

Drive to win readers builds momentum in home stretch

BY LOUIS MARTIN
The international campaign to win thousands of subscribers to the *Militant* has gained momentum the last three weeks, with more than 1,000 subscriptions sold—444 in the last week alone!

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Fall 'Militant' subscription campaign				
Oct. 13 - Dec. 16 (week 8)				
Country	quota	sold	%	3,500
UNITED STATES				
Claysville, PA ⁺	10	13	130%	Should be 2,676
Redding, CA ⁺	10	12	120%	
Albuquerque, NM	3	3	100%	
Greensboro [†]	5	5	100%	
Longview, WA ⁺	12	12	100%	
Muscoda, WI	5	5	100%	
Yakima, WA ⁺	15	14	93%	
Seattle	210	180	86%	
Houston	150	126	84%	
Denver [*]	6	5	83%	
Twin Cities	175	145	83%	
Washington	110	91	83%	
New York	450	371	82%	
Miami	120	98	82%	
Chicago	230	178	77%	
Des Moines	180	138	77%	
Los Angeles	200	153	77%	
Rio Grande V. TX [†]	25	19	76%	
Boston	110	82	75%	
Omaha, NE [†]	80	57	71%	
Lincoln, NE	35	23	66%	
San Francisco	225	147	65%	
Atlanta	185	112	61%	
New Orleans [†]	5	3	60%	
Philadelphia	150	79	53%	
Tampa [†]	15	6	40%	
Drayton, ND [†]	3	1	33%	
Total U.S.	2724	2078	76%	
Prisoners ^{†**}	13	14	108%	
UNITED KINGDOM				
Manchester	80	83	104%	
London	200	193	97%	
UK Total	280	276	99%	
CANADA				
Montreal	133	120	90%	
Vancouver	12	9	75%	
Canada Total [*]	145	129	89%	
NEW ZEALAND				
	130	98	75%	
AUSTRALIA				
	90	81	90%	
Total	3382	2676	76%	
Should be	3500	3111	89%	
†New to scoreboard *Raised goal				

Egyptian president moves to restrict political rights

Amid mass protests, workers defend space to organize



AP Photo/Petr David Josek

Dec. 9 protest at presidential palace in Cairo against draft constitution pushed by Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi that restricts democratic rights, unions and freedom of worship.

BY SETH GALINSKY

Since Nov. 22 when Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi decreed that all his decisions are “final and binding” until a new constitution is passed, hundreds of thousands of opponents and supporters of his government have joined competing demonstrations across the country.

Morsi, a leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, announced Dec. 9 that a referendum on a new constitution—which codifies restrictions on democratic rights, unions and freedom of worship—will take place Dec. 15, pushing aside calls to postpone the vote from a range of bourgeois opposition parties and many trade unions. Morsi said he had authorized the army to arrest civilians to maintain “public order” until the vote is over.

Killing of Florida teen spurs protests demanding repeal of pro-vigilante law

BY NAOMI CRAINE

MIAMI—The killing of 17-year-old Jordan Davis in Jacksonville has renewed debate over the state’s Stand Your Ground law. Hundreds of people marched there Dec. 8 calling for the repeal of the pro-vigilante legislation.

The law became a target of protests earlier this year when local officials cited it as the grounds for not charging George Zimmerman with the killing of Trayvon Martin in Sanford. Zimmerman was eventually charged with second-degree murder after nearly two months of protests in Florida and nationwide.

Davis and three friends, all African-

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Morsi also modified the decree that his decisions are law and cannot be appealed in court, saying that this only applies to “constitutional declarations.” A few days earlier he called for a dialogue with opposition leaders.

Morsi was elected in June following the military’s removal of dictator Hosni Mubarak in February 2011 after several weeks of protests by hundreds of thousands, inspired by the movement that overthrew the Ben Ali dictatorship in Tunisia. Protests

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New Pentagon spy unit, drones part of shift in long-term US military strategy

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The Pentagon’s establishment of the Defense Clandestine Service, a spy unit within the Defense Intelligence Agency, is part of broader changes long under way in the U.S. military designed to more effectively confront the type of conflicts the U.S. rulers expect in a world marked by increasing economic and social crises.

The move reflects the growing weight of U.S. spy operations at home and abroad, the convergence in the work of civilian and military intelligence branches and their increasing emphasis on hunter-killer operations, which include the Barack Obama administration’s aerial drone assassination program.

The Pentagon plans to send hundreds of additional operatives abroad through the Defense Clandestine Service. The context is the U.S. military’s shift to the Pacific and Asia to counter the economic and military rise of China, as well as Washington’s operations aimed at forcing the Iranian government to abandon its nuclear program and at weakening

Gov’t jobless stats increasingly out of step with workers’ reality



While statistical measurements of “productivity” and workers’ “real wages” should be taken with a grain of salt, graph illustrates a growing gap between the two, as pressure on profit rates spur bosses to squeeze more from labor while driving down the costs.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Official unemployment figures declined slightly to 7.7 percent in November from 7.9 percent in October. But these numbers cranked out by the U.S. Labor Department have no correlation to the actual jobs crisis facing working people—more than 23 million can’t get a full-time job, while many employed face

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S. African farmworkers' strikes end, but wages fight is not over

BY SETH GALINSKY

Recent strikes by farmworkers throughout South Africa's Western Cape have ended for now. While workers didn't win the wage increase they were fighting for, they were not defeated and have gained experience for the inevitable battles ahead.

Thousands of farmworkers across the Western Cape went on strike Nov. 5 demanding an increase to 150 rand a day (\$17) from the current official minimum of 69 rand. Most strikers went back to work by Nov. 19 after government officials promised to review the minimum wage by Dec. 4, and officials of the pro-government Congress of South African Trade Unions and its affiliate the Food and Allied Workers Union urged workers to end the walkout, saying they would back a new strike if the demands were not met.

Within days after this first round of strikes subsided, the Ministry of Labor rapidly reneged on its promise, saying no review was possible until next year. Capitalist farm owners, however, immediately began beefing up private security on their farms and intimidating workers.

"One thousand workers were fired after the strike," said Owen Maromo, an organizer with People Against Suffering, Oppression and Poverty, which works with immigrant workers.

Phumla Tsheko, 21, a mushroom worker, is one of those fired. "The boss said I was the one doing the talking," she told the *Militant* by phone.

Tsheko said she was paid only 60 rand a day, despite the official minimum. She doesn't believe the farm owners who say

they can't afford to pay 150 rand.

"If you can afford to farm, you can afford to pay us," she said. Referring to strikes by tens of thousands of mine-workers from August to November, Tsheko added, "The mineworkers gave the farmworkers pride, to say that we are human beings."

On Dec. 4—with no raise in their wages—thousands of workers went on strike again. But that evening COSATU Western Cape Provincial Secretary Tony Ehrenreich announced the strike was over. He said that farm owners had agreed to negotiate, farm by farm, and that the more profitable farms should pay higher wages and share profits. Workers then returned to the fields.

"There are good farmers and bad farmers," Food and Allied Workers Union organizer Sandile Keni said in a phone interview. "The farmers who cannot afford to pay more must prove it to us."

"This is not a victory for farmworkers," Carmen Louw, a spokesperson for Women on Farms Project in the Western Cape, told the *Militant*. "This agreement is what the farmers have been suggesting all along."

Louw explained some of the challenges to organizing farmworkers, less than 10 percent of whom belong to any union.

"It is difficult because of the spatial reality. Farms are far apart, often on gravel roads. You need four-wheel drive all terrain vehicles to get there," she said. "The farmers' security guards try to intimidate us. They don't allow us on the



Reuters/Mike Hutchings

Farmworkers on strike Dec. 4 march for doubling of minimum wage to 150 rand (\$17) a day in Franschhoek, near Cape Town, South Africa. "If you can afford to farm, you can afford to pay us," commented mushroom worker Phumla Tsheko, one of workers fired during strike.

farms to talk to the workers, even though many workers live there. And the police threaten to arrest us, sometimes detain us for 48 hours."

Louw and other farmworker organizers told the *Militant* this harassment stepped up after the first strike. Some workers arrested on strike-related charges are still in jail.

"While native-born South African farmworkers arrested during the strike have mostly been released," Maromo

said, "in De Doorns there are still 19 workers from Zimbabwe and 15 from Lesotho in jail. Many other foreign-born workers from Zimbabwe were already deported."

Even though their demands were not met, Maromo said, "I believe the farmworkers learned something, but we need some people that can lead a strike properly." He said some farmworkers were discussing how to prepare for another strike in January.

Anti-abortion laws struck down by Oklahoma Supreme Court

BY JOHN STUDER

Supporters of women's rights won a victory in Oklahoma Dec. 4, when the state Supreme Court struck down two recently enacted legal restrictions to abortion as unconstitutional.

House Bill 2780, passed in 2010, mandated that ultrasounds be performed on women seeking abortions within one hour of the procedure, have the image placed in front of her, accompanied by a verbal description of the results—even if she objects. The eight justices who heard the case unanimously voted to throw out the law. Justice Noma Gurich did not vote, recusing herself because she had been involved in lower court proceedings on the law.

All nine judges voted to find House

Bill 1970 unconstitutional. This bill, enacted last year, sought to prohibit the use of RU-486 and other medications that can induce abortion.

Both decisions were based on lawsuits brought by the Oklahoma Coalition for Reproductive Justice. The lawsuit against forced invasive ultrasounds was joined by Nova Health Systems and Dr. Larry Burns, two of three abortion providers in the state.

"Both laws posed real threats to the dignity and health of women in Oklahoma, as well as access to safe abortion care," Stephanie Toti, senior staff attorney at the Center for Reproductive Rights, said in a phone interview from the group's headquarter-

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THE MILITANT

Covers working-class struggles worldwide

The 'Militant' covers workers' struggles worldwide—from nurses in Israel striking for wage raises to garment workers in Bangladesh fighting for safer working conditions to workers in U.S. and Europe standing up to bosses' assaults on wages, safety and dignity.



Yehoshua Yosef/Flash90/Redux
Nurses in Israel on strike in Tel Aviv Dec. 3.

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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

As we go into the final days of the drive, the *Militant* editor announced the paper will count all subscriptions received by the Christmas holiday weekend. The final campaign scoreboard will be printed in the following issue.

Four subscriptions were received last week from workers behind bars, three from the U.S. and one from New Zealand, bringing the total to 14 and blasting over a goal we increased twice.

“*Militant* distributors here never had results anything like this before,” Jacquie Henderson writes from Houston. “We sold 34 subscriptions last week. This includes 22 going door to door in working-class areas.

“Sixteen of the door-to-door subscriptions were sold during the weekend alone,” Henderson adds, “along with three copies of books offered at reduced prices with a subscription to the paper.” (See ad below.)

Militant distributors in Houston also sold five renewals and three new subscriptions to picketing strikers outside the Pioneer Flour Mill in San Antonio. Members of Teamsters Local 657 have been on strike since April 2011 against an attempt by the company to jack up their health care costs.

According to John Naubert, *Militant* distributors in Seattle sold 20 subscriptions to the paper last week, including 15 going door to door.

One of them was to Darcy Lelary-Bignayan. “I’m pro-union. We need

fair wages,” she said. “My mother grew up in Thailand and we were very poor. A lot of people have lost their voices. That’s why I am signing up for the *Militant*.”

Lelary-Bignayan also bought a copy of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party.

“*Militant* readers sold 16 subscriptions and one *Workers Power* book last weekend, knocking on doors inside several high rise apartment buildings in a Black working-class neighborhood on the Southside,” Alyson Kennedy writes from Chicago.

Robert Beal, a rangeland erosion laborer, dropped a note to the *Militant* from Yakima, Wash., saying that he sold a subscription and a copy of *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* to Jaime Villanueva as he was going door to door in rural Toppenish, Wash. Villanueva is a house builder on the Yakima Reservation.

“In 2008 I sometimes worked for \$5 an hour just to save my house and land,” Villanueva said. “I nearly lost everything and couldn’t get back up. I need to stay informed on current events in the world and why things happen.”

At the Hyundai-Rotem railcar factory in Philadelphia, George Chalmers reports that shop steward and longtime subscriber Ivan McNeil took a stack of *Militant* subscription blanks, telling coworkers that the paper informs “about what’s really going on.” As a re-



Militant/Dave Prince

Cinthia and Mauricio Valenzuela buy subscription from Maggie Trowe in Omaha, Neb., Dec. 8.

sult of his pitch and the *Militant*’s coverage of workers’ struggles in China, two coworkers decided to subscribe.

“This week,” Joanne Kuniansky wrote from Sydney, Australia, “Justine McCarthy, a longtime subscriber, sent in four subscriptions she decided to get for interested friends as Christmas presents, responding to the call for

readers to help expand who gets the *Militant*.”

The international effort to expand the readership of the socialist news-weekly among working people will continue long beyond the current drive.

You can order a bundle of the paper or subscription blanks at themilitant@mac.com or (212) 244-4899.

Socialist Workers Party wins new fund-drive contributors across US

BY SUSAN LAMONT

At the end of the sixth week of the \$100,000 Socialist Workers Party fund, contributors around the country have sent in \$53,633. Last week’s \$15,803 was the best so far. Fund supporters will need to send in an average of \$23,200 each of the next two weeks to make the goal by Dec. 24.

Reports from several cities show the momentum building for the fund.

Chicago: Charlie Brown, a machinist at Electro-Motive Diesel, has contributed \$75 and joined in getting the *Militant* into the hands of other workers, on the job and going door to door in working-class neighborhoods. “I feel honored to be participating,” Brown said, referring to the *Militant* subscription effort. “To me this has been an eye-opener. Once you see the truth about what’s going on, you want to involve other people too.

“It’s important that we contribute to the Party-Building Fund,” Brown added. “To keep doing what you’re doing, you need money. It has to come from workers who appreciate the *Militant*.”

Des Moines: Supporters have raised their goal a second time, to \$2,700! “We now have 11 first-time contributors out of our goal of 15,” reports Chuck Guerra. “The three new contributors since last week came from a new reader who contributed \$5 when he bought a subscription; a worker at a plastics plant who contributed \$1; and a school janitor, who is an officer in his union local in eastern Iowa, who pledged \$20.”

Seattle: Tina Taylor, a teacher in Tacoma and member of the Washington Education Association, contributed \$10 after signing up for a subscription and buying *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*, a book on special during the drive. “It’s important that people understand it’s workers who keep the country afloat,” Taylor said. “They talk about ‘poor people,’ meaning us. Without our voice, everyone loses. I think it is important to help out when you have even a little extra.”

Miami: *Militant* distributors Anthony Dutrow and Tom Baumann set up a socialist literature table at the International Longshoremen’s Association Local 1526 hiring hall in Ft. Lauderdale early morning Dec. 8, selling 10 single copies of the *Militant* and one book. Tangielar Mothersill, one of several ILA *Militant* subscribers, stopped to chat and looked at the fund chart. “You are doing an outstanding job of getting information out,” she said, handing over a \$5 contribution.

New York: To date, 32 workers and young people have donated for the first time. Individual contributions range from \$1 to \$100 and add up to more than \$600.

A final chart will appear in the first *Militant* of 2013, shipped Jan. 3.

Contributions can be sent to the SWP address nearest you (see page 8) or directly to the SWP National Office at 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, NY, NY 10018.

Party-Building Fund Week 6 of 9			
Area	Quota	Collected	%
Des Moines*	\$2,700	\$1,967	73%
Seattle	\$8,500	\$5,440	64%
Atlanta	\$8,600	\$5,226	61%
San Francisco	\$13,500	\$8,021	59%
Miami	\$3,000	\$1,746	58%
Boston	\$4,000	\$2,280	57%
Twin Cities	\$6,000	\$3,334	56%
New York	\$20,000	\$10,804	54%
Philadelphia	\$4,200	\$2,190	52%
Los Angeles	\$8,500	\$4,035	47%
Omaha	\$600	\$251	42%
Washington	\$7,500	\$2,815	38%
Chicago	\$9,500	\$3,494	37%
Lincoln	\$250	\$50	20%
Houston	\$3,500	\$630	18%
Other		\$1,350	
Total	\$100,350	\$53,633	53%
Should Be	\$100,000	\$66,667	67%
* Raised goal			

Special offers

The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning by Jack Barnes

“Until society is reorganized so that education is a human activity from the time we are very young until the time we die, there will be no education worthy of working, creating humanity.”

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Articles, interviews from the *Militant*

“We know that right is on our side, but to win we need a jury of millions throughout the world to make our truth known.”—Gerardo Hernández

\$3 with subscription (usually \$5)

See distributors
on page 8



Socialists campaign in Omaha for gov't-funded jobs program

BY DAVID ROSENFELD

OMAHA, Neb.—Maura DeLuca and Jacob Perasso, Socialist Workers Party candidates for mayor and city council here, joined more than a dozen campaign supporters over the Dec. 7-9 weekend, knocking on hundreds of doors to present the working-class alternative in the elections.

Campaign supporters joined in from Chicago, Minneapolis, and Des Moines, Iowa.

“Many workers are unemployed or underemployed. Others are over-employed, being forced to work too many hours,” Perasso said. “No capitalist party offers anything that will address our problems.”

The candidates talked to workers about fighting for a massive government-funded jobs program to put millions to work at union-scale wages to alleviate the scourge of unemployment and its negative effects on workers’ confidence and combativity. “The capitalists say this would be too expensive,” Perasso said. “But this just means it will cut into their profits.”

A house cleaning worker who subscribed this week to the *Militant*, who

declined to have her name printed for job considerations, told DeLuca and Perasso about a job action she participated in.

At Molly Maids, where she works, 20 workers threatened to strike. “They demanded they no longer be assigned to clean houses that pay just \$40. They only get 18 percent of that and don’t get paid for the transportation time to get to each house,” Perasso noted.

The boss said they could leave if they didn’t like the job. They all walked out and he came running to get them back. They haven’t been assigned to clean the lower paying homes since.

She encouraged campaigners getting out the *Militant*, telling them “sell a lot!” as they walked to the next door.

The centerpiece of the campaigning was introducing Omaha workers to the *Militant* and books on revolutionary working-class politics. Thirty-two subscriptions to the *Militant*, which featured a front-page story on the campaign, were sold over the December 7-9 weekend, along with 16 books.

“We are finding workers want to discuss how the crisis of capitalism is affecting their lives and those of other



Militant/David Rosenfeld

Maura DeLuca, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Omaha, Neb., speaking at South Omaha YMCA Dec. 8, the first event hosted by the campaign in that city.

working people around the world,” said Fredy Huinil, a campaign supporter from Omaha who helped organize the three-day effort.

On Dec. 8, the campaign hosted its first public meeting in Omaha, held at the South Omaha YMCA. Eighteen people participated in a lively discussion during the program and over a delicious Mexican and Guatemalan dinner prepared by campaign volunteers.

Joe Swanson, one of the meeting’s co-chairs, said campaigners going door to door found an eagerness among workers hit by the economic crisis to discuss what the working class needs to do. “In the last three or four years we have found that we can go into any corner of the country and have a discussion with workers in their community, neighborhoods and living rooms,” he said.

DeLuca related an experience selling a subscription to a meatpacking worker, who asked about Cuba and the so-called Ladies in White. “I said that these women were opponents of the Cuban Revolution, which brought workers and peasants to power,” DeLuca told the audience. “And I explained the case of the Cuban Five, who are in U.S. prisons because of their support for that revolution.” The meatpacker bought a copy of *Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution*.

Socialist Workers Party launches campaign in Chicago

BY DENNIS RICHTER

CHICAGO—“I’m running to represent the interests of the working class and farmers—in the 2nd Congressional District and across the country,” John Hawkins said, announcing his campaign for U.S. Congress in the March 19 special election here.

“Their interests are completely intertwined with those of workers and farmers worldwide,” he said.

Hawkins launched his campaign over the Dec. 1-2 weekend, going door to door in Chicago’s Southside working-class neighborhoods.

Hawkins, a glass factory worker and veteran trade unionist, is active in labor solidarity, the struggle for Black rights and the fight against police brutality.

The special election was set by Illinois Gov. Patrick Quinn to replace

former U.S. Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr., who resigned from Congress Nov. 21.

More than a dozen people have declared they may seek the Democratic Party nomination.

“In opposition to the course of the Democratic and Republican parties, who reflect the class interests of the ruling rich,” Hawkins said, “the Socialist Workers campaign will offer the hand of solidarity to our working-class brothers and sisters around the world, who, like working people here, confront the effects of the world capitalist economic crisis. This includes miners and other workers in South Africa who have been striking for three months for decent wages, workers in Spain and Greece resisting austerity measures, and garment workers in Bangladesh fighting for safe working conditions.

“We will campaign for an end to Washington’s war moves, from Afghanistan to Mali, an end to Washington’s 50-year-old embargo against Cuba, for independence of Puerto Rico, and for the unconditional release of the Cuban Five, Oscar Lopez Rivera and other political prisoners.”

“We campaign for a massive government-funded jobs program to address unemployment and underemployment,” Hawkins told those he met.

“This would put millions to work rebuilding and expanding public schools, quality public housing, recreational facilities, public hospitals and neighborhood clinics.”

Many working people in the area responded favorably to the campaign’s call for the firing and prosecution of cops responsible for the killings of Darrin Hanna, Rekia Boyd, Stephon Watts and others in the Chicago area, and for new hearings for the more than 100 inmates still in jail based on confessions elicited from torture at the hands of Chicago police under the supervision of former police Lt. Jon Burge.

“We explain the roots of the capitalist economic crisis and why the bosses

are making working people pay for it through layoffs, wars, discrimination and attacks on our rights,” Hawkins said.

“And we explain why working people must organize to fight to take political power into our own hands and replace the dictatorship of capital with the rule of the working class and our allies.”

Anti-abortion laws struck down

Continued from page 2

ters in New York. “The Oklahoma Supreme Court recognizes that the U.S. Supreme Court has established the right to abortion for all women in the U.S. The Oklahoma legislature is bound to respect that.”

The Center for Reproductive Rights filed a lawsuit on behalf of the three plaintiffs against House Bill 2780 in April 2010, when the law was passed by the state legislature. It was blocked by a district judge in March this year.

“The court has resoundingly affirmed what should not be a matter of controversy at all—that women have both a fundamental right to make their own choices about their reproductive health, and that government has no place in their decisions,” Nancy Northup, president of the Center for Reproductive Rights, said in a press release March 28.

In April, the Oklahoma Supreme Court overturned an effort to organize a referendum that sought to legally define a fertilized egg as a person.

All three decisions were based on federal Supreme Court rulings upholding *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 case that legalized abortion in the U.S. This decision was won as a result of shifts in attitudes coming out of the mass proletarian struggle for Black rights that defeated Jim Crow segregation, as well as the fight against the

Vietnam War and for women’s rights that arose out of that victory.

Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt told the press Dec. 4 that the state government may appeal the decision. “We disagree with the court decision, particularly with the fact that the question on whether Oklahoma’s Constitution provides a right to an abortion was left unanswered,” he said.

The attorney general has 90 days to petition for appeal.

“The fact that it was a unanimous decision says that it stands on pretty solid ground,” Toti said.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

ILLINOIS

Chicago

The Crisis of the U.S. ‘Justice’ System and Its Impact on Black Workers. Speakers: Mark Clements, Campaign to End Torture; Ralph Peterson, organizer of fight against cop killings; John Hawkins, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Congress, 2nd C.D. Sat., Dec. 15, 7 p.m. 806 W. Washington Blvd., Suite 202. Tel.: (312) 455-0111.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

The ‘Fiscal Cliff,’ the Capitalist Crisis and the Working Class. Speaker: John Naubert, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Dec. 22. Dinner, 5:30 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. 5418 Rainier Ave. S. Tel.: (206) 323-1755.

CANADA

Montreal

Washington, Ottawa: Hands Off the Middle East! Speaker: Beverly Bernardo, Communist League. Fri., Dec. 21, 7:30 p.m. 7101 St-Denis, room 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

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.—\$6



PathfinderPress.com

Pro-vigilante law protests

Continued from front page

American teenagers, were parked outside a gas station Nov. 23. Michael Dunn, a 45-year-old software engineer who is Caucasian, argued with them over the loud music they were playing. Dunn then fired at least eight shots into the teens' vehicle, several as they were driving away. Davis was struck and killed.

Dunn was arrested the next day at his home in Satellite Beach, about 170 miles south of Jacksonville, after police traced his license plate. He is pleading not guilty to charges of second-degree murder, claiming he saw a shotgun in the teens' car. The police say they found no weapon in the vehicle.

Press reports say it's likely Dunn will argue that his actions were protected under the Stand Your Ground law. This law, adopted in Florida in 2005, states that a person is immune from prosecution for use of deadly force in public if "he or she reasonably believes that such force is necessary to prevent imminent death or great bodily harm to himself or herself or another or to prevent the imminent commission of a forcible felony."

This and similar laws around the country are also sometimes referred to as "shoot first" or "make my day" laws because the shooter has no "duty to retreat," meaning they don't have to attempt to walk away from or de-escalate a situation before using deadly force.

Reuters reported that Ron Davis, a retired airline worker and Jordan's father, said Dec. 5 he is beginning to campaign against Stand Your Ground "because that law emboldens people to carry firearms and to use them if somebody looks at them sideways." Two days later he joined Rev. R.L. Gundy, Florida state president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, at a press conference outside the gas station where Jordan Davis was killed, calling for protests against the law.

Davis' death comes right after a commission set up to review the Stand Your Ground legislation in the wake of the Trayvon Martin killing issued an initial report largely supporting the law. The 19-member "Task Force on Citizen Safety and Protection" was appointed by Gov. Rick Scott and includes the legislators who sponsored the law. It held seven hearings across the state earlier this year.

Speaking against the law at a hearing in Cutler Bay, near Miami, was Arlene Byrd and Ruby Mosely. Byrd's son, Kijuan Lamar O'Neal, was killed June 1 by security guards at a nightclub. Mosely's son was beaten to death by the owners of a convenience store in 2010.

"Repeal it. It doesn't help," Mosely said, reported the *Miami Herald*. "We have a law for self-defense. What was the purpose of this law?"

At the Cutler Bay and other hearings, several members of the task force took the lead in defending the law. "The law is to protect law abiding citizens from violent attack," said task force member and defense attorney Mark Seiden, the *Herald* reported.

The task force website reports it received more than 11,000 public comments by phone, email and mail, more than 70 percent in favor of Stand Your Ground. It posted a draft report Nov. 13 that states, "All persons have a fundamental right to stand their ground and defend themselves from attack with proportionate force in every place they have a lawful right to be and are conducting themselves in a lawful manner." It then recommends some minor modifications to clarify some terminology and review guidelines for neighborhood watch groups. The task force is supposed to present final recommendations in the coming weeks.

Ron Davis said there will be a candlelight vigil in Jacksonville Dec. 15 for his son and against Stand Your Ground, and other actions in the near future.

Human Rights Day: Thousands march in Israel



Some 5,000 people attended a march Dec. 7 in Tel Aviv to mark International Human Rights Day, raising demands for civil liberties in Israel, for workers rights, against the effects on workers of the rising cost of living, for national rights of Palestinians in and outside Israel, for women's rights, and the rights of immigrant workers, especially Black workers from Africa.

"There are people here from all kinds of places, but we are all united by the battle for basic rights," Dawit Demoz, an Eritrean asylum seeker, told Ynetnews.com. "The government in Israel treats us like criminals."

"I felt it was important for me to attend and represent Arab women, whose rights are violated over and over," said Waffa Tiara of the Maan Workers Advice Center, adding that joblessness among Arab women is 83 percent.

"Society infringes on women's rights—and it doesn't make a difference whether they are Jewish, Muslim or Christian, and we are Israeli or Palestinian, Ashkenazi or Sephardi," Sammi Michael, president of the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, told the rally.

—JOHN STUDER



"Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever expanding union of the workers."

—Karl Marx and Frederick Engels

Written in 1848, the Communist Manifesto explains why communism is the line of march of the working class toward power, "springing from an existing class struggle, a historical movement going on under our very eyes."

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Illinois miner tells story of fight for safety on job

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

When workers stand up for safety on the job, they often find the only people interested in really doing something about it are fellow workers. Such was the case when Joshua Walls and a co-worker quit their jobs at the American Coal New Era mine in Galatia, Ill., over hazardous conditions.

The mine is owned by Murray Energy, which also was part owner of the Crandall Canyon Mine in Utah, where six miners were fatally sealed in after the mine collapsed in August 2007.

Walls was working as a contract miner for Big Buck Construction Company doing roof bolting and repair work to keep the mine slope, a secondary escape way, from collapsing. The slope also had a belt line that brought coal out of the mine.

After being denied unemployment nine months ago, he appealed the decision to the State Board of Review and was denied again.

Continued on page 7

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



December 25, 1987

Responding to murderous repression by Israeli occupation forces, Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and West Bank are fighting back on an unprecedented scale.

In Gaza, the United Nations relief director described the situation as "a popular uprising." He said every town and refugee camp in the area was affected by the mounting rebellion.

The current wave of demonstrations were touched off when an Israeli army semitrailer truck slammed into two vans carrying Palestinian laborers, killing four and injuring seven.

General strikes have gripped Gaza City and the main towns of the West Bank. Those who commute to jobs in Israel have stayed home.

The military rules the territories with an iron fist. Palestinians have virtually no rights. There is detention without trial and arbitrary deportations into exile. Palestinian land is subject to seizure, strikes and demonstrations are illegal.



December 24, 1962

An urgent campaign to free a young Negro, who was framed up and sent to the Mississippi State Penitentiary for attempting to enroll at lily-white Mississippi Southern University, has been launched by the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee.

Clyde Kennard, 33, the frame-up victim, has already been in prison almost two years. His case occurred before James Meredith's success in breaking the color bar at the University of Mississippi attracted world attention. After finishing three years at the University of Chicago, Kennard applied for admission to MSU. In the fall of 1959, upon returning to his auto after an interview with the MSU president and another state official, he was arrested for reckless driving. At the station a charge of illegal possession of liquor was added. Since he neither smokes nor drinks, the "finding" of liquor in his car was an obvious frame-up.



December 25, 1937

Complete victory on December 13 over the wholesale grocery bosses after a four-days strike has demonstrated the undiminished power of the Minneapolis Teamsters' Unions. The bosses involved in this strike were the last die-hards to yield to unionization last year, after a bitterly-fought seven-week strike.

Union demands for sole bargaining power and a ten-cent increase of hourly wages were the chief issues of the strike. Although it involved only a few hundred men, the strike was conceded by both sides to be a test of strength which would determine who would hold the advantage when contracts expiring next May, covering most of the teamsters of this area, would come up for revision. The extraordinary speed with which they forced the bosses to capitulate indicate that the unions will have an easy time of it in the coming negotiations for the whole industry.

Tunisian unions strike, answer attacks from pro-gov't Islamists

BY LOUIS MARTIN

Over the past few months there have been growing tensions in Tunisia between labor unions and other workers' organizations on one side and the Ennahda-led government and reactionary forces that support it on the other.

Ennahda is an Islamist formation brought to power in the October 2011 elections held after the overthrow of the Zine El Abidine Ben Ali dictatorship earlier that year.

These tensions came to the fore recently when the Tunisian General Union of Labor called a general strike for Dec. 13 in this North African country of some 10 million. The call was withdrawn Dec. 11 following an agreement between the government and the UGTT, whose content has not yet been made public.

The UGTT, the country's main trade union federation with some 500,000 members, issued the strike call in response to a Dec. 4 assault by goons from the League for the Defense of the Revolution on a union march assembling in front of the labor federation's offices in the capital city of Tunis.

The Islamist attackers, wielding clubs and knives, shouted "the people want the assassination of the union," witnesses said, according to an Associated Press story. The thugs pursued fleeing demonstrators into the building, breaking windows. Some 10 people were injured, according to AP.

The assault was part of "a series of attacks against trade unionists and UGTT offices," Ghassen Ksibi, UGTT press secretary, said in a Dec. 10 phone interview from Tunis. Ksibi said these actions included burning down the UGTT office in Jendouba in June.

The League for the Defense of the Revolution is closely associated with Ennahda, which denounced the assault on the unionists.

The UGTT demanded that the attackers be arrested and the League for the Defense of the Revolution be banned.

The Dec. 4 attack came in the wake of several days of social protests, clashes with cops and a general strike in Siliana, a farming town located some 80 miles southwest of Tunis. The Siliana actions were triggered by general discontent in face of the lack of progress since the overthrow of the dictatorship in January 2011, especially in the impoverished areas of the country. Official unemployment stands at about

18 percent in Tunisia today.

The Siliana protests were organized by the local UGTT around demands for regional economic development, dismissal of the regional governor and release of political prisoners arrested earlier this year.

Cops shot demonstrators with bird-shot and tear gas, injuring more than 300 people. The strike was called off after the governor was replaced by his deputy.

One-day general strikes shut down the regions of Sidi Bouzid, Kasserine, Gafsa and Sfax Dec. 6, in anticipation of the Dec. 13 UGTT strike.



AFP/Getty Images/Fethi Belaid

Working people in Siliana, Tunisia, demonstrate Nov. 29 for improved conditions two years after government of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali was overthrown. Cops injured 300 people.

Egypt workers fight for space to organize

Continued from front page

continued against the military regime that at first took Mubarak's place.

Under the guise of consolidating the "revolution" and preventing a return of direct military rule, the Muslim Brotherhood—the largest and best organized capitalist party in the country—is moving to close down space working people won in the course of that struggle.

In several cities opponents and supporters of the measures have clashed, with dead and wounded reported on both sides.

Concerned about provoking another round of mass actions in the country, President Barack Obama called the Egyptian president Dec. 6 and "welcomed Morsi's call for a dialogue with the opposition," according to a White House press release. "It is essential for Egyptian leaders across the political spectrum to put aside their differences and come together to agree on a path that will move Egypt forward," he said. But opposition parties rejected the call, unless the referendum was postponed.

Although the draft constitution uses the word "freedom" 42 times, it limits free speech through prohibitions on insulting prophets or individuals. It includes provisions widely viewed as tightening the application of sharia law and limiting freedom of worship, allowing state control of the finances of the Coptic Christian church and eliminating protections for followers of the Baha'i faith. About 5.3 percent of Egypt's 80 million people are Coptic Christians.

It also undermines workers' right to organize by specifying that only one union is allowed "per profession." Since the removal of Mubarak, hundreds of new unions have been formed, often in direct competition with the state-backed federation.

The draft eliminates a clause from the old constitution that prohibited discrimination "on the basis of sex, origin, religion and creed."

Continuing the uneasy alliance between the Muslim Brotherhood and the military high command, the constitution allows military trials for civilians "for crimes that affect the armed forces" and keeps secret the military budget. High-ranking army officials are a key section of Egypt's capitalist class. The military owns

large factories and farms, controlling between 20 and 30 percent of the country's economy.

Interests of workers

"The government decrees are clearly not in the interests of workers," Ibrahim Hamdi, a worker at a state-owned textile mill in Mahalla El Kubra told the *Militant* in a Dec. 8 phone interview. "That is why thousands of us have participated in demonstrations demanding they be repealed."

While most workers in the mills are not supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood, "We try to discuss with those that are with Morsi, to win them over," he said.

"Our main union demands revolve around job security and public investments to get the machines working in order to hire more workers," Hamdi added, noting that thousands of workers have lost their jobs over the last several years.

"The constitution says that women are to be protected and that is really worrying," Alaa Murad, a recent college graduate who works at a university in Cairo, told the *Militant*. "I am a practicing Muslim, but the Brotherhood twists certain religious texts and interprets them in their own way. They want to bring back laws that a husband can control whether a woman works or not, apply to university or travel without his permission. It's bad enough already that we don't have access to a lot of occupations."

Murad said some of her relatives, many engineers or professors, support the Muslim Brotherhood. "Before Morsi was elected, we used to talk about our disagreements, discussion was more acceptable," she said. "But now his supporters have become more vicious."

The National Salvation Front formed to oppose Morsi's moves is dominated by capitalist politicians. It is headed by Mohamed el Baradei, former head of the U.N. International Atomic Energy Agency and leader of the Constitution Party; Amr Moussa, former Arab League head and at one time Mubarak's foreign minister; Al-Sayed al Badawy, head of the Wafd Party, which played the role of a loyal opposition during the Mubarak regime; and Hamden Sabbahi, leader of the Nasserite Popular Current.

The front also includes several so-

cial democratic and middle class radical groups, including Al-Tagammu, the Socialist Popular Alliance Party and the Social Democratic Party.

The military high command has tried to portray itself as above the fray. "We support the call for national dialogue, to reach a consensus that unites all segments of the nation," Armed Forces spokesperson Ahmed Mohamed Ali stated Dec. 8. "The Armed Forces have always ensured the security and safety of the nation and its people."

Since taking office, Morsi has kept in place many policies both of Mubarak and the interim military regime that immediately followed his ouster. And like his predecessors he has called on workers to stop striking for higher wages and better working conditions.

Brotherhood backs IMF austerity

Egyptian Prime Minister Hisham Kandil has been negotiating with the International Monetary Fund over the terms of a \$4.8 billion loan Morsi's government has requested to weather the economic crisis, including a sharp drop in tourism and foreign investment and a budget deficit estimated at \$27.5 billion.

As part of the deal, the government has already begun cuts in subsidies for cooking gas and electricity and plans to cut more, including for food. "We need to do it gradually and to make sure it can succeed," Kandil told the London *Financial Times* in October. "There is no good time to implement a reform programme."

On Dec. 9 Morsi announced he was imposing new sales taxes on soft drinks, beer, cigarettes, cellphone services, cooking oil, fertilizers and pesticides as part of getting the IMF loan. Later that night he announced the measures were on hold "until the degree of public acceptance is made clear."

"Morsi no longer has legitimacy," Gamal Abu'l Oula Hassamin, director of the Center for Trade Union and Workers Services, which helps organize workers in Mahalla, said by phone. "Mill workers, other workers and neighborhood residents are discussing what to do."

Georges Mehrabian in Athens, Greece, contributed to this article.

In New International no. 12

Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun

by Jack Barnes



Today's accelerating capitalist crisis poses the need for class-struggle-minded workers to chart a revolutionary course to confront it.

pathfinderpress.com

Factory fires in S. Asia show need for union in safety fight

BY EMMA JOHNSON

Recent factory fires in Bangladesh and Pakistan have put the spotlight on working conditions in the centers of world garment production, as well as the need for labor unions that can fight to wrest higher wages and safety concessions.

The *Militant* addressed this question in an editorial two weeks ago following the fire that killed 120 workers at the Tazreen Fashions factory near Dhaka, Bangladesh: “Only workers themselves have an interest in safe working conditions. Only their organization and use of union power—including the ability to shut down production—can enforce it.

“Safety inspectors, whether from capitalist government agencies or from so-called nonprofit NGOs ... end up serving as cover for the bosses unless and until the fighting union of workers is brought to bear.”

As it turns out, the Ali Enterprises garment factory in Karachi, Pakistan, was certified as safe by a highly regarded nonprofit organization based in New York just a couple of weeks before Sept. 11 when 289 workers there were killed in a fire.

Survivors reported that plant managers locked the doors to save the company’s stockpiles of jeans. Windows were iron grilled. At least 65 workers were injured from jumping out of windows on the upper floors of the four-story building.

For the past 15 years retail giants like Walmart and Carrefour have created numerous factory inspection systems, said to monitor safety in the plants where their products are produced. Ali Enterprises received a SA8000 certificate Aug. 20 under the auspices of Social Accountability International, saying it ran a model business. The SA8000 certifies factories in relation to eight areas, including health and safety, wages, working hours and child labor.

In a Dec. 7 article, the *New York Times* characterized Social Accountability International as “a respected, nonprofit organization based in New York.” It receives funding from retail giants like GAP, Gucci and H&M, in addition to labor unions, governments, founda-

tions and NGOs. It has certified 3,083 factories in 66 countries.

“The certificates are fake, they don’t follow them anyway,” Nasir Mansoor said in a phone interview from Karachi. “Ali Enterprises got a clean sheet one month before the fire. That organization has certified 100 plants in Pakistan.”

Mansoor is the deputy secretary general of the National Trade Union Federation. He says factory owners—especially in the export industry in textile, garment, shoe and leather—use the international certification to skirt official labor regulations.

“To guarantee workers’ safety and working conditions you need unions in the plants,” he said. “But to form a union you must prove that you are em-



Garment workers demonstrate Nov. 27 in Dhaka, Bangladesh, demanding safer working conditions after fire in factory there killed more than 120 workers three days earlier.

ployed by the company. And 97 percent of all workers in the industry don’t have contracts with the employer.”

Mansoor said the Pakistani government is one of the financial contributors

to Social Accountability International. “The government doesn’t care about the workers or the labor laws. It’s more interested in getting a foreign buyer to the companies here.”

Bosses ‘didn’t want union,’ close mine after worker killed

BY BETSY FARLEY

HARRISBURG, Ill.—Peabody Energy’s decision to close the Willow Lake underground coal mine has put 334 workers at the mine near Equality out of work. The closure comes as the United Mine Workers of America was in contract negotiations with the company and after yet another miner was killed on the job there.

“The mine has failed to meet acceptable standards for safety, compliance and operating performance,” Peabody said in a Nov. 27 press release.

Workers at the mine, members of UMWA Local 5929, have been fighting for a contract since May 2011 when they voted to be represented by the UMWA. The question of safety, and in particular the right to a union safety committee, was among the top concerns driving the workers’ unionization effort.

“They didn’t want the union, you know? That’s my feelings,” Willow Lake miner Mike Sampson, told WSIL-TV at a Nov. 29 meeting organized by the United Mine Workers about the mine closing.

On Nov. 17, Chad Meyers, 30, was killed on the job when he was crushed between a continuous mining machine he was operating and the coal rib. Meyers was not experienced at operating the machine, according to a couple of miners who spoke with the *Militant*.

“He had run the miner the night before for a half shift,” said Ryan Pate, 31. “The next night the boss needed a miner operator when some men didn’t come to work. This was the first time Chad ran the miner completely on his own.”

Another 26-year-old roof bolter at Willow Lake, who asked that his name not be used, said workers were under heavy pressure to increase coal production. “The company safety meetings were just to tell us production was too low and we were basically no good,” he said. “Morale among the workers was low. The equipment we had to work with was junk.”

On Nov. 30, just 13 days after the fatality at Willow Lake, Steve O’Dell, 27, of Mount Nebo, W.Va., was killed when he was pinned between a continuous mining machine and a scoop at the Alpha Natural Resources Pocahontas Mine.

Later that same day, part of a coal-waste embankment gave way at Consol Energy’s Robinson Run operation in Harrison County, W.Va., sending a bulldozer and two pickup trucks sliding into the complex’s huge slurry impoundment. Two engineers in the pickup trucks were treated and released from area hospitals, but the body of the bulldozer operator, whose name has not been released, has still not been found.

The federal Mine Safety and Health Administration reported in June that since January 2010, at least 85 miners nationwide have been injured—including eight who were killed—where miners are crushed, run over, pinned by or struck by moving mining equipment.

Still, the Obama administration has yet to finalize a requirement for “proximity devices” that would shut down equipment when miners get too close, and help prevent such deaths.

The Willow Lake Mine, which opened in 2002, has a long record of safety violations. In July 2010, a supervisor at the mine was killed when a shuttle car hauling coal struck him.

UMWA Vice President and Region 3 Director Steve Earle of Madisonville,

Ky., told the *Militant* in a Dec. 6 phone interview that the union knew of safety problems and was making suggestions to Peabody to improve safety.

“We’ve had a number of issues with Peabody, including unfair labor practices over the period of time since the miners at Willow Lake voted for the UMWA. We had put those issues behind us, and they were bargaining in good faith and we were too.”

Earle said the union will continue to negotiate with the company for a contract for the 34 surface workers at the preparation plant, which will continue to operate, running coal from Peabody’s Wildcat Hills Mine.

According to both miners, Peabody has permits to mine Willow Lake’s coal reserves through Wildcat Hills, a nearby nonunion Peabody mine.

The closing of the Willow Lake Mine comes on top of layoffs at American Coal, owned by Murray Energy Corp. in Galatia. Unemployment in Saline county, home to both Equality and Galatia, stood at 8.6 percent in October.

Alyson Kennedy contributed to this article.

Miner’s story of fight for job safety

Continued from page 5

“The state said I voluntarily quit the job. I said that I didn’t voluntarily leave, but quit because of the conditions of work,” Walls told the *Militant*. “My conscience made me stand up. I could not allow myself to sit by and endanger coworkers. You shouldn’t have to work in conditions like this. You don’t have to die to work.”

Walls filed another appeal with the Saline County Circuit Court and has a court hearing Jan 4. In his appeal he wrote: “There is a list of things wrong in that slope. Most of the structure is over 30 years old and beyond repair; simply put you can’t weld to rust. Add rusted-out roof bolts above the decaying structure which are giving way, creating major falls in the slope and you got a recipe for disaster.”

When Walls and other workers voiced their concerns in company safety meetings, the bosses’ response was “there is

a stack of applications to replace you,” Walls explained in the appeal.

After Walls and a coworker quit, Walls called the Mine Safety and Health Administration to report the situation “thinking MSHA would do a proper investigation and support my allegations,” said the appeal.

But the MSHA report said the slope was safe and states they inspected it after the crew had gone home. Walls explains that MSHA could not see the working conditions and did not interview any workers.

“I would hate to think that our government discourages its working-class people from standing up for their rights in regards to safe working conditions,” he states in the appeal. “Our government should stand by the people that decide to make a stand against unsafe companies, encourage safe working environments for all and never allow safety to take a backseat to production ever.”



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First military defeat for U.S. imperialism in the Americas

Below is an excerpt from Cuba and the Coming American Revolution by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. The Spanish edition of the book is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for December. In the excerpt Barnes describes the defeat of the U.S.-sponsored invasion of Cuba in April 1961, and efforts of communist youth in the U.S. to get out the truth about Washington's actions and the Cuban Revolution. Copyright © 2001 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JACK BARNES

On the morning of April 18, 1961, readers of daily newspapers across the United States woke up to front-page headlines proclaiming, “Rebels Near Havana, Invade Four Provinces.”

Many radio stations blared an Associated Press news dispatch reporting that “Cuban rebel forces” had landed within thirty-eight miles of Havana and at numerous other points on the island. Citing a press release from the “Cuban Revolutionary Council,” the dispatch said that much of the Cuban militia had already defected to the invading forces and “in the next few hours” the deciding bat-



Bohemia
Members of First Company of 134th Militia Battalion celebrate victory at Playa Girón, April 1961. Defense of Cuban Revolution “changed lives of substantial number of youth in U.S.”

tle for the country would be fought. “Rebel” forces were “in control of the Isle of Pines and had freed some 10,000 political prisoners held there.”

Most Americans took the story as good coin, expecting to soon hear that the “pro-Communist dictator” Fidel Castro had been ousted.

Around the country, however, in dozens of cities and on a number of college campuses, there were pockets of individuals who knew from the beginning that every word of the AP story was a lie. We had been carrying out an intensive educational campaign for weeks to counter the Kennedy administration’s mendacious disinformation efforts. We were getting ready for the invasion we knew was coming, preparing to act here in the Yankee heartland side by side with the Cuban people the moment it was launched. Between April 17 and April 19, as the battle was being fought in Cuba, we confidently took to the streets, organized speak-outs, posted marked-up newspaper clippings a couple times a day, and went on the radio asserting that, all press reports to the contrary, the U.S. government-organized and -financed invasion was being defeated, not winning.

As we had been doing for months, we pointed to the immense popularity of the revolution among the Cuban people in response to the measures the new government was organizing them to take. The Mafia-run gambling dens and brothels, a national shame, had been shut down. Land had been distributed to more than 100,000 tenant farmers, sharecroppers, and squatters. House and apartment rents, as well as electricity and telephone rates, had been slashed. Racial discrimination was outlawed and equal access not only made law but also enforced. The best public beaches, which had been previously off limits to Blacks, had been opened to all. A nationwide campaign to eliminate illiteracy had been launched—part of a broader extension of public education to the countryside, among the poor, and for women. Popular militias had formed in factories, other workplaces, schools, neighborhoods, and towns across the island, as Cubans demanded arms and military training to defend their new conquests.

The huge money-gouging U.S. monopolies had been nationalized, as well as the major landed, commercial, and industrial property holdings of the wealthy Cuban families who had

been the social and political base of the Batista dictatorship.

Through more than two years of popular mobilization, the workers and farmers of Cuba had begun transforming not only their country but themselves. It was precisely for this reason, we explained, that Cubans could, and would, fight to the death to defend their revolution—and do so successfully.

Only thirty-six hours after the initial AP stories made headlines across the United States, the counterrevolutionary “rebel forces”—who had landed not thirty-eight miles from Havana or on the Isle of Pines, but near the Bay of Pigs on the southern coast of the island—had been ignominiously routed at Playa Girón by Cuba’s popular militias, Revolutionary National Police, Revolutionary Air Force, and Rebel Army. Not only the decisiveness, but also the speed of the April defeat was stunning. ...

The shock of the very first military defeat of U.S. imperialism in the Americas began to register in Washington, and among its defenders in pressrooms, factories, and schools across the country. In the weeks that followed, as bitter and self-serving recriminations among organizers of the invasion spilled out, more and more information about the U.S.-run military operation and the social background of the individual Cuban “freedom fighters” began to make its way into the mainstream press in the United States.

As these facts became known, supporters of the Cuban Revolution took full advantage of them to spread the truth, point to the accuracy of what we had been arguing for months, and underline the sober exactitude of the speeches and statements of leaders of the Cuban Revolution over the previous two years. ...

This political battle that began more than forty years ago was one that changed the lives of a substantial number of young people in the United States. It transformed the communist movement here in a way that paralleled the profound changes taking place in Cuba and elsewhere around the world.

December BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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‘Cliff’ or no cliff, workers go to the wall

BY JOHN STUDER

Since President Barack Obama won a second term in November, the bourgeois press has been consumed with articles, commentaries and angst over the prospect of the U.S. economy falling over a “fiscal cliff” if Democratic and Republican party politicians can’t come to an accord on the next steps to balance the U.S. government budget through some combination of raising tax revenue and cutting government expenses.

Underneath the sharp tactical debate is bipartisan agreement to press ahead with some type of “austerity” measures to make working people pay for rising government debt, just as the capitalists make us pay for every other aspect of their crisis.

The “fiscal cliff,” a term coined by Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke, refers to Congress’ decision to automatically enact deep spending cuts and tax raises on Jan. 1, 2013, if it fails to reach agreement on a series of budget-cutting measures that include cuts to Social Security, Medicare and other programs.

Congress set the deadline after gridlock between the two parties led to adoption of the Budget Control Act of 2011, which also authorized increasing the federal debt and enacted \$900 billion in “stopgap” cuts in “discretionary spending” measures. The latter included social programs, government agency budgets and some military spending.

Both parties agree the interests of the ruling class necessitate their reining in a rising national debt amid stagnant production to avoid currency and credit problems. Raising taxes on themselves is an option they want to minimize, to varying degrees, as it adds to downward pressure to capitalists’ profit rates. Spending cuts can have their own contracting effect on the economy. Additionally, they worry about working-class resistance if they push too hard too fast.

Like their counterparts in much of Europe, the U.S. rulers find themselves marching, out of step, down a road many are fearful of, with sharp disagreements on how to approach it.

President Obama and legislators have spent the last month posturing and jockeying with each other.

CNBC ran a full-page ad in the Dec. 11 *Wall Street Journal* for “Mission Critical,” promising “special coverage all day today” about “America’s economy on the brink.”

The role of this barrage is to convince workers to believe we have a stake in the government’s debt problems and must prepare to sacrifice for the good of “the

country.”

The capitalists’ fiscal problems are not the causes of their crisis. They are among the results and symptoms of a more fundamental and longer-term slowdown in worldwide capitalist production and trade. And this crisis cannot be fixed by financial, monetary or fiscal fiddling.

The financial crisis stems from a decades-long squeeze on industrial rates of profit, leading capitalists to shift their investment from production to speculative ventures in search of greater gain. “Trillions of dollars were being sucked out of industrial America and turned into ‘financial instruments’ and new, exotic forms of wealth,” Steve Fraser wrote in the Dec. 3 *American Conservative*.

“Financial engineers,” Fraser said, thought they could “turn money into more money (while bypassing the messiness of producing anything).” This can appear to work for a time. But inevitably no longer does.

President Obama paints his proposals to avoid the ‘cliff’ with a populist brush, pushing for \$1.6 trillion in increased revenues over the next 10 years. He says these would come from tax increases on the 2 percent in the country who take in more than \$250,000 a year and from changes in the tax code.

He also pushes for \$400 billion in cuts from Medicare and other programs.

Republican Speaker of the House John Boehner countered with proposals for \$800 billion in additional revenue from taxes over the next decade, coupled with \$600 billion from deeper cuts in Medicare, including raising the eligibility age from 65 to 67, and cutting Social Security payments by lowering cost-of-living increases.

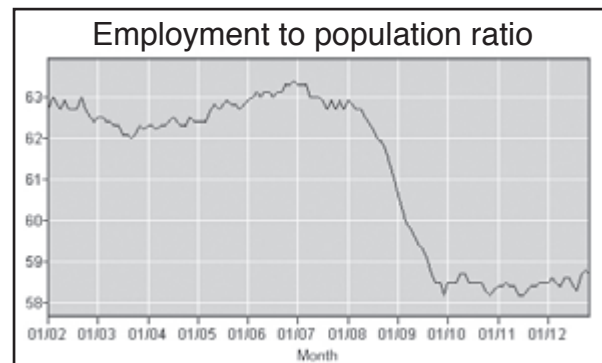
Behind the public face of partisan shock and disdain, both camps have leaked willingness to compromise.

The leaks report plans for a “two-step deal.” The first would lock in “an initial round of spending cuts” and “changes to the tax code” in January. This would put off the “fiscal cliff” until August, when Obama and Congress would pursue a more far-reaching “overhaul of the tax code and entitlement programs,” the Dec. 3 *Wall Street Journal* reported.

Those in on the negotiations suggest replacing the term “fiscal cliff” with “fallback” or “backstop.”

Whatever they call it, it represents one more way in which the U.S. rulers are preparing to push workers to the wall.

Gov’t jobless figures



After dramatic decline, employment to population ratio has hovered around same low level for the last three years.

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speedup and boss assault on wages and working conditions.

According to the Labor Department’s news release, “payroll employment rose by 146,000 in November.” But the department’s own figures also say that the total number of people employed in the country actually declined by 122,000.

How is this magic trick accomplished? In large part by “disappearing” 350,000 workers from the official workforce, which means they are no longer counted when figuring employment rates. Among them are 166,000 workers the statisticians added in November to a category they consider too “discouraged” in their job prospects to bother counting.

The employment to population ratio—a straight percentage of the total population that is employed—provides a more accurate gauge of those without work. Unlike the official unemployment rate, it is not easily masked by removing discouraged workers from the job figures or other methods. In November the ratio declined by 0.1 to 58.7 percent, meaning a slightly smaller percentage of the population is working than the previous month.

After a sharp decline of 5 percentage points between 2007 and 2010, the employment to population ratio has hovered around the same spot for the last three years. This represents not only the lowest rate in decades, but an unprecedented amount of time without any sign of even a temporary recovery.

“Many millions of Americans, in particular less-skilled men, are leaving the workforce, a phenomenon the country has never seen before on the present scale,” wrote Jonathan Rauch in a Dec. 5 article in the *National Journal* titled “The No Good, Very Bad Outlook for the Working-Class American Man.” This situation, he states, might “bring social unrest and class resentment of a magnitude the country hasn’t known before.”

What the statisticians refer to as productivity in U.S. factories increased at a 2.9 percent annual rate in the third-quarter of 2012, its fastest rate in two years, reported the Labor Department. One of the main ways bosses are raising labor productivity—more goods produced in less time—is by making employees work harder, faster, under more unsafe job conditions. Fewer workers are pressed to crank out more work while millions search for work.

“Productivity is rising handsomely, but compensation of workers isn’t keeping up,” writes Rauch. In fact over the past three decades it “has hardly risen at all.” Between 1948 and 2011 productivity rose 254.3 percent, while average hourly compensation has only gone up 113.1 percent, according to the Economic Policy Institute.

“From the end of World War II through about 1980, almost two-thirds of every dollar of income generated by the economy flowed to workers in the form of wages and benefits,” writes Rauch. “Beginning around 1980, workers’ share began to slide and, in the past decade or so, has nosedived to about 58 percent.”

Meanwhile, manufacturing declined in November to its lowest level in more than three years, according to the Institute for Supply Management. While retail trade employment rose by 53,000 last month, in preparation for holiday sales, manufacturing jobs declined by 8,000 and construction by 20,000.

New Pentagon spy unit part of military shift

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past decade to about 16,500, according to the *Washington Post*.

The budget for the operation is being held up in the Senate, which is requesting more details on the plan and its costs.

“This is not a marginal adjustment for DIA,” stated the agency’s director, Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn, at a conference in October. The goal is to “push” DIA operatives into more countries, “out into [U.S.] embassies, out into military forces,” he stated. The DIA currently has agents operating in 139 countries, Flynn said. “We are in one of those turning moments in history ... a very long turn.”

DIA operatives “will be trained by the CIA and often work with the U.S. [military’s] Joint Special Operations Command,” reported the *Post*.

Another converging area of operations between the civilian and military spy agencies is in the use of armed aerial drones operated by the CIA and the Special Operations Command, mostly the CIA.

Administration’s role in drone killings

President Barack Obama plays a key role in the designation of many assassination targets. He signs off on every strike in Yemen and Somalia, as well as many of the “more complex and risky strikes in Pakistan,” the *New York Times* reported in May.

Drone assassinations have included a U.S. citizen, Anwar al-Awlaki, who was killed in Yemen last September on orders of Obama. Attorney General Eric Holder in a March 5 speech argued that this does

not violate the Fifth Amendment, which prohibits the government from taking life without due process, because the president’s considered judgment amounts to due process.

During the 2012 presidential campaign the Obama administration expressed concern that these declared powers might fall into the wrong hands if Mitt Romney won the election. Weeks before the vote administration officials stepped up cobbling together a legal structure with formal rules about when to conduct drone attacks and the president’s role in adding individuals to the kill list.

The *Times* is among liberal voices critical of the Obama administration’s latitude in conducting drone attacks. Its editors have called for a legal framework that would legitimize assassinations much like the special courts set up in the 1970s, pushed by civil libertarians, that rubber stamp FBI espionage.

In a Nov. 29 editorial titled “Rules for Targeted Killing,” the *Times* presented its proposal: “Rules should specify that no one can be killed unless actively planning or participating in terror. ... Raising money for terror groups, or making tapes urging others to kill, does not justify assassination, and neither does a threat or a revolt against another government.”

“Standard police methods should be used on American soil,” the editorial continued. “And if an American citizen operating abroad is targeted, due process is required. We have urged the formation of a special court” that “could review the evidence regarding a target before that person is placed on a kill list.”

‘Militant’ holiday schedule

The next issue of the *Militant*, mailed out on Dec. 20, will be a two-week issue. We are taking a one-week break for the holidays.