

# THE MILITANT

**INSIDE**  
**Socialist Workers Party sets course to deepen activity in working class**  
 — PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 78/NO. 27 JULY 28, 2014

## Texas rally protests child deportation threats

BY STEVE WARSHELL

McALLEN, Texas — Some 75 people protested here July 10 against moves by the U.S. government to make it easier to deport children from Central America. Tens of thousands of children have been arrested by immigration police over the last year. The rally took place just miles from the U.S.-Mexico border.

Rally participants also denounced plans for further anti-immigrant measures being promoted by President Barack Obama and Texas Gov. Rick Perry. The day before the rally Obama issued a statement saying he would consider a request by Perry to send National Guard troops to the U.S.-Mexico border to make it more difficult for workers without papers to cross.

Washington's immigrant crack-down is aimed not at ending the flow of immigrants, but at controlling it to meet the needs of industry and agribusiness for cheap labor.

Continued on page 9

## 'Militant' wins victory against federal prison censorship

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In a victory for workers rights, authorities at the high security U.S. Penitentiary in Florence, Colorado, have reversed their decision to censor an issue of the *Militant*.

The fight began May 19 when the *Militant* received a notification from the warden dated Feb. 7, along with the rejected Dec. 30 issue that had been mailed to a subscriber in the prison. The notice said "this publication is deemed inappropriate for the orderly running of the institution due to it containing articles pertaining to Revolutionary Communist Party in the USA and the need to overthrow the system."

On June 12, David Goldstein, of the firm Rabinowitz, Boudin, Standard, Krinsky & Lieberman, filed an administrative appeal with Paul Laird, regional director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons in Kansas City, Kansas, demanding the ban be reversed on the basis that it violated the First

Continued on page 3

## Turkey: Kurds advance fight for national rights

Eyewitness report by 'Militant' correspondents'



Associated Press/Jodi Hilton

Istanbul June 8, march against killing of two youths in Kurdish area of Turkey who were protesting new Turkish military post there. Flags depict Kurdish political prisoner Abdullah Ocalan.

BY TONY HUNT

IZMIR, Turkey — The Turkish government is taking steps to advance talks with supporters of the Kurdish fight against national oppression, instead of repeating failed attempts to stamp it out through brute force. On July 10 the Turkish Parliament passed a law that legalizes contacts between the outlawed Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) and government officials.

Any dealings with the armed group have been technically illegal until now, although substantial negotiations have taken place since 2012 between Ankara and the PKK's jailed leader, Abdullah Ocalan. The law also opens up a road for amnesty for PKK fight-

ers and their re-entering civilian life.

Last year Ocalan, who was captured in 1999 and is serving a life sentence for "treason," declared an end to the PKK's decades-long military struggle against the government waged from its bases in southeastern Turkey and northern Iraq, part of the historical territory of Kurdistan.

"There is an international campaign to free Mr. Ocalan," Hayri Ates, an official of the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), said at a meeting with *Militant* reporters July 3 at their headquarters here.

The Kurdish people have been denied a homeland for centuries, first by

Continued on page 4

## Strike by parts workers shuts other factories in South Africa



Reuters/Rogan Ward

Striking members of National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa at rally in Durban July 1 point at workers on construction site who are not taking part in strike. More than 220,000 workers walked off job to demand end to labor broker system and wage increases.

BY EMMA JOHNSON

The strike by more than 220,000 workers in South Africa is having a widening impact. General Motors closed its assembly plant in Port Elizabeth July 3. Ford announced July 14 it had suspended production at its Pretoria plant, and Toyota closed three lines at its factory in Durban the following day. BMW South Africa has cut production by at least one-third. The walkout follows on the heels of a

successful five-month strike by platinum miners.

Workers organized by the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa downed their tools July 1. The strike is centered in factories making parts for the mine, auto and telecommunications industry.

The Metalworkers union is demanding a one-year contract, a 12 percent wage increase, an end to the

Continued on page 9

## Meeting celebrates expansion of Communist League in Canada

BY JOHN STUDER

MONTREAL — "I'd like to welcome you all to this international celebration of the expansion of the communist movement here in Canada, hosted by the Communist League and its two new branches in Montreal, Quebec, and Calgary, Alberta," Philippe Tessier told some 50 people gathered at the Lajeunesse Community Recreation Center in Montreal July 12. Tessier, 21, a member of the Montreal branch executive committee who joined the league in September, chaired the meeting, which was followed by a dinner and lively social.

"For the first time since 2005 the Communist League will have branches in two cities," Michel Prairie, organizer of the new Montreal branch, told the meeting.

Two days later, the members who will be setting up the Calgary branch piled into two cars and set out for Alberta. They plan to make several stops on the

way to learn more about politics across Canada. In Manitoba they will meet farmers hit by recent massive flooding and report on their demands for the *Militant*.

In recent years, communist work-

Continued on page 6

### Also Inside

- LA rally marks anniversary of prison hunger strike 2
- Rightist party wins India election by shifting to center 2
- Cuban 5 paintings part of Kansas 'art walk' 4
- Oppose boss assault on Long Island Rail Road workers 5

# Rightist party wins election in India with shift to center

BY EMMA JOHNSON

The Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian People's Party) won India's May general elections by shifting to the center, gaining a firmer foothold in mainstream bourgeois politics. The party promised to deliver economic growth and change amid dissatisfaction with the status quo among both toilers and capitalists.

Bharatiya Janata defeated the Indian National Congress, which has ruled the country in the interest of the Indian bourgeoisie for all but a few years since independence in 1947. The Congress Party was identified with lack of economic development, corruption scandals and embarrassment at the way India is lagging behind China and other Southeast Asian nations.

The Bharatiya Janata Party has pointed to the development in Gujarat, a state of 63 million in the northwest of the country, as an example for all of India. Narendra Modi, the new prime minister, has been chief minister in Gujarat since 2001. He took credit for expansion of industrial production there, an average economic growth of 13.4 percent, and a stable electricity and water supply.

Modi is a longtime leader of the rightist Hindu-nationalist movement in India. In 2002, more than 1,000 people, mainly Muslims, were killed in riots in Gujarat. Modi has generally refused to answer questions about his role, pointing to investigations that clear him of responsibility. In a rare comment last year he said that he regretted Muslims' suffering as he would that of a puppy run over by a car.

During the election campaign Modi stayed away from Hindu-nationalist, sectarian statements. "It is our responsibility to take everyone along. A government cannot be of just a few people," he said after the victory. Echoing the promises of the Congress Party, he said, "Our mantra will be inclusive growth." He has promised a government "dedicated to the poor, to the millions of youth of the country, to the mothers and sisters hankering for respect and honor, to the exploited rural and urban workers."

Modi's shift in discourse is also another sign of the continued erosion of India's caste system, which still places people in hereditary categories of social status: from Brahmins at the top to so-called untouchables at the bottom. Muslims, who make up 13.4 percent of the population, also face discrimination.

Bharatiya Janata's landslide victory — winning 282 out of 543 seats — is the first time since 1984 that a single party commands a majority in Parliament. The Congress Party was reduced to 44 seats, losing 162. Voter turnout was at a historic high of 66 percent, with nearly 100 million first-time voters.

The Congress Party has been dominated by the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty since its founding — Jawaharlal Nehru, the country's first prime minister, was the main leader of the independence struggle along with Mahatma Gandhi. Nehru's daughter, Indira Gandhi, succeeded him. Her children and grandchildren have followed with few interruptions.

## L.A. rally marks anniversary of prison hunger strike



Militant/Wendy Lyons

LOS ANGELES — More than 70 people joined a spirited picket line and rally here July 8 to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the start of a hunger strike by 30,000 California prisoners demanding an end to the state's use of indefinite solitary confinement. The strike ended last September.

Connie Pedroza, whose son Gabriel Reyes was locked in a tiny windowless cell for 15 years, and Sylvia Rogokos, whose brother Frank Reyna was in solitary for 23 years, told the crowd that Reyes and Reyna, both of them participants in the hunger strike, were among those who have been released into the general prison population. They described the impact of being able to touch their relatives for the first time in all those years.

Thousands are still being held in solitary confinement across California. "We have to continue the fight for everyone," Rogokos said. Rallies and vigils were also held in Oakland, San Bernardino, Eureka/Humboldt and Santa Cruz.

— WENDY LYONS

India's population of 1.27 billion people is growing by 1.7 percent a year and is estimated to overtake China as the world's most populous country by 2030. Half are below 25 years old. More than 70 percent live in rural areas, but urbanization is rapid.

India is poorer and less industrialized than many of its East Asian neighbors. A quarter of the population is illiterate, including 35 percent of women. A third lack access to clean water or reliable electric power and the transport infrastructure is decades behind China. In 1960 the Indian economy was 20 percent bigger than China's. Today China's is seven times bigger than India's.

"Bringing electricity, roads and water to each home can't be such a herculean task," Ashish Anant, 24, who works as a management consultant in Delhi, told the *Wall Street Journal*. She voted for Modi, because he's "a doer."

"What matters is business development — just look at how Modi developed Gujarat. They don't even have power cuts. He'll do the same for the country now," Syeed Jaleel, a fruit stand owner in Hyderabad in southern India, told the *New York Times*.

Economic growth in India has slowed from 8.5 percent in 2009 to less than 5 percent in 2012. Consumer prices rose between 9 and 11 percent annually over the last five years. For the 10 million young people who enter the workforce every year it is increasingly difficult to find a job.

President Barack Obama called Modi on May 16 to congratulate him on his victory. Obama invited him to visit the U.S. some time in the future, effectively lifting a nine-year visa ban the State Department issued in 2005 on grounds that Modi had links to the 2002 anti-Muslim riots in Gujarat.

## THE MILITANT

### Protest killings, brutality by police

*The role of police in capitalist society is to protect the interests of the capitalist class and keep working people 'in their place.' From Miami to Chicago to California and the U.K., the 'Militant' covers fights against cop killings, brutality and frame-ups. Don't miss an issue!*



Militant/Naomi Craine  
Miami Beach, Florida, rally demands prosecution of cop who killed Israel Hernández.

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

# Victory against prison ban

Continued from front page

Amendment rights to freedom of speech and freedom of press of prisoners and the *Militant*. The ban also contravened Bureau of Prisons' regulations, the appeal pointed out.

Those rules state the warden "may not reject a publication solely because its content is religious, philosophical, political, social or sexual, or because its content is unpopular or repugnant." Among the other provisions violated was that rejection notices "must contain reference to the specific article(s) or material(s) considered objectionable."

On July 7, Goldstein received notification that prison authorities had reversed their ruling. "We have reviewed your request along with a copy of the publication," wrote Laird in a letter dated June 27 to Goldstein. "I understand this matter has been reevaluated at the institution-level."

"USP Florence has reconsidered the prior rejection of 'The Militant' Vol. 77, No. 47," John Oliver, warden of the high-security prison, wrote to Goldstein June 25. "The publisher may resend."

"This is the latest of several recent victories against attempts to censor the paper in prison," said *Militant* editor Doug Nelson in a July 12 interview. "This was the first time in at least half a century that a federal institution had interfered with delivery of the paper." Over the past year the *Militant* has won administrative appeals against prison censorship in state penal facilities in Washington state and Florida.

"This has to do with defending

workers' rights — in and out of prison — against efforts by the rulers' politicians, courts and jailers to chip away at constitutional protections won in past struggle," Nelson said. "This is also about the right of prisoners to be political, to read what they want and discuss politics, and to resist prison abuses."

The *Militant* has no affiliation to the Revolutionary Communist Party or its paper *Revolution*. Nor was there any mention of either in the issue rejected by the warden at Florence. "But if there were, on what basis can prison authorities ban a paper because it reports on some organization?" Nelson said in an interview after the appeal was filed. "We defend other papers like *Prison Legal News*, *San Francisco Bay View*, *Legal Focus* and *Revolution* in their battles against prison censorship."

"I thank you for taking a stand in this matter along with us. And look forward to the victory that we will have!" the prisoner wrote to the *Militant* in early July, prior to knowing the case had been won.

"That's great news," said Paul Wright, editor of *Prison Legal News*, upon hearing of the latest victory, noting that the monthly magazine also continues to face censorship.

"We get a lot of rejection letters from the maximum security prison at Florence where we have a number of subscribers," said Mary Ratcliff, editor of *Bay View* in a July 12 phone interview. "We need to challenge these rejections" so that authorities know "there will be a reaction other than just from the prisoners."

Among those imprisoned on frame-

## Rally protests clearing of cop in killing of Calif. teen



*Militant*/Carole Lesnick

SANTA ROSA, Calif. — More than 200 people joined a rally and march here July 12 condemning the decision by District Attorney Jill Ravitch not to prosecute the cop who killed 13-year-old Andy Lopez. Sonoma County Sheriff's Deputy Erick Gelhaus shot and killed the eighth grade student Oct. 22, 2013. Lopez was carrying a toy pellet gun when Gelhaus opened fire, shooting him seven times.

Ravitch announced her decision July 7, saying the killing was justified because Gelhaus believed he was in danger.

Thirty-four people have been killed by Sonoma County cops since 1995, according to a November 2013 report in the *Press Democrat*, but prosecutors have never charged any of the cops involved with a crime.

The Lopez family released a statement saying that the DA's "cowardly political decision sends the tacit message that law enforcement officials who use excessive force in Sonoma County will not suffer meaningful consequences and, instead, will enjoy immunity from local prosecution." The family has filed a wrongful death lawsuit against Gelhaus.

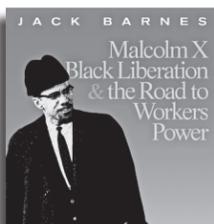
— GERARDO SÁNCHEZ

up charges at the Florence supermax prison is H. Rap Brown, a former leader of the Black Panthers, currently known as Imam Jamil Al-Amin, Ratcliff pointed out. "The notorious indifference at Florence to prisoners' health

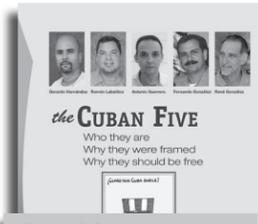
concerns is being exposed now that we learn he has cancer of the plasma cells after reporting incapacitating symptoms for over a year and getting no attention at all," she wrote in a July 14 email to the *Militant*.

The *Bay View* and the *Militant* are part of an ongoing fight in California against attempts by state prison authorities to approve a rule that would ban publications that "indicate an association with groups that are oppositional to authority and society."

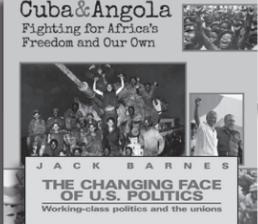
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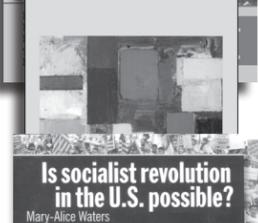
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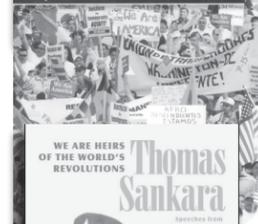
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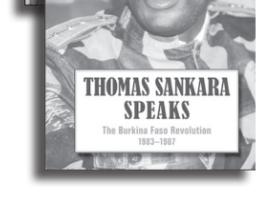
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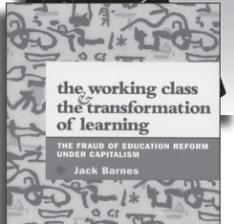
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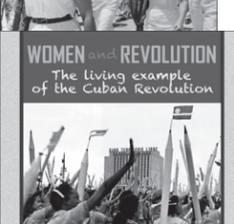
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See distributors on page 8

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# Turkey: Kurds fight for rights

Continued from front page

the Turkish Ottoman rulers, then by British and French imperialists. After World War I the imperialist powers carved their territory up among four countries: Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey.

The largest number of Kurds, some 13 to 15 million, live in Turkey, comprising 17 to 20 percent of the population.

Since 1984, more than 40,000 people have died in the southeastern part of the country, as the Turkish government battled the PKK and repressed any manifestation of Kurdish identity, even referring to Kurds as “mountain” or “Eastern Turks.” During the peak of the war, from 1984 to 1999, the Turkish military and government forcibly evacuated 300 Kurdish villages, forcing out some 378,000 people.

## Impact of gains won by Iraqi Kurds

Advances by Kurds in Iraq have had a big impact in opening space for Kurds in Turkey to organize in defense of their rights. Taking advantage of the no-fly zone Washington imposed on Iraq during the 1991 U.S. invasion, Kurdish Peshmerga guerrillas wrested control of Kurdish areas in northern Iraq. After Saddam Hussein’s overthrow in 2003, Kurds established the Kurdish Regional Government.

Turkish rulers worried that advances by Kurds in Iraq would give a boost to the Kurdish struggle in Turkey. But confronted with the reality of Iraqi Kurdis-

tan they had to adjust.

“The Kurdish zone has blossomed into one of the main buyers of Turkish exports worldwide,” reported *Deutsche Welle* June 30.

*Foreign Affairs* magazine noted in March 2013 that Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan’s economies “are increasingly interdependent. Approximately 80 percent of the goods sold in the KRG are made in Turkey. Some 1,200 Turkish companies are currently operating in northern Iraq (mostly in construction, but also in oil exploration).” Turkey is the main conduit for oil produced in Iraqi areas under Kurdish control.

In 2005 Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan broke a long-standing taboo within the ruling class when he referred to a “Kurdish problem” — merely saying “Kurdish” in public had been unthinkable until then. Erdogan’s Justice and Development Party came to power in 2002.

## Kurdish language restrictions eased

In 2009 his government began making more concessions to Kurdish demands, including easing restrictions on speaking Kurdish, allowing an official Kurdish TV station and opening negotiations with Ocalan.

Working people and supporters of Kurdish rights have taken advantage of the space that has opened up to discuss, organize and press their demands.

In June 2013, thousands of Kurds — joined by Turkish workers, students



Militant/Alyson Kennedy

Kurds often work in the lowest paying jobs, said representatives of pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party. From left, Tony Hunt, worker-correspondent for *Militant*; Hayri Ates and Feyziye Pulat from Peace and Democracy Party; Cafer Alp, Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions; and former Kurdish political prisoner Ferhat Gokmen.

## Who are the Cuban Five?



Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González are Cuban revolutionaries who during the 1990s accepted assignments from the Cuban government to gather information on the 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 attacks, both against targets in Cuba and supporters of the Cuban Revolution in the United States, Puerto Rico and elsewhere.

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

Hernández was also convicted of conspiracy to commit murder, based on the pretext that he bore responsibility for the Cuban government’s 1996 shoot-down of two 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.

René González returned to Cuba in May 2013. Fernando González returned Feb. 28.

## Cuban 5 prison paintings part of Kansas ‘art walk’



Militant/Jacob Perasso

KANSAS CITY, Kansas — Prison paintings by Antonio Guerrero, one of the Cuban Five, were a prominent feature here of the July 4 “First Fridays,” a monthly art walk, when galleries host receptions and open houses. The *Kansas City Star* featured the showing at the Late Show Gallery as its lead article on this month’s event.

The watercolors depict the five Cuban revolutionaries’ time in the “hole” during their first 17 months in prison in Miami. About 100 people visited the gallery during the course of the evening.

“Guerrero created 15 images, accompanied by short texts, that zero in on the indignities of captivity — chains, shakedown, cockroaches — and the strategies evolved to survive them,” the *Star* said. The article noted that *I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived*, a book which reproduces the watercolors, would be available for purchase at the gallery.

Fifteen books about the Cuban Five were bought by exhibit visitors, who also bought two subscriptions to the *Militant*.

— DAVID ROSENFELD

and others — marched in Istanbul to protest the death of Medeni Yildirim, an 18-year-old Kurd shot by police in Diyarbakir, the main city in the Kurdish region of southeastern Turkey. He was killed while protesting against a new military outpost there.

In September 2013 Erdogan announced a “democratization package” that included more concessions to Kurds as well as to Roma and other minorities.

Over the last several decades, Kurds have become a larger part of Turkey’s working class outside Kurdistan, moving to cities across the country, such as Izmir on the western Aegean coast and Istanbul. Many Kurds who live in the southeast migrate seasonally to agricultural areas along the Black Sea, living in tents outside towns and cities during harvest season.

The pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party leaders laid out a picture of what confronts Kurdish workers in Turkey. Kurds mostly work in construction, as street vendors and porters, and as seasonal farmworkers, they said. Few

are miners.

“The main problem is in the workplace,” said Ates. He described how Kurds often work in the most insecure and unsafe jobs under the subcontracting system known as *taseron*, which denies workers health care benefits and pensions.

Many Kurds work as day laborers, with very low wages, Ates said, and many Kurdish children begin working when they are 9 or 10 years old and stop going to school. This contributes to high illiteracy among Kurds.

The children “learn to speak at home in their native tongue, Kurdish,” said Feyziye Pulat, co-chair of the Izmir city branch of the BDP, “but are forced to learn through Turkish once they are in school.” Education in Kurdish is now allowed in private, but not in state primary and secondary schools.

This does not mean the oppression of Kurds within Turkey has ended. The Turkish government still tries to keep the working class divided by criminalizing Kurds and Roma, BDP leaders said. “The authorities do not want conscious Kurdish youth,” said Pulat. As a result she said, the police turn a blind eye to drug dealing in Kurdish neighborhoods in cities like Izmir.

Ferhat Gokmen, 24, a BDP supporter, told the *Militant* at the party’s headquarters that he was recently released from prison after serving five years of a 10-year sentence for throwing stones at an armored police vehicle. While in prison he fought to get access to Kurdish language newspapers.

According to Ates, the majority of the thousands of political prisoners are Kurdish. He also estimated that non-political inmates are disproportionately Kurdish or Roma. According to the Turkish Ministry of Justice website, there were more than 130,000 prisoners in the country as of May 2013.

## Exhibits of paintings by Antonio Guerrero, one of the Cuban Five *I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived*

### Manchester, England June 25-July 19

Mon.-Thurs. 9AM-8PM. Fri.-Sat. 9AM-5PM. Manchester Central Library, St. Peters Square, City Centre, M2 5PD.

### Liverpool, England August 2

Exhibit hours: 11AM-2PM. Public meeting 12PM. The Casa Bar and Venue, 29 Hope St., L1 9BQ. Tel.: (0151) 709-2148.

## ON THE PICKET LINE

### UK glass workers fight for increase in pay

NEWCASTLE, England — Drivers passing by honked in support of the picket line outside Tyneside Safety Glass July 7 where more than 100 members of the Unite union are in the middle of a two-week strike over pay. The workers also held a one-week strike in mid-June.

The company, which makes glass for motor vehicles, is offering a 3 percent pay increase the first year and 2 percent each of the following two years. Initially the company demanded workers agree to work an extra 10 minutes a day to pay for any wage increase.

"I've been here 17 years and never had a pay increase in real terms," said striker Neill Davis, a union representative in the factory.

"Agency workers are still working, they have been told that if they don't show up, they would never be called up for work again," he said, adding that some agency workers have donated to the strike fund.

"They want to manipulate us, they are stubborn and want to break the union because it is strong," said Newrick Dawson on the picket line. He pointed to intimidation by bosses. "One lad here got sacked last week, because he moved his car without permission after a parking space freed up on site."

While *Militant* correspondents were at the picket, union representatives from a local bakery and a college came to offer solidarity. Firemen on a passing fire brigade truck also honked in support.

— Hugo Wils and Dag Tirsén

### New Zealand cleaners protest contracting out jobs

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Cleaners at the exclusive Kings College boarding school here protested July 3, demanding "No to contracting out!" A dozen students came to the school gates to learn about their fight.

Currently 15 members of the Service and Food Workers Union work directly for Kings College, cleaning the housing facilities. Another eight classroom cleaners work for Professional Property and Cleaning Services, a cleaning contractor. School officials decided July 7 to transfer all cleaning jobs to Professional.

Mabel Dawson, who has worked at the school for 10 years, told the *Militant* that many of the cleaners work for both Kings College and Professional. "Workers for Professional are always having problems with their wages and conditions," she said.

Last year the cleaners won a commitment from the school to increase their wages by \$1 an hour to \$18.50 (US\$16.30) in June 2015.

While school officials say the workers will keep these pay rates, they won't guarantee that their hours will be maintained when transferred. Workers at Professional are paid \$14.25 an hour (US\$12.50), Dawson said.

— Annalucia Vermunt

### Court orders Sakuma Farms to rehire, house Wash. farmworkers

MT. VERNON, Wash. — Sakuma Brothers Farms, in the Skagit Valley here 75 miles north of Seattle where farmworkers went on strike last sum-



Militant/Michael Tucker

Cleaners at Kings College boarding school in Auckland, New Zealand, at July 3 protest against the school's decision to contract out the cleaning services of dormitories.

mer, must offer jobs to the former strikers this year, as well as housing for the workers and their families, according to a series of court decisions.

The *Skagit Valley Herald* reported

that farm co-owner Steve Sakuma sent letters to more than 350 workers telling them that they were not eligible for rehire because they had missed too much work last year. The company applied for H-2A visas to bring 428 temporary workers from Mexico to take their place. Union members charged this was retaliation for last year's strikes.

In response, Familias Unidas members sent Sakuma Farms letters from 460 farmworkers stating that they were ready to work.

On May 27, the union won a court injunction ordering the company to rehire the former strikers. A few days later, Sakuma Farms announced it had withdrawn its application for H-2A workers.

In early June, Sakuma Farms agreed to pay \$500,000 to berry pickers who say they were underpaid or denied rest breaks from October 2010 to December 2013. As part of the court-approved settlement the company also agreed to provide workers who are paid piece rates accurate records of what they pick.

In a further blow to the bosses, Skagit County Superior Court Judge Susan Cook ruled June 26 that Sakuma Brothers can't ban other family members from living with farmworkers in company-provided housing.

"The struggle began because of the conditions in the fields. We were working on our knees from 5 a.m. to 3 p.m., even if it was raining and our clothes were soaked," Felimón Pineda, vice president of Familias Unidas, said in a June 28 interview to the Skagit Valley Community College radio station.

"We are fighting not just for us, but for our children. Some people tell me that their children are in school so they will never have to go into the fields," he said. "But if everyone is a doctor or a lawyer or a teacher, who will bring in the harvest?"

"We won't stop until we get a contract," farmworker Benito Lopez told the radio station.

— Clay Dennison

### Oppose boss assault on Long Island Rail Road workers!

*Long Island Rail Road workers have been without a contract since 2010, tied up by red tape under the federal Railway Labor Act. Workers could strike against the Metropolitan Transportation Authority July 20 when a federal "cooling off" period ends. Below is a statement by John Studer and Dan Fein, Socialist Workers Party candidates for governor and lieutenant governor of New York.*

We call on working people to show solidarity with the more than 5,000 Long Island Rail Road workers facing a two-pronged assault from the railroad bosses and state and federal governments.

All working people have a stake in this fight. The rail bosses' push to boost profits comes down hardest on safety — for rail workers, workers who use the trains and those who live and toil along the tracks. In the last year, workers have seen the consequences of the rail bosses' profit drive: deadly train disasters from Lac-Mégantic in Canada to Metro-North in the Bronx.

Workers need to fight for workers' control over our job conditions and build and strengthen unions so we have the power to shut work down when it is unsafe.

The bosses want LIRR workers to accept a two-tier contract, including steep cuts for new hires on wages, health care and pensions. Such a contract puts workers under more pressure, makes working conditions more dangerous, increases divisions among workers and weakens solidarity. Boss after boss has done this over the last 10 years.

In contrast to the bosses' parties, the Democrats and Republicans, with their stacked labor boards and "cooling off" periods, the Socialist Workers Party candidates stand full-square in support of the LIRR workers' fight to push back the bosses' assault.

We would use the governor's office to campaign to broaden support for all those who act to strengthen workers' control over safety. These struggles can open the door to the fight to take political power out of the hands of the propertied rulers and for a workers and farmers government.

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



July 28, 1989

Some 150,000 Soviet coal miners on strike throughout western Siberia were joined by thousands of miners in the Ukraine, the Soviet Union's largest coal region, on July 17.

Mines in more than 70 coalfields in the Ukraine's Donets Basin are shut down as well as most mines in the Kuznetsk Basin in Siberia. The miners protested food shortages and insufficient pay and vacation time. They wanted better medical care, housing, and the right to set production levels and improve working conditions on the job.

Other demands included an end to greater economic benefits awarded to Communist Party officials, a revised constitution allowing for more individual freedoms, repair of environmentally damaged mining areas, and a law strengthening the right of unions to strike.



July 27, 1964

CLARKSDALE, Miss. — The discovery of two more mutilated bodies of Negro citizens of this terror-ridden stronghold of racists has prompted new calls for federal investigations.

Charles Evers, NAACP state field secretary and brother of the murdered Medgar Evers, said 14 Negroes have recently disappeared, been slain, or died mysteriously in rural Mississippi.

"Most of these murders were committed by local police officers," Evers said. He also declared: "The FBI hasn't been able to get enough evidence to put anyone in jail. You really begin to wonder, what good are they? What are they doing here?"

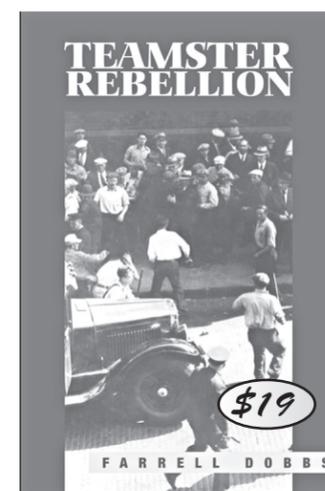
In a letter to FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, Evers expressed extreme shock at his recent statement that "lawlessness in the South is no worse than lawlessness in the North."



July 29, 1939

The anti-war sentiment of the Indian masses is one phase of the struggle for independence from Great Britain. Equally significant is the spread of strikes around economic issues.

On that front, the workers of India are in the vanguard of the independence struggle. In Bombay alone, 50,000 night shift textile workers are on strike. Lockouts and the closing of night shifts are spreading. The textile strike is extending rapidly to Ahmedabad, Sholapur, Cawnpore, Jubbulpore, etc., and may soon assume nationwide proportions involving hundreds of thousands of textile workers. These workers are engaged in conflict not only with the despotic British government, but also with the anti-labor actions of the Popular Front Congress ministries. In many cases the strikes are directed against native Indian capitalists and mill-owners.



PathfinderPress.com

# Canada party

Continued from front page

ers in North America and beyond have found sustained and growing receptivity to communist propaganda among workers and farmers as the propertied rulers have sought to make working people pay for the growing crisis of their capitalist system.

“The league has recruited three new members since last September,” Prairie said. “This augmentation of our forces, which has helped deepen our work in the working class, is a product of the changes in the world, our involvement in workers’ skirmishes and political activity, and the attractiveness of our revolutionary perspective for fighting workers.

“Today we see increasing resistance around the world, from Ukraine to Turkey to South Africa,” he said. “One example here was the victory of port truck drivers in Vancouver.”

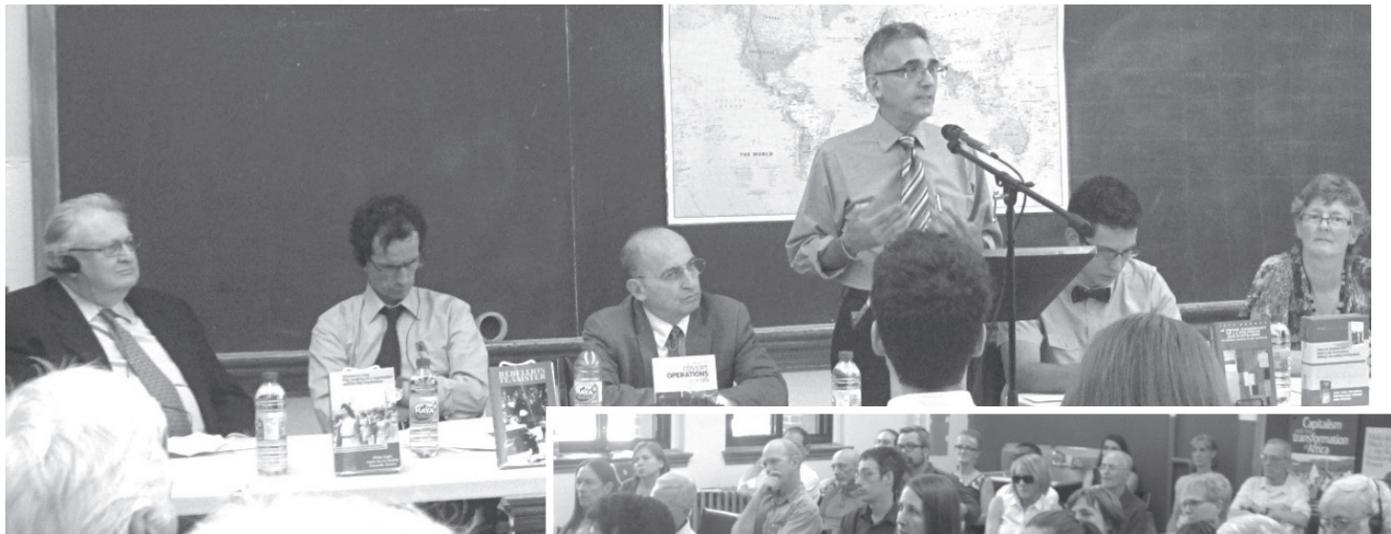
“I’m happy to welcome those of you with us here from Los Angeles, San Francisco, Twin Cities, New York, Omaha, Philadelphia, London, Vancouver and Hamilton, Ontario,” Tessier said.

In addition to members of the Communist League, the Socialist Workers Party in the U.S. and organized supporters of the communist movement, participants included four co-workers of league members, including one who helped arrange a February trip to Mali and Burkina Faso to expand the reach in Africa of books on revolutionary politics published by Pathfinder Press. Other participants had experiences joining with Communist League members participating in strike picket lines and efforts to defend the Cuban Five. Yasemin Aydinoglu, who had joined a *Militant* reporting trip to Turkey a few weeks earlier, came from New York to take part in the celebration.

“The strengthening of the working class across Canada over the past few decades was registered here when workers rejected the reactionary political course of the Parti Quebecois in the April 7 Quebec election,” Prairie explained to the meeting. “This defeat demonstrated how gains steadily made by the working class have broken down the ability of Canadian capital to divide us by using discrimination against French-speaking Quebecois.

“These gains are reinforced by the growing integration of the fighting capacity of immigrant workers into the battles of the working class,” he said.

Prairie pointed to a message to the meeting from Robin St-Pierre, president of the Confederation of National Trade Unions at Hotel des Seigneurs. League members have built support for their



Militant photos by Guy Tremblay

July 12 meeting in Montreal celebrates expansion of Communist League in Canada with establishment of two new branches. Above, from left, Norton Sandler, Socialist Workers Party National Committee; Frank Forrestal, who took part in recent *Militant* reporting trips to Ukraine and Turkey; Jonathan Silberman, representing Communist League in U.K.; Michel Prairie, organizer Montreal branch; Philippe Tessier, chair; Katy LeRougetel, organizer Calgary branch. Inset, meeting participants.



fight to defend their jobs and conditions since October 2012, bringing workers and *Militant* readers to their picket lines and taking word of the fight to workers’ doorsteps as they introduced them to the paper. “It has been our pleasure to work with you,” St-Pierre wrote.

“We were able to work with the union to organize a showing of the prison paintings of Cuban Five prisoner Antonio Guerrero at one of their meetings,” Prairie said.

“We’ve always had the perspective of building a party across Canada to join the vanguard of the working class in the fight for power, for a workers and farmers government in Ottawa.

“We see these as two new branches — including here in Montreal, where we’ve had a unit for the last six years,” he said, “because we will have to involve all our members thinking from a new start about how we can take the *Militant* newspaper door to door in working-class neighborhoods in our regions, build fractions in plants and join in common activities with our co-workers, to defend workers on the job and to participate in other labor and political activities in our areas. And to expand our participation along with the SWP and other Communist Leagues in working-class fights and political developments around the world.”

## Openings in Ukraine, Turkey

“Not too many years ago it would have been unthinkable for the communist movement to send a *Militant* reporting team to Ukraine,” said Frank Forrestal, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of Minnesota, who has participated in two *Militant* reporting teams to Ukraine this year, as well as to Turkey in June.

“On both trips, everywhere we went, from the west to the east of Ukraine, workers wanted to talk to us,” he said. “They described their battles to defend their country and their jobs, wages and working conditions. We told them what workers in the U.S. are going through today as the bosses try to squeeze more and more out of us. They agreed that we face the same questions, the same challenges, the same need to find a road to fight for workers power.”

“On the second trip we went to the exclusion zone in Chernobyl, the site of the nuclear disaster in 1986,” Forrestal said. “We contrasted the response of the Stalinist rulers, who covered up the scope of the disaster with disdain for the consequences to the lives and conditions of working people, with the internationalist course of the Cuban Revolution, which extended free medical care to more than 25,000 victims.”

Forrestal also joined a *Militant* reporting team to the Soma region in Turkey where 300 miners were killed in a May 13 fire at the Eyzek mine.

“We were warned that the reception might not be so hot for workers from the United States,” Forrestal said. “But the opposite was the case. The miners related to us just like workers in Ukraine, as fellow fighters facing the same obstacles, looking for a way forward. And they want to keep in touch.”

## Turning point

“This is not a routine decision,” Norton Sandler said, speaking for the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party. “It marks an important turning point for our entire international movement.”

“The capitalists and their banks and corporations in the U.S., from General Motors to General Electric, are saddled with massive debt,” he said. “They have no answer to the crisis of their system. They have tried every kind of stimulus, cut interest rates effectively below zero, without any growth. They will keep trying to push wages down, to boost productivity while tossing safety aside, to use more temps, to keep grinding it out of our class, so that, over time and off our backs they can grow out from under the debt.

“There is one crucial calculation they make in this: that the working class will remain passive,” he said. “But they have a problem. The evidence is that the working class is mounting increasing resistance. The skirmishes we see are not

necessarily big or long-lasting. We don’t win often today. But the fights show that something has shifted.

“Since 1978 our world movement has concentrated our cadres in basic industry,” he said. “Today it is clearer than ever — the future of all politics is in the working class.

“We find more workers looking to talk politics, to act in solidarity with anyone who resists,” Sandler said. “Some see that what we are saying and doing is worth devoting your life to.”

“One of the reasons there are members of SWP branches in Omaha, San Francisco, Twin Cities and Seattle here today is because the establishment of a branch of the Communist League in Calgary opens opportunities for more practical collaboration,” he said. “We can work together on political questions like the ramifications for workers of the growing extraction of shale and tar sand oil, fracking and the spread of rail disasters, as the bosses rush to profit from the energy boom. We can be involved together in the struggles of working farmers, of meatpackers.

“There will be more opportunities to collaborate with supporters of the communist movement in Vancouver, members of the Print Project who work on the production of Pathfinder books.”

“What comrades are saying about the Montreal branch being a new branch is very important,” Sandler said. “I’m glad SWP comrades came from Philadelphia, because it expands the number of our branches that can work with and learn from collaborating with you.

“Your move will help change our movement in North America,” he said. “It will help us become more proletarian, more capable of responding to working class resistance.”

## World smaller, more homogeneous

“One thing that struck me when I was listening to Frank Forrestal is how small the world is becoming,” said Jonathan Silberman, speaking for the Political Committee of the Communist League of the United Kingdom. “If you look at the distances across Europe, from Ireland to Ukraine to Turkey, it is a shorter distance than between Montreal and Calgary.”

From Ukraine to Turkey to Canada and the U.K., workers face the same challenges, the same need to find a common line of march against capitalist oppression and exploitation and towards

Continued on page 9



Militant/Katy LeRougetel

Workers on strike against Hotel des Seigneurs view watercolors by Antonio Guerrero, one of Cuban Five, after March 10 union meeting. “We see more workers interested in discussing politics and acting in solidarity with those who resist,” Socialist Workers Party National Committee member Norton Sandler said at July 12 meeting celebrating expansion of Communist League.

# Socialist Workers Party holds Convention

## Sets course to deepen involvement in struggles and propaganda activity in working class

BY DOUG NELSON

OBERLIN, Ohio — The worldwide slowdown of capitalist production and trade over the last half decade has spurred the propertied rulers to intensify their offensive to whittle away at the living standards, job conditions, rights and expectations of working people. This is generating stirrings of labor resistance and a widening and sustained receptivity to communist politics not seen in decades, creating greater openings and responsibilities for proletarian parties.

Delegates to the Socialist Workers Party's 47th Constitutional Convention here June 22-24 discussed and approved a political course to meet these opportunities, adopting a National Committee platform and reports by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes and longtime party leader Mary-Alice Waters. Seated as observers were nondelegate party members — including three new recruits — and workers interested in learning more about the communist movement.

Discussion centered on the need and possibility to expand readership of the socialist press in the working class, as communist workers step up involvement in labor fights, social struggles and political activity alongside other militant workers. Delegates charted a course to draw wider milieus of working people into activities to free the Cuban Five and defend Cuba's socialist revolution; give more leadership attention to organizing party members to work together in industrial workplaces and carry out political work on and off the job with co-workers; and recruit to the SWP.

In the weeks since the conference, socialist workers have joined and brought the *Militant* to a range of labor battles and other working-class political actions. This includes a number of strike pickets around the country, from Teamsters at the Hinckley Springs plant in Chicago to port truck drivers in Los Angeles; a courthouse protest against a union-busting frame-up of school bus drivers in Boston; actions against brutality and killings by cops from Thomaston, Georgia, to Miami, Florida; demonstrations against deportations in Texas and California; a radio-program discussion with farmworkers fighting

for a union in Washington state; a rally outside the Hobby Lobby store in Burbank, California, against the Supreme Court's attack on workers and women's rights under cover of protecting bosses' "religious freedom."

"Like coming out of a long tunnel, the decades-long political retreat of the working class is more and more behind us," said Jack Barnes. Convention delegates concluded that building a workers' party today requires branches of a different kind, which above all are organized and led to respond in a timely way to struggles and political developments in the working class.

"Party branches can't organize their weekly work based on a list drawn up in advance, Barnes said. "We need to be driven more by what we see and learn from others is happening around us. Our peripheral vision is improving."

The party's regular sales of the *Militant* and books on workers' doorsteps over the recent period has been, and will continue to be, the bedrock of this perspective. "We have built a large periphery of readers," said Barnes, "but we have only started to focus on getting to know them," to have the discussions that will lead us to more workers, more fights and other activity we can join with them.

Branches need the kind of local headquarters that facilitate this outward-turned course, said Barnes. We need professional workers' halls that we can organize from, proudly bring others to and use as headquarters for socialist election campaigns that bring the SWP's revolutionary program into the discussions taking place among working people. But meetings and work in these halls must above all serve the purpose of getting out and joining political actions and activity with other working people.

### Capitalists 'new normal' perspective

The bosses have no solution to the persisting slowdown in capitalist production and trade. The rulers of the U.S. and other imperialist powers responded to the 2007 world financial crisis — which laid bare massive burdens of debt — with monetary and fiscal schemes that staved off a sharper decline in the



Militant/Betsey Stone

Delegates and guests at Socialist Workers Party 47th Constitutional Convention, June 24.

global banking system and its economic, social and political consequences.

But the debt balloons and their dead hand on capitalist growth haven't gone away. More and more voices of the U.S. rulers, Barnes said — from former top Clinton and Obama economic officials such as Lawrence Summers, to some of the country's top bond dealers — are recognizing that the capitalists are in for a long, drawn-out period of economic stagnation, what some of them call "the new normal." In face of this situation, their aim is to gradually deleverage and retire this debt, eventually laying the basis for a new period of growth. Working people, meanwhile, are expected to accept years and years of downward pressure on our living standards and persistent joblessness that amounts to a relative shrinking of the working class.

Absent from the rulers' projections, however, is a rise of labor resistance to these grinding conditions, resistance that would disrupt both the economic and political prospects of the bosses and their government. Communist workers, on the other hand, consider such class battles inevitable, with no predictions on timing or scope. What the communist movement does today will determine whether it's politically prepared as such mass struggles erupt.

"The moral and political contest between the working class and the propertied rulers grows out of tendencies inherent in capitalism that generate economic and social crises," said Barnes. "The future is in the hands of the working class, not the capitalists, not their banks or their Federal Reserve."

Under today's conditions, the U.S. rulers are not looking to launch a far-reaching assault on workers' rights or preparing for major ground wars like WWI, WWII, Korea or Vietnam, said Barnes. No electable politicians are calling for a frontal assault on Social Security, Medicare, or other social benefits, or even dismantling the Affordable Care Act. And while the bosses' government is cranking up the pressure on immigrant workers, this anti-working-class course is not part of moves toward mass deportations; instead, the aim of the employing class

is to superexploit foreign-born labor in order to push down the wages and job conditions of all workers.

### Openings in 'shrinking world'

Among the most striking features of the current period is the wide-open political space for working people to discuss, organize and act in their class interests. And this is true not just in North America, but across much of the world — from Ukraine to Turkey; from Egypt to Iran; across Latin America and throughout Asia.

"We live in a shrinking world," said Barnes. "Wherever we go, we find workers face similar questions and similar tasks to defend and advance their class interests and those of their oppressed and exploited allies."

Working people wherever we go are  
**Continued on page 9**



Militant/Sara Lohman

Convention discussed openings to join labor resistance and social struggles with fellow workers. Above, Dan Fein, second from right, Socialist Workers candidate for lieutenant governor in New York, talks with members of Communications Workers of America at May Day rally in Manhattan's Union Square. Inset, Frank Forrestal, center, SWP candidate for Minnesota governor, walks picket line with port truckers in Wilmington, California, April 28.



### Socialist Workers Party National Committee

Elected by 47th Convention

#### Regular Members

Jack Barnes  
Róger Calero  
Steve Clark  
Tom Fiske  
Frank Forrestal  
Ellie García  
James Harris  
Alyson Kennedy  
Paul Mailhot  
Mary Martin  
Omari Musa  
Dave Prince  
Norton Sandler  
Mary-Alice Waters  
Rebecca Williamson

#### Alternate Members

1. Dennis Richter
2. Doug Nelson
3. John Studer
4. Tony Lane
5. Maggie Trowe
6. Naomi Craine
7. Tom Baumann
8. Santos Ramos

# 1905 revolution in Russia drew toilers of the East into politics

Below is an excerpt from *The Balkan Wars 1912-13* by Leon Trotsky, a leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution. As a leader of the St. Petersburg Soviet during the failed 1905 revolution, Trotsky was arrested and sentenced to exile in Siberia. He escaped to Vienna, where he began publishing the newspaper *Pravda* (Truth) and wrote for other papers. This book contains articles written from 1908-1913 describing the political ferment sweeping the East, the maneuvering of the Great Powers of Europe, and the political aims of the ruling classes in Serbia, Romania and Turkey in the years preceding World War I. The piece is from articles printed in *Pravda* in December 1908 and *Kievskaya Mysl*, the largest circulation daily in Kiev, Ukraine, in January 1909. Copyright © 1980 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



When army officers revolted in July 1908, Turkish Sultan Abdul Hamid, seated, had no choice but to make concessions, agreeing to a constitution and elections. "The country at once sprang to life," Trotsky writes. "The young proletariat of Turkey woke up as though at a thunderclap."

a revolutionary struggle has begun which with varying success has already lasted for over two years. In China, in India, everywhere, the masses are rising against their own tyrants and against the European despoilers (capitalists, missionaries, etc.) who not only exploit the European proletariat but also plunder the peoples of Asia. The most recent echo of the Russian revolution is the revolution that occurred in Turkey this summer.

Turkey is situated in the Balkan Peninsula, in the southeastern corner of Europe. From time immemorial this country has been a byword for stagnation, lifelessness, and despotism. The sultan in Constantinople was in no way inferior to his brother in St. Petersburg, and in many ways surpassed him. Peoples of different race or religion (Slavs, Armenians, Greeks) were subjected to diabolical persecutions. But the sultan's own people — the Muslim Turks — did not live happily, either. The peasants were enslaved to the officials and the landlords, and were poor, ignorant, and prey to superstition. There were few schools. The setting up of factories was hindered in all sorts of ways by the sultan's government, owing to its fear of the development of a proletariat. There were spies everywhere. The embezzlement and waste indulged in by the sultan's bureaucracy (just like the tsar's) was boundless. All this led to the com-

plete decay of the state. The capitalist governments of the European countries were gathering round like so many hungry dogs, each trying to bite off a bit for itself. And Sultan Abdul Hamid went on incurring debts, the repayment of which was bleeding his subjects white. The people's discontent had been accumulating for a long time, and under the impact of the events in Russia and Persia it has now broken out into the open.

In Russia it was the proletariat that came forward as the chief fighter for the revolution. In Turkey, however, as I have already mentioned, industry exists only in embryonic form, and so the proletariat is small in numbers and weak. The most highly educated elements of the Turkish intelligentsia, such as teachers, engineers, and so on, being able to find little scope for their talents in schools or factories, have become army officers. Many of them have studied in West European countries and become familiar with the regime that exists there — only, on their return home, to come up against the ignorance and poverty of the Turkish soldier and the debased conditions of the state. This has filled them with bitterness; and so the officer corps has become the focus of discontent and rebelliousness.

When the revolt broke out in July of this year [1908], the sultan found himself at once practically without an army. Corps after corps went over to

the revolution. The ignorant soldiers certainly did not understand the aims of the movement, but discontent with their conditions caused them to follow their officers, who called peremptorily for a constitution, threatened that otherwise they would overthrow the sultan. There was nothing left for Abdul Hamid but to resort to concessions: He "granted" a constitution (sultans always make such "grants" when there is a knife at their throat), summoned to power a ministry of liberals, and took steps to hold elections for parliament.

The country at once sprang to life. An endless round of meetings began. Many new newspapers appeared. The young proletariat of Turkey woke up as though at a thunderclap. Strikes broke out. Workers' organizations arose. In Smyrna the first socialist newspaper began publication.

Now, as I write these lines, the Turkish parliament has already met, with a majority of Young Turk reformers. The near future will show what is to be the fate of this Turkish "Duma." ...

What are we going to witness in Turkey in the immediate future? It is futile to make guesses about this. One thing only is clear — namely, that victory for the revolution will mean a democratic Turkey; a democratic Turkey will provide the basis for a Balkan federation, and a Balkan federation will once for all clear the "hornets' nest" of the Near East of the capitalist and dynastic intrigues which hang like black thunderclouds not only over the unhappy peninsula but over all Europe.

Restoration of the sultan's despotism would mean the end of Turkey and a free-for-all to grab pieces of the carcass of the Turkish state. A victory for Turkish democracy, on the other hand, would mean peace.

The drama still lies ahead! And while behind the irreproachably welcoming smile of European diplomacy directed at the Turkish parliament are concealed the predatory jaws of capitalist imperialism, ready to utilize Turkey's first internal difficulties in order to tear her to pieces, European democracy stands with all the weight of its sympathy and support on the side of the *new* Turkey — the Turkey that does not yet exist, that is only about to be born.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY LEON TROTSKY

The Russian revolution [of 1905] has called forth echoes in places far from the borders of Russia. In Western Europe it has produced a stormy upsurge of the proletarian movement. At the same time it has drawn the peoples of Asia into political life. In Persia, bordering on Caucasia and under the direct influence of the events there,

*July* BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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# Socialist Workers Party Convention

Continued from page 7

interested in the revolutionary working-class politics presented week in and week out in the *Militant*, as well as in books we sell to workers in the U.S., like *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes; the four-volume series by Farrell Dobbs on the Teamster struggles of the 1930s in the Midwest; *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions* by Barnes; *Lenin's Final Fight* and others.

Coming right out of the conference, a team of worker-correspondents for the *Militant* left for a reporting trip to Turkey to talk with miners about their struggles following the profit-driven disaster that killed more than 300 coal miners at the mine in Soma in May, and to learn more about the conditions and fights of other workers and rural toilers. The coming months will bring socialist workers to Panama for a conference on the place of people of Chinese origin in political and class battles around the world; to Bangladesh for an international “Free the Cuban Five” conference; a third reporting trip to Ukraine; and elsewhere.

“We’ll be going to more and more places, taking on whatever this entails, as we respond to greater openings to build the world communist movement,” said Barnes.

## Defense of Cuban Five

Over the last year, the majority of party branches across the country have worked with others in their area to organize and build political events to expand knowledge about and support for the fight to free the Cuban Five among workers and young people. Above all, we’ve made use of showings of prison paintings by Antonio Guerrero, one of the Five, Mary-Alice Waters pointed out in her report, “Communist Work in Defense of the Cuban Revolution and the Cuban Five.” Showings of Guerrero’s paintings have been displayed with descriptions of each by Guerrero and his imprisoned comrades together with other information on the Five in a variety of venues, including art galleries, community centers, libraries and churches.

But, Waters said, still ahead of us is organizing the kind of events that really tap into the opportunities to win support for this campaign among working people — to take this fight deeper into the working class where a “jury of millions” can be built. That’s where we find those who are attracted to the Five as revolutionary fighters, not suffering victims. That’s where we can point to the Five as examples to be emulated, as the kind of men and women it takes to make a socialist revolution. And learning about the Cuban Five and why they “represent the honor of several generations of Cubans born during the revolution” — as Cuban Interests Section Chief José Ramón Cabañas put it during the “5 Days for the Cuban 5” in Washington, D.C., last month — is the best way today for workers to learn about and come to support the Cuban Revolution.

The convention took place on the heels of a three-day Active Workers Conference and built on the political themes discussed there. Sponsored by the

SWP, the conference drew together 320 workers and young people active or interested in the communist movement. (See “Active Workers Conference Discusses Opportunities to Build Proletarian Parties Today” in the July 14 issue of the *Militant*.)

## Forward to ‘100th anniversary’

“The conference was a good start to the next five years of political work leading to the 100th anniversary of the founding of the communist movement in the United States,” said Barnes in his opening remarks to the convention. He was referring to the 1919 founding of the Communist Party in the U.S., a watershed in the organization of the vanguard of the working class that stood on the shoulders of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia — the first time workers and farmers conquered and held political power.

The year 1919 marks the birth of the struggle for a proletarian party with a nose for power in the United States from which the Socialist Workers Party traces its unbroken political continuity — a rich 95-year history in the class struggle fighting to build a workers’ party whose political course and revolutionary-centralist methods of organization are modeled on the Bolshevik Party under the leadership of V.I. Lenin.

In face of the conservatizing pressures leading up to World War II in 1939-40, for example, the leadership of the SWP and world communist movement organized a political fight against the rise of a petty-bourgeois opposition that abandoned defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist threat, rejected revolutionary centralist organizational principles and sought to rationalize this bending to Washington’s war drive by revising the programmatic foundations of Marxism. The lessons of this political battle are recorded in *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party* by James P. Cannon and *In Defense of Marxism* by Leon Trotsky.

In response to a new wave of labor resistance and working-class combativity in the U.S. following the 1974-75 world capitalist downturn, the SWP National Committee led a political campaign in the latter 1970s to again bring the class composition, milieu, norms and axis of work of the party into closer accord with its proletarian program and strategy. The party organized a “turn to the industrial unions,” getting the overwhelming majority of its members and leadership working together in jobs in basic industry. This proletarian turn rooted the party’s political outlook and activity in the experiences, discussions and struggles of workers in the factories, mines and mills — who are not only the central target of the bosses’ assaults, but also the most powerful battalions of the working class when organized and mobilized into action. The political conclusions and decisions from those experiences are described in the book *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*, and remain the heart of the party’s revolutionary, working-class course today.

“In the course of the convention, the layers of the party cadre who’ve led that turn took command of the tone and character of convention discussion and put their stamp on its outcome,” said Barnes. With considerable weight toward the worker-Bolsheviks who continue to lead this proletarian course, delegates from 14 party branches elected a new National Committee.

# Expansion of Communist League in Canada

Continued from page 6

workers power, he said.

“We have two branches in the U.K., and it’s a big help in looking at politics as a nationwide party. That’s a lot harder if you are only in one city. The lessons of your experiences will be a big help to us,” Silberman said. “Like you, we are working to transform our branches, deepening participation in working-class politics and stirrings of resistance, in defense of the Cuban Revolution and the Five.”

“The same time that we begin setting up in Calgary, one of the members of the Communist League, Bev Bernardo, will be leaving to join Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press, at the International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas conference being held in Panama,” said Katy LeRougetel, organizer of the new Calgary branch.

“We know that the revolutionary party starts with the world. It’s a perfect way for the new branches of the Communist League to get going. Tonight everyone here can join in,” she said, launching a fund appeal to help cover the expanding work of the league. Pledges and collections totaled \$4,270.

The meeting was followed by a delicious dinner, organized by supporters of the league. It was an opportunity to relax and continue the political discussion.

“This was a really good meeting,” Amélie Lantheigne, a former co-worker of LeRougetel at Quebecor printshop, told the *Militant*. “Since Katy is leaving to build the Calgary branch, I made sure I went around and got the phone number of everyone in the new Montreal branch. I want to make sure we keep working together.”

# South Africa strike

Continued from front page

use of labor brokers and a R1,000 (\$93) monthly housing allowance. The Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of Southern Africa, the main bosses association, offered a 10 percent raise the first year, 9.5 percent the second year and 9 percent the third year, but refused to discuss getting rid of the labor brokers or providing a housing allowance.

Workers hired by brokers earn lower wages and have no medical insurance or pensions, even though they work the same jobs with the same hours and conditions as workers employed directly by the struck companies.

Working people have been hit hard by rising prices. The annual inflation rate rose to 6.6 percent in May, the highest rate since July 2009. Food prices are rising 9 percent per year and gas prices 14 percent.

In a press release July 13, Metalworkers General Secretary Irvin Jim said the union was “ready to end the current strike with a one-year agreement and a 10 percent wage increase.” But the steel and engineering bosses refused to budge from their insistence on a three-year contract or increase their wage offer. “We met the bosses this morning and rejected their final offer,” Mphumzi Maqungo, national treasurer of the Metalworkers union, told the *Militant* by phone from Johannesburg July 14.

Direct talks between the bosses and the union broke down July 14. The following day, Jim said that to demand an immediate “ban” of labor brokers may be “too rough,” according to *Business Day Live*. “Here we are saying to them, we are willing to give you a year to phase it out if you are under pressure.”

The union and the bosses will continue talks sponsored by the Metal and Engineering Industries Bargaining Council, a government labor board.

The Metalworkers strike follows the victory scored by platinum miners organized by the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union in a five-month battle against the three largest platinum companies in the world. Over 70,000 miners struck Jan. 23, returning to work June 25, after approving a three-year contract that included 20 percent annual wage increases.

# Texas immigration

Continued from front page

“Politicians tell us that this crisis is about ‘security,’ but if it is, it’s about the security of the tens of thousands who are fleeing poverty and violence in their own countries,” Juan Antonio Vargas told the crowd. “The most cynical of the politicians demand more law enforcement from Obama.” Vargas, a Filipino, is a former reporter for the *Washington Post* who received widespread publicity in 2011 when he revealed in the *New York Times* magazine the he is an undocumented immigrant.

Vargas noted that Obama “is responsible for the deportation of more than 2 million people since he came to office five years ago.”

U.S. Customs and Border Protection says it detained 47,017 unaccompanied children from October 2013 through May 2014, a 92 percent increase from the same period the year before. Most are children from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. In 2008, then President George W. Bush signed a law that gives children that are not from Canada or Mexico the right to a court hearing.

Other speakers at the rally, which was called by the Minority Affairs Council and the United We Dream organization, told of their own experiences crossing the border into the U.S. and the violence, dangers and abuse they faced.

“People are coming here for the same reasons they always come,” Hector Carrasco, told the *Militant*. “Some are trying to reunite their families, all of them are trying to escape poverty and violence. Some feel it’s easier to get jobs now.”

“The Socialist Workers Party calls on Washington to stop the deportations and end the silent raids on workers in factories through E-Verify and I-9 document checks,” said a statement distributed at the rally by supporters of Mike Fitzsimmons, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Texas governor.

Lara Canales and José Acosta contributed to this article.