. “If they want to talk about retroactive pay,” de Blasio said in the final campaign debate, “that’s their right, but they have to show us the cost savings to go with it.”

He needs to tread a path that does not rankle the most powerful individuals in the capitalist class who hold city bonds and maintains New York City’s AA rating, Clark said.

In this he can expect support and understanding from city union officials. “No one wants to bankrupt the city,” United Federation of Teachers President Michael Mulgrew told Bloomberg News.

“We can’t bum-rush the door and hope we all get in and get what we want,” Ed Ott, former executive di-

rector of New York City’s Central Labor Council, said.

De Blasio campaigned on a platform he called a Tale of Two Cities, counterposing the lot of the 1 percent and the 99 percent, paraphrasing Occupy, Clark said. But more and more now he talks about how New Yorkers are all One City, “rising together” — and *sacrificing* “together.”

As workers begin to go through experiences in the years ahead, they will learn who their allies and enemies are, and they will learn how to effectively organize and fight for their interests. The SWP will be part of these struggles and discussions on how the working class can move forward.

“The purpose of the party shall be to educate and organize the working class in order to establish a workers and farmers government,” said Clark, quoting the party’s constitution, “which will abolish capitalism in the United States and join in the worldwide struggle for socialism.”

Today the party is working with *Militant* readers to campaign to get 2,500 new subscribers this fall, talking about political developments from New York to the Philippines and discussing with workers the need for our class to chart a revolutionary course to take state power out of the hands of the propertied rulers and their parties.

“Join us in these efforts,” Clark said.

US gov’t spying

Continued from front page
from pointing out).

These interests, Boot noted, are both political and economic.

Every government does it, he said, other governments “just don’t have the resources or capability to spy as effectively as the NSA does.”

The leaks by Snowden are the most extensive in U.S. history. And there are likely more to come.

Working people sense that if Washington goes to such lengths to spy on its erstwhile allies, it hasn’t the slightest qualms about doing that and more to militant workers and others who organize resistance to attacks on living standards and rights.

The *Guardian* newspaper in the U.K. reported Oct. 24 that the NSA had 35 “world leaders” under surveillance. That same week numerous reports of NSA spying, including targeting the personal cellphone of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, appeared in *Der Spiegel*, *Le Monde*, and other media.

NSA also targeted Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff, former Mexican President Felipe Calderon, officials of the European Union, the Pope and millions of others.

Le Monde reported that the NSA “collected more than 70 million French phone records between early December 2012 and early January 2013.”

The NSA has also been conducting operations aimed at “stealing industrial secrets and intellectual property,” for example, on Brazil’s state-run oil company Petroleo Brasileiro, reported the *New York Times*.

In the ongoing fallout and recriminations, it has come out that Brazil spied on U.S. officials, Australian snoops targeted Asian countries, French and Spanish spies targeted their own citizens and funneled the information to the NSA, and moles from Communications Security Establishment Canada spied on Canadians.

The public protestations were coupled with “a more calculated political response by Ms. Merkel and France’s president, François Hollande,” the *Times* said, that “may have a broader diplomatic and economic effect.”

Paris, Berlin and other rivals of Washington sought to mobilize nationalist outrage to press for “reforms” and elbow others out of the way for a closer relationship with the U.S. rulers, including wider access to the very type of spy information they are complaining about.

Despite public statements of outrage, what Merkel would really like, Deutsche Welle’s news agency wrote, is for Germany to be accepted into the “Five Eyes” — Australia, the U.K., Canada, and New Zealand, led by Washington — with special spy-data sharing arrangements that limit surveillance on their top officials and allow each government’s spy agencies access to information on people in their countries.

Leaker seeks clemency

Snowden has seized on the disputes to argue that calls from the left and right for “reform” of NSA spying is supposed proof his leaks are helping the U.S. government clean up its act.

Snowden released two statements from his temporary asylum in Russia, a “Manifesto for the Truth” and a “To whom it may concern” letter he delivered to Hans-Christian Stroebele, a Green Party member of Germany’s parliament, who visited him.

“Instead of causing damage, the usefulness of the new public knowledge for society is now clear,” Snowden wrote in his manifesto, “because reforms to politics, supervision and laws are being suggested.”

Snowden asked that he be granted clemency and allowed to return to the U.S., offering to testify before Congress.

The response from the Obama administration; Dianne Feinstein, chairwoman of the Senate Intelligence Committee; and Mike Rogers, her House counterpart; was swift: no way. Surrender, face the charges and go to prison.

While there is bipartisan agreement in Washington that NSA spying is essential to the defense of U.S. capitalism, there are growing pressures to seek some face-saving “reforms.”

Obama hosted a White House meeting with a delegation of “business leaders” at the end of October, who told him that the flap over Snowden’s revelations could “lead to billions of dollars in lost business,” the *Times* reported Nov. 4.