

Over 800 sign up in 2 weeks!
Join effort to go way over goal



John Hawkins, left, brings *Militant* to picket line of striking Will County government workers, near Chicago, Nov. 19. “We haven’t had a raise in four years,” one worker said.

BY EMMA JOHNSON

“We had all-day teams out all three days during the Thanksgiving week-end,” said Dennis Richter Dec. 3 over the phone from Chicago, an area that moved into the bold on the scoreboard after selling 37 *Militant* subscriptions this week.

“We went twice to a neighborhood where workers have held rallies demanding the removal of refinery waste covering them in dust. We met

SUBSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN
EXTENDED FOR ONE WEEK

a young worker who said he makes \$8.25 an hour at a chemical plant. His wife is unemployed and they have three kids. He signed up.”

As they were going door to door, Richter said a worker repairing a roof waved at them. “I already got that paper,” he said as they approached. “I bought it at one of the rallies.”

On Nov. 19, supporters of the *Militant* sold several copies at a picket

Continued on page 3

‘Proud to know
Ramón Labañino,
a person of values
and principles’

BY JOHN STUDER

Getting to know Cuban revolutionary Ramón Labañino while in a federal prison in Miami has had a big impact on Secundino Pérez.

“Ramón is a person with principles and values,” said Pérez, speaking on a

FORMER PRISONER TALKS
ABOUT ONE OF CUBAN 5

popular Spanish-language radio program in Miami. “He’s someone you become proud to know.”

Labañino is one of five Cuban revolutionaries fighting a political frame-up by the U.S. government. (See “Who Are the Cuban Five” on page 7.)

Interviewed last January on Radio
Continued on page 7

Rail bosses’ profit drive
behind NY train disaster

BY JOHN STUDER

NEW YORK — “82 MPH Criminal,” read the front-page headline of the Dec. 3 *New York Daily News*. “Train driver doing 82 MPH on a 30 MPH bend!” the *New York Post* said. The media campaign aims to foist all the blame for the Dec. 1 derailment of a Metro-North commuter train onto the train’s engineer, while diverting attention from how the rail bosses put profits ahead of the safety of passengers and crew.

Four passengers were killed in the derailment, three of them thrown from the train as it jack-knifed, and more than 70 were injured.

Contrary to the steamroller crusade in the New York press, Earl Weener, spokesperson for the National Transportation Safety Board, the government agency investigating the crash,

ONLY WORKERS, UNIONS
CAN ENFORCE SAFETY
— See editorial page 9

said at a Dec. 3 press conference that they have not yet determined what led to the crash and pressed for Metro-North to implement safety recommendations that have been disregarded.

Continued on page 9



Derailed Metro-North train in New York City Dec. 1. Company rejected safety measures as too costly even though they could prevent such derailments and resulting deaths and injuries.

US rulers continue to claim entire Pacific
as theirs in face of challenges by Beijing

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Tensions are once again heating up in Asia following Chinese military moves to assert greater influence in the East and South China seas and challenge the U.S. rulers’ notion that the entire Pacific belongs to them. Meanwhile, Tokyo is taking steps to

assert its own considerable military power independent of its U.S. ally.

On Nov. 23, the Chinese government declared an air defense identification zone over the East China Sea, demanding that non-Chinese aircraft inform Beijing of flight plans whenever they pass through it. The area includes the uninhabited Diaoyu Islands — called Senkaku by Tokyo

Continued on page 6

Pope leads shift
to expand church
influence in world
wracked by crises

BY SETH GALINSKY

Pope Francis is leading a fight within the Catholic Church to recast itself with a more inclusive image and breathe new life into its activities around the world. The goal is to head off the decline of an institution that is increasingly out of step with the changing social attitudes and

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Also Inside

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- Interns file lawsuit against violation of wage laws 4
- Supermarket workers rally for contract in Washington 5
- Protests against gov’t attacks on asylum seekers in Australia 5

Fall ‘Militant’ subscription campaign Oct. 12 - Dec. 17 (week 7)				
Country	quota	sold	%	2,500
UNITED STATES				2,299 <

Workers protest oil waste in Chicago neighborhood

BY BETSY FARLEY

CHICAGO — Mountainous black piles of oil refinery waste are growing along the Calumet River in the working-class neighborhoods of the Southeast Side here, where residents have been reporting increased incidents of asthma and other respiratory problems. On any windy day the hazardous material billows in clouds, covering houses in black dust.

“In the summer it covered our windows, got in our food, and even covered the kids’ swimming pool in the yard,” said Lilia Barboza, who lives on South Mackinaw Avenue.

The waste material, called petroleum coke or petcoke, is a high-carbon, high-sulfur powdery byproduct produced by the BP refinery in Whiting, Ind. Regulations demand the piles be covered there, but there are no laws governing storage once it is transported to facilities here. The production of petcoke, which is sold mostly overseas as cheap fuel, is slated to triple next year from 700,000 tons to 2.2 million tons after a \$4.2 billion upgrade is completed at the refinery.

Workers who live in the area have organized community meetings demanding the stockpiles be covered or moved. Hundreds protested Nov. 21 at a meeting convened by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency.

“My wife and daughter both got asthma,” said 28-year-old construction worker Santos Cabrera, who grew up on 108th Street, two blocks from the terminals owned by Beemsterboer

Slag Corp. and KCBX Terminals. Cabrera joined a protest of about 45 people Sunday morning Nov. 24 in front of the KCBX terminal. “They need to get these piles out of here. Our children’s health should come first,” he said.

“We are concerned for our neighborhood, the kids have asthma and there are other health problems,” Tom Roche told the *Militant* at a Nov. 21 community organizing meeting of some 150 people at Jane Addams Elementary School. Roche, a worker at the nearby Ford stamping plant, came to the meeting with his wife Pat and their three kids, who all live three blocks from the petcoke mounds.

“We are like an abandoned area in Chicago,” said retired retail worker Teresa Sobieski. “They don’t care about the workers who live here.”

On Nov. 4, Illinois Attorney



Top: Militant/Betsy Farley
Nov. 24 protest, above, on Chicago’s southeast side demanding that hazardous refinery waste be removed or covered. Inset, mounds of uncovered waste near residential neighborhood.



General Lisa Madigan filed suit against KCBX for alleged air pollution caused by petcoke and coal along the Calumet River. On Nov. 19, the Illinois EPA announced it will not approve a construction permit

for KCBX Terminals, and Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced the city is discussing regulations that would require the terminals to cover the piles or surround them with high walls.

Embargo forces closing of Cuba’s US consular service

BY EMMA JOHNSON

The Cuban government has been forced to suspend its consular services in the United States, the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C., announced Nov. 26, holding up travel to and from the island. The suspension is a consequence of the decades-long trade and financial embargo imposed by Washington on Cuba.

On July 12, the Buffalo-based M&T Bank informed the Interests Section that it would no longer provide banking services and gave the Interests Section

and the Cuban Permanent Mission to the United Nations a limited period to close all accounts and find a new bank.

“Due to the restrictions still in force, derived from the U.S. policy of economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba, and despite the numerous efforts made with the Department of State and several banks, it has been impossible for the Cuban Interests Section to find a U.S. or international bank with branches in the U.S. to operate bank accounts of the Cuban diplomatic missions,” said the Interests Section in a press release.

In 1960, President Dwight Eisenhower initiated what became an almost total economic, trade and financial embargo, as well as a ban on U.S. citizens traveling to Cuba, all of which have been maintained by every U.S. president since.

“During the government of President Obama, the blockade has been intensified, particularly in the financial sector,” Cuba’s Minister of Foreign Affairs Bruno Rodríguez told the

U.N. General Assembly Oct. 29 before representatives of 188 nations voted to condemn the U.S. embargo on Cuba for the 22nd year in a row. Only the U.S. and Israel were opposed, with the Marshall Islands, Micronesia and Palau, effectively U.S. colonies, abstaining.

The financial sanctions include fining banks that perform transactions that Washington sees as violations of the embargo. One example is the \$619 million fine the U.S. Treasury Department levied against the Netherlands ING Bank last year.

International conventions stipulate that “the receiving state must provide all facilities to the diplomatic missions, including consular offices, to carry out their functions.” A bilateral agreement between Cuba and the U.S. from 1977 reaffirms adherence to these conventions.

“We cannot force a private bank to provide services to a diplomatic mission,” the State Department said to CNN Nov. 27.

THE MILITANT

Oppose censorship imposed on workers behind bars

“The newspapers being censored are those the prisoners love for recognizing their dignity and the righteousness of their cause,” notes the ‘San Francisco Bay View.’ The ‘Militant’ is part of the fight for the rights of workers behind bars to read and think for themselves.



California prisoners reading *S.F. Bay View*.

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Australia: Send A\$50 for one year to P.O. Box 164 Campsie, NSW 2194, Australia.

Pacific Islands: Send NZ\$50 for one year to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland 1140, New Zealand.

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

line for some 1,000 public workers who went on strike two days earlier in Will County, west of Chicago, Richter said. “They’re still out and we’ll go back there again.”

“They’re trying to increase our contribution to health insurance by 75 percent and we haven’t had a raise in four years,” striker Kendra Coleman, an HIV/STD worker, told *Militant* supporters.

Richter is one of several supporters of the paper in the Midwest who will be going to Omaha, Neb., to help expand readership of the socialist paper there.

Omaha had their best week so far, Rebecca Williamson said by phone Dec. 3. The bulk of the more than two dozen subscribers signed up at the doorstep. “But we did many callbacks and got several subscriptions that way, along with a couple renewals.”

Well over 800 subscriptions have been sold in the past two weeks. To take full advantage of this momentum, the *Militant* has extended the drive one week through Dec. 17.

“We have received a good response from workers in the Red River Valley, where the 20-month lockout of sugar

workers took place,” reported Frank Forrestal from Minneapolis. “So far we’ve picked up eight renewals and expect to get a few more before the end of the drive.”

Some 1,300 members of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union at American Crystal Sugar were locked out between August 2011 and April 2013 in seven different facilities in North Dakota, Minnesota and Iowa. The *Militant* covered the lockout from beginning to end and many workers signed up for subscriptions in the course of the fight.

Forrestal said he got an email from Scott Ripplinger, who was a picket captain and sent in many photos to the *Militant* during the lockout. Ripplinger, who was among several workers framed up by the company on criminal charges for incidents on the picket line, now works as an over-the-road trucker. When one of his loads went through Memphis, Tenn., he visited the picket line of fellow BCTGM members locked out by Kellogg Company there since Oct. 22.

Seattle has climbed up to one of the top spots on the scoreboard after getting 35 subscriptions last week. Some new

forces chipped in, reported Mary Martin. Fire Carrol, one of her co-workers in a popcorn factory in Kent, Wash., sold three of them. “He decided to get a subscription after reading the paper for a few weeks. Over the Thanksgiving weekend he signed up three new readers among people he knows back home in central Washington.”

“In a time of chaos and lies, it’s good to see a paper that tells it like it is. That is why I



Militant/Baskaran Appu

Student Haswany Jamaluddin reads *Militant* Nov. 30 at “Socialism 2013” conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. She and 12 others subscribed and 58 Pathfinder books were sold.

encourage others to read the *Militant*,” Carrol told Martin.

The name the *Militant* caught the eye of Glynis Harps, who works in payroll accounting. She met John Naubert as he was knocking on her door in west Seattle Dec. 1. “This must be about free thinking, standing for your rights,” she said. “This society is oppressing people. If you exercise your rights, they retaliate against you.” When Naubert explained that this system cannot be reformed and that what is needed is a workers’ revolution, she responded, “I agree, can I also buy another subscription for a friend?”

From New York Deborah Liatos reported that Greg Herndon, a co-worker at a plastics factory in New Jersey, renewed his subscription and bought a second copy of *Cuba and Angola, Fighting for Africa’s Freedom and Our Own*. He showed his first copy to a co-worker, who kept it and then decided to get a *Militant* subscription and *Malcolm X*,

Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power.

“We need each other to help find the truth,” said Herndon, who is also encouraging the library in Edgewater, N.J., where he lives, to carry Pathfinder titles. Supporters in New York have sold 120 books on special offer since the start of the drive. Top seller is *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* with 30 copies and *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free* with 26.

One area has already gone over the top on the scoreboard. “I am deeply thankful because through the *Militant* I can be informed about Cuba and the Five Heroes,” wrote an inmate in Florida with his six-month renewal slip, put-

Continued on page 4



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Library worker David McElroy signs up for subscription in Stratford area of London Dec. 1 from *Militant* supporters Ann Howie, left, and Pamela Holmes.

Special offers with ‘Militant’ subscription

The Cuban Five

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

The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

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

The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning

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

We Are Heirs of the World’s Revolutions

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

Thomas Sankara Speaks

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

See distributors
on page 8

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

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

Cuba and Angola

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

Women in Cuba

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

Women and Revolution

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

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

San Francisco
End All of Washington’s Sanctions Against Iran. Speaker: Andrea Morell, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 13, 7:30 p.m. 5482 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

ILLINOIS

Chicago
Freedom for Prisoners Convicted Based on ‘Confessions’ Extracted Through Torture. Fri., Dec. 13, 7:30 p.m. 806 W. Washington Blvd., Room 202. Tel.: (312) 952-0628.

IOWA

Des Moines
Unionize! Organize! Support Workers’ Struggles from Memphis to Bangladesh. Speaker: Chuck Guerra, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 13, 7:30 p.m. 3707 Douglas Ave. Tel.: (515) 707-1779.

MINNESOTA

Minneapolis
Washington-Tehran Interim Nuclear Pact: Its Meaning for Workers in Iran and the U.S. Speaker: Frank Forrestal, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 13, 7:30 p.m. 416 E. Hennepin Ave. Tel.: (612) 729-1205.

CANADA

Montreal
End All Sanctions Against Iran! Speaker: Michel Prairie, Communist League. Fri., Dec. 13, 7:30 p.m. 7107 St-Denis, Room 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland
Why Governments Spy: Secret Police, a Weapon of Capitalist Rule. Speaker: Janet Roth, Communist League. Fri., Dec. 13, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5 waged, \$2 unwaged. 4/125 Grafton Road. Tel.: (09) 369-1223.

Interns file lawsuits against working for bosses for free

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Fed up with working for free, a growing number of interns have been filing lawsuits against employers and winning cases over violation of federal and state minimum wage laws — striking back against one front in bosses’ efforts to drive down the value of labor.

Four months after two intern workers filed suit against Condé Nast, whose publications include *The New Yorker*, *Vanity Fair* and *Vogue*, the company announced in October it was ending its internship program.

The suit, which is still pending, was filed by Lauren Ballinger, who was employed over the summer in 2009 as an intern at *W Magazine’s* accessories and jewelry departments. She often worked 12-hour days or longer for a flat \$12 a day. The other plaintiff, Matthew Leib, worked at *The New Yorker* in 2009 and 2010, receiving between \$300 and \$500 for a three- to four-month internship, according to Reuters.

The suit, handled by Outten & Golden LLP, states that the interns are “employees” who under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act and New York Labor Law must be paid minimum wage.

“Not only is the company violating the law, but it perpetuates inequalities,” Michael Litrownik, an attorney with Outten & Golden, said in a phone interview Dec. 3. Often the only people in a position to intern with no pay “are those who come from families of wealth,” shutting out others from even the possibility of a job.

The suit against Condé was filed days after a June 11 ruling by a New York judge that Fox Searchlight Pictures violated labor laws in using unpaid interns in production of the movie “Black Swan.” According to the suit, more than 100 interns have worked at Fox without pay since September 2005.

Another class action suit brought by intern Lucy Bickerton against Public Broadcasting Service’s “Charlie Rose Show” was also settled at the end of June for \$250,000, towards covering unpaid labor of interns employed there.

An intern at *Harper’s Bazaar* who worked 55 hours per week without pay filed a lawsuit last year against Hearst Corporation.

The magazine *Forbes*, which bills itself as “The Capitalist Tool,” is now urging employers to stop hiring interns. “Lawsuits against employers by

unpaid interns are becoming common and very public,” said an article published Sept. 6. The expenses companies legally open themselves up to, it warned, are “going to be significantly more expensive than just paying them — outright.”

The use of unpaid and exceptionally low-paid intern labor has expanded over the past decades. Giving away your labor under the rubric of an internship has been increasingly promoted as an essential way for students and others looking for work, often with hopes of breaking into a “career,” to pretty up their résumés and “get a foot in the door.”

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers, 50 percent of graduating students in 2008 had some kind of internship while in school, up from 17 percent in 1992. This year companies have increased their use of interns by one-third over 2012, reports a recent survey by the Society for Human Resource Management. University administrators often push this by providing a few college credits for internships.

Prior to the 1970s, such internships were uncommon due to protections won through labor struggles. The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, for example, was a concession wrested in big battles from the capitalist class, which was then looking to stem a mass working-class social movement. For the first time in U.S. history, the act set a minimum wage and a legal workweek at 40 hours.

The growing use of intern labor today has developed alongside a deepening crisis of capitalism on a world scale, characterized by high unemployment, increased competition for jobs and a new offensive by bosses against workers’ living standards and working conditions.

Subscriptions

Continued from page 3

ting subscriptions by prisoners at 107 percent. (See coverage on the Cuban Five on page 7.)

“I want to fight for a better world,” said graduate student Haswany Jamaluddin as she signed up for a subscription at the “Socialism 2013” conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Invited by the Malaysian Socialist Party, Baskaran Appu from New Zealand and Linda Harris from Australia brought the *Militant* and Pathfinder books to the Nov. 30-Dec. 1 event.

Jamaluddin also got a copy of *We Are Heirs of the World’s Revolutions*, one of nine books on special offer (see ad on page 3). Participants in the conference picked up 58 Pathfinder books, 18 of them on special. In addition to Jamaluddin, 12 decided to subscribe.

While Appu and Harris were campaigning in Malaysia, *Militant* supporters back home in Australia and New Zealand both put in their best week so far, as did supporters in five other areas. For the second week in a row we signed up more than 400 new readers!

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

Impact of Korean War discussed at NY meeting



NEW YORK —

Some 75 people attended a film and panel discussion at City College here Nov. 21 on the history of the Korean War. The meeting featured the documentary “Memory of Forgotten War.” Directed by Deann Borshay Liem and Ramsay Liem, the film is centered on interviews with four Koreans whose families were permanently separated in the course of the 1950-53 Korean War. The movie also shows how U.S. troops occupied the South at the end of World War II, put back in power officials who had collaborated with the Japanese occupation and unleashed murderous repression to impose their rule.

Panelists, above, discussed the impact of the division and continued hostility by Washington against North Korea. From left: Jong Wan Baik, a professor at CCNY; Ramsay Liem; Jae Jung Suh, fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars; and Sukjong Hong, a writer, artist and fellow at the Korea Policy Institute. The Colin Powell School for Civic and Global leadership hosted the event.

Liem, a professor at Boston College, said he has noticed more knowledge about the Korean War, a once taboo subject, among Korean-American students in recent years. “I’ve been surprised by how many come to my classes and already know about the division from talking to their grandparents,” he said.

— SETH GALINSKY

Winning new contributors key to success of Party-Building Fund

BY TONY LANE

Payments received this week of \$10,229 bring the total collected for the SWP Party-Building Fund to \$65,814. With conscious and regular attention in each area, we are in a good position to bring the \$100,000 fund to a successful completion over the next three weeks.

San Francisco raised its quota to \$14,000 and is just four shy of their goal of winning 30 new contributors. Twenty-one of those who have given to the Socialist Workers Party for the first time learned about the fund after buying a *Militant* subscription from communist workers who knocked on their door, reports Carole Lesnick. “One worker, whose family is from China, offered a \$5 bill for a single copy of the paper,” said Lesnick. “When I said, ‘We’ll put the extra \$4 to the cause,’ she responded. ‘Let me give you this,’ and handed me a \$20 bill for the party fund.”

New York has received donations from 47 first-time contributors out of a goal of 50, reports Candace Wagner. Gaining these new contributors is an invaluable part of winning the pledges necessary for local areas to top their quotas.

Militant readers and supporters can send fund contributions to the SWP office nearest you (see direc-

tory on page 8) or directly to the SWP National Office at 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Payments received in the SWP National Office by Monday are counted for that week’s scoreboard. A final chart will include all payments received by Dec. 23.

Party-Building Fund Week 6 of 9

Area	Quota	Collected	%
Seattle	\$8,800	\$7,915	90%
San Francisco*	\$14,000	\$11,055	79%
Des Moines*	\$3,000	\$2,306	77%
Boston	\$3,500	\$2,460	70%
Atlanta	\$8,800	\$6,122	70%
New York	\$20,000	\$13,626	68%
Twin Cities	\$5,750	\$3,321	58%
Los Angeles	\$8,200	\$4,658	57%
Lincoln	\$200	\$100	50%
Miami	\$3,000	\$1,475	49%
Washington, DC	\$7,500	\$3,570	48%
Philadelphia	\$4,200	\$1,937	46%
Omaha	\$2,500	\$1,068	43%
Houston	\$3,000	\$1,170	39%
Chicago*	\$10,000	\$3,680	37%
Other		\$1,350	
Total	\$102,450	\$65,814	66%
Should Be	\$100,000	\$66,666	67%
* Raised goal			

JACK BARNES

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ON THE PICKET LINE

Boston school bus drivers blast union busting at council hearing

BOSTON — More than 200 school bus drivers and their supporters packed the city council chambers and an adjoining overflow room here Nov. 21 for a special hearing that discussed Veolia Transportation's attacks against them and their union, United Steelworkers Local 8751.

Drivers and other union activists who spoke at the hearing explained how Veolia, which was awarded a contract by the city in July to bus some 30,000 students daily, locked them out for one day Oct. 8, after refusing to meet to discuss union grievances over contract violations.

"It was a well orchestrated and well calculated effort of union busting," Steven Kirschbaum, chair of the union's grievance committee, told the hearing.

Following the lockout, Veolia management fired Kirschbaum and three other union leaders — Vice President Steve Gillis, Recording Secretary Andre Francois and steward and former Local President Gary Murchison.

Transportation contractor Veolia operates school bus systems in more than 130 areas in the U.S. and Canada. It signed an agreement with the union before it took over the Boston contract to maintain all current employees and honor the union contract.

On Oct. 7, a day before the lockout, company management called all drivers to tell them they had to come in and fill out a new-hire application, along with a background check waiver.

The next morning drivers refused to work until they could discuss what they saw as disregard for the agreement the company made.

"We demanded a meeting with them," Gillis, the fired vice president, said, "or that they schedule a set time for one."

The company responded with the lockout, firing of union leaders and 864 letters of reprimand to drivers.

Veolia officials and Mayor Thomas Menino were invited to address the city council meeting but didn't show up. The mayor has called the drivers "selfish people who only want to cause disruption in our city."

"They ignored us. They disrespected us. Just like today," Chantal Casimir, a driver out of the Readville yard, said.

Members of the public were invited to address the hearing, and a number took the floor to back the Steelworkers.

"We need to organize solidarity with the bus drivers," Kevin Dwire, a member of UNITE HERE Local 26 and of the Socialist Workers Party, said. "Tomorrow it can be any of us. Our contract at Skychef is up next year."

— Ted Leonard

Supermarket workers rally in DC for contract

WASHINGTON — Dozens of Giant and Safeway workers and supporters rallied Nov. 21 outside the grand opening of the new O Street Market Giant Foods store here to demand that the two grocery chains back down in their efforts to eliminate health benefits.

The grocery store workers — members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 400 — voted Nov. 13 to authorize a strike. The contract expired Oct. 31, but has been extended to Dec. 20. In the meantime, Giant and Safeway have begun recruiting scabs.

"We must be prepared to keep our stores open," Safeway spokesman Greg

Ten Eyck said in a statement Nov. 11.

"What they want to do is shift people out of health care — part-time workers, spouses and retirees," Craig Simpson, a UFCW representative told the *Militant* at the protest.

"I have 15 years in and I still have to bump people off the schedule to get not even 40 hours," Stephanie Pryor, who works at the Giant store in Greenbelt, Md., said.

Pryor is among the almost 13,000 workers at the two grocery chains in the D.C. area who can't get full-time hours. "That has been the trend for about 10 years," she said.

Pryor described how the expansion of part-time hiring forces more senior part-timers to take shifts from newer part-time workers in order to get more hours. This causes resentment and divisions among the workers, she said.

Many of her co-workers work at Giant because they get health benefits, Pryor said. If Giant and Safeway get



Militant/Paul Pederson

Members of United Food and Commercial Workers take fight for new contract inside Giant Foods at O Street Market after rally outside new supermarket in Washington, D.C., Nov. 21.

their way, those workers, their spouses and retirees will have to buy insurance on the exchanges set up under the Affordable Health Care Act.

D.C. Mayor Vincent Gray, D.C. nonvoting Delegate to Congress El-

eanor Holmes Norton and other area politicians attended the grand opening, lavishing praise to Giant for bringing "good jobs" to the rapidly gentrifying Shaw-Howard neighborhood.

— Paul Pederson

Rally in Australia protests gov't attacks on asylum-seekers

BY JOANNE KUNIANSKY AND MANUELE LASALO

CANBERRA, Australia — Hundreds rallied here Nov. 18 in front of federal parliament to protest government attacks on asylum-seekers coming by boat to Australia.

Signs and banners reading, "End mandatory detention," "Let them land, let them work," "No one is illegal" and "Refugees are welcome here" were carried by groups who came from Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra, as well as re-

gional towns across New South Wales and Victoria.

"My youth is being wasted," said a young refugee from Iran who spent four months in an immigration jail in Darwin and now lives in Melbourne under visa conditions that prohibit him from working. "I can't afford to study. I don't like getting money from the government. I want to work and be part of society."

Since the conservative coalition of the Liberal and National parties won control of the government in the Sept. 11 election, Prime Minister Anthony Abbott has put in place Operation Sovereign Borders, which uses the navy to turn asylum-seeker boats back to Indonesia.

One of the first actions of the Abbott government was to reinstate more restrictive temporary protection visas. The government aims to rapidly process the claims of the 32,000 asylum-seekers

currently in detention. Those deemed "genuine" refugees are to be given TPVs, with no prospect of permanent settlement or possibility of bringing family members. Those denied refugee status would be deported.

The day before the Canberra protest, Prime Minister Abbott, while in Sri Lanka attending the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting, announced the gift of two patrol boats to the Sri Lankan navy to aid in stopping refugee boats headed for Australia.

As of January 2013, nearly half of all asylum-seekers imprisoned in Australia were Sri Lankan, many fleeing the aftermath of the more than two-decade civil war there that ended in 2009 with the defeat of the Tamil Tigers in a bloody government offensive against the Tamil oppressed minority.

More than 1,000 Sri Lankans have been returned home since the former Labor government began its harsher anti-immigrant policies. All new arrivals by boat are to be sent to detention centers on Manus Island in Papua New Guinea or to Nauru and refused resettlement in Australia.



Militant/Ron Poulsen

Rally in front of Australian parliament in Canberra, Nov. 18.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



December 16, 1988

December 7, Pearl Harbor Day, is an occasion for flag-waving by U.S. government and military figures. The Japanese military attack on a U.S. naval base in 1941 was used to whip up an anti-Japanese hysteria as part of Washington's efforts to build domestic support for U.S. participation in the interimperialist slaughter known as World War II.

Two months later the White House issued an order to intern 120,000 Japanese Americans in concentration camps, accusing them of being a potential fifth column.

More than 46 years after this mass incarceration on Aug. 10, 1988, President Ronald Reagan signed legislation apologizing for the forced relocation and establishing a \$1.25 billion trust fund to pay reparations to the evacuees and their families.



December 16, 1963

FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover made an ominous speech in Washington, D.C., Dec. 4. He warned against "political radicalism" in the civil-rights movement and declared "devotion to race should not supersede devotion to established institutions."

Hoover's statement raises the question of just what "established institutions" he means. Jim Crow is an established institution. And it rests on other established institutions like the Democratic Party machine in the South, the racist police, the racist state governments, the racist voter-registration system, segregation laws, etc. — to speak only of the South.

Hoover and his FBI have clearly established a record of devotion to, and refusal to challenge, these institutions even when they are clearly incompatible with the 13th and 14th Amendments.



December 17, 1938

NEW YORK — Two hundred working-class families, tired of the continual delay and red tape of the Home Relief Bureaus, have taken possession of two relief offices and are determined to remain on a sit-down strike until the necessary food and clothing for their children is provided.

The relief officials have turned off the heat in the bureaus, locked the fire exits and wash rooms, and have refused to allow food to be sent into the strikers. A picket line has been thrown around both bureaus.

A recent reduction of 50 cents on the coal allowance for each unemployed family is an indication of the policy to be pursued by the LaGuardia administration. In homes dependent upon coal for heat this will mean further misery for the jobless.

US rulers claim entire Pacific

Continued from front page

— which are controlled by Japan, but claimed by China.

The move took place just over a week ahead of a planned trip to Asia by Vice President Joseph Biden that was originally focused on advancing the White House's goal of securing, by the end of the year, the Trans-Pacific Partnership — a major trade pact involving 12 nations that comprise 40 percent of the world's gross domestic product and does not include China, the U.S. rulers most formidable rival power. The trip has now taken on the additional purpose of trying to respond to Beijing's move, while averting any military confrontations.

Beijing's announced air defense zone overlaps parts of similar zones declared by Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. In its announcement the Chinese Defense Ministry said its armed forces would take unspecified "defense emergency measures" against aircraft that didn't identify themselves and obey instructions from Chinese authorities.

Both Washington and Tokyo promptly flew unannounced military aircraft into the zone, including two B-52 bombers by the Pentagon Nov. 26. "U.S. defense officials said there would be further military exercises in the area," reported the *Wall Street Journal*, "and acknowledged it is possible that China could attempt to contact or intercept the aircraft."

Three days later, Tokyo flew 10 fighters and reconnaissance aircraft within the air defense zone, according to Col. Shen Jinke, a spokesperson for China's air force, the *Journal* reported.

Meeting in Tokyo with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe Dec. 3, Biden criticized China's declaration of a new air defense zone, "but stopped short of joining Japanese leaders in demanding that it be scrapped," noted the *Financial Times*.

Biden, who also plans to meet with South Korean President Park Geun-hye and Chinese President Xi Jinping during his weeklong visit, said he was "deeply concerned" that tensions risked "accidents and miscalculations."

After the Chinese air defense zone was announced, Japan's two largest

long-haul carriers, Japanese Air Lines and ANA Holdings, complied with Beijing's request to notify the Chinese government of flight plans before crossing. But the Japanese government Nov. 27 ordered all commercial airlines to disregard this and has expressed disappointment that the U.S. government has not done the same.

U.S. expands military role in Japan

Japan's Self-Defense Forces are among the world's largest armed forces, with annual military spending ranking sixth in the world last year — in Asia second only to China.

Washington has not taken an official position on who actually owns the Diaoyu Islands, but as a signer of a mutual defense treaty with Japan it backs military action undertaken by Tokyo.

In early October, U.S. and Japanese officials agreed to revise the 1997 Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation. Long-range U.S. surveillance drones will now be placed in Japan for the first time, monitoring the East China Sea. Navy reconnaissance planes never before stationed outside the U.S. will patrol waters in the region. A new X-band U.S. missile defense radar system will be put in place in western Japan, augmenting one already set up in the northern part of the country. These two, combined with one being considered in the Philippines, would create a radar arc that could track any missile launched from North Korea and much of China.

Prime Minister Abe has also approved creation of a National Security Council and is promoting passage of a national secrets law. The bill, already approved by the lower house of Parliament, would impose stiff prison terms for "leaking" a vague array of diplomatic, military and other government secrets. "The bill could be used to prosecute not only officials who leak secrets," stated the *New York Times*, "but also journalists or even university researchers who receive them."

China's air defense zone over the East China Sea further complicates a dispute with South Korea over a submerged helipad-equipped rock within the zone known as Ieodo in Korea and Suyan

gious doctrine and the weakening of divisions among workers based on religious intolerance.

Regardless of Francis' motives, the shift is good for working people because it provides more openness to discuss and act together for their social and political needs.

"The first reform must be attitude," Francis told the Jesuit journal. "If a homosexual person is of good will and is in search of God, I am no one to judge."

"We need to create still broader opportunities for a more incisive female presence in the church," while ordaining women as priests was still "a question not open to discussion."

Isaias Miguel Ortiz, a university professor in the Dominican Republic, applauded the pope's statement on not judging gays in a Sept. 22 article by Associated Press interviewing church

Continued on page 9

Impact of typhoon in Philippines 'unabated'



AP Photo/Bullit Marquez

Nearly a month after Typhoon Haiyan devastated a large part of the central Philippines "its effects show no sign of abating," U.N. representative Bernard Kerblat told Agence France-Presse Dec. 3.

According to the Philippine government, the death toll is now 5,680, with 1,779 people still missing. Millions of workers, farmers and fishermen lost their homes, built in the most vulnerable low-lying areas, because they couldn't afford to live anywhere else, much less build structures that could withstand the storm.

The government says 26,233 were injured, double the number it gave two weeks ago. "We're ... seeing a second wave of people reaching hospitals with injuries," the World Health Organization said in a Dec. 4 statement. But in many rural areas no medical help, or much food aid, has arrived.

The U.N. estimates that 4.13 million people were displaced, and 1.2 million houses damaged or destroyed. More than 204,000 people are still living in 1,000 "evacuation centers," including churches, stadiums and schools, many of which were at least partially destroyed, like the one in Tacloban, above.

The U.S. Agency for International Development, which has been dispensing aid with an eyedropper, estimates that 74 percent of crops, 60 percent of fruit-bearing trees, and 65 percent of fishing boats and equipment were wiped out, affecting 5.6 million people.

There is no government plan for rebuilding homes. Instead, the U.N. hopes to distribute 98,600 plastic sheets, 7,500 tents and 19,000 solar lanterns.

— SETH GALINSKY

in China. South Korea administers the territory. The island is believed to be surrounded by natural gas and mineral deposits.

At the same time, economic relations between China and South Korea have been growing, with trade reaching \$215 billion last year. The Barack Obama administration is pressuring Seoul against letting China's telecommunications company Huawei develop South Korea's advanced wireless network, citing "national security" concerns with China, the *Wall Street Journal* reported Dec. 3.

On Nov. 26, China sent its first aircraft carrier, the Liaoning, along with two destroyers and two frigates into the South China Sea for training exercises. The move evoked a strong response from the Philippine government, which is in conflict with Beijing over control of the Scarborough Shoals. China claims sovereignty over all land inside the South China Sea, including more than 40 islands.

In an effort to counter the rising power of China and keep up pressure on North Korea, the Pentagon has announced plans to increase the proportion of its warships in the Pacific from about half to 60 percent by 2020. And Washington is working to strengthen regional alliances and establish bases surrounding China, including the Pacific island Saipan, Australian air force bases at Darwin and Tindal, Changi East air base in Singapore, Korat air base in Thailand, Trivandrum in India and possible airbases in the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia, an unnamed U.S. Air Force general announced in September, according to foreignpolicy.com.

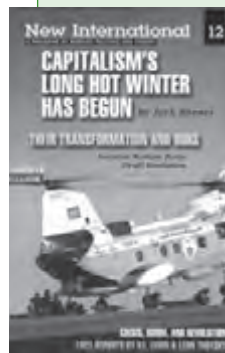
As part of this "Asia pivot,"

Washington seeks to exploit differences between Beijing and several Southeast Asian governments — Brunei, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan and Vietnam — over these islands and territorial waters. More than half the world's supertanker commerce travels through the South China Sea and vast reserves of oil and gas are believed to be located there.

New International no. 12

'Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun'

by Jack Barnes



Today's accelerating global capitalist slump accompanies the most far-reaching shift in Washington's military policy since the U.S. buildup toward World War II. Class-struggle-minded working people must face this turning point for imperialism, and chart a revolutionary course to confront it.

New International no. 13

'Our Politics Start with the World'

by Jack Barnes



The economic and cultural inequalities between imperialist and semicolonial countries, and among classes within almost every country, are produced and accentuated by the workings of capitalism. For vanguard workers to build parties able to lead a revolutionary struggle for power, our activity must be guided by a strategy to close this gap.

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'Proud to know Ramón Labañino'

Continued from front page

Progreso's *La tarde se mueve* (Afternoon on the Move), Pérez told host Edmundo García about his experiences with Labañino during a six-month period they were both in the same unit in the Federal Detention Center in late 2009 and early 2010. At that time, Labañino was awaiting a resentencing hearing in federal court. Pérez has since been released on parole.

"At first I was nervous about approaching Ramón," said Pérez, who had heard only biased propaganda about the Cuban Five from the local media, which falsely branded them "Cuban spies." But as he got to know Labañino, "I saw the kind of person he is. We became good friends — based on respect for each other's ideas."

In conversations among prisoners, "he didn't just tell you, 'This is how things are.' He tried to get you to understand things. ... So you would gradually understand how things really are," said Pérez, who came to the U.S. some 14 years ago from Pinar del Río province in Cuba, where he had worked as a doctor.

Respected by fellow inmates

In the prison world some individuals elicit "respect out of fear," Pérez said. Labañino earned a different kind of respect, one "that comes from the heart."

"He always respected everyone's ideas and beliefs," Pérez said. And everyone respected him, "even the guards."

If he saw a fellow inmate not feeling well, Labañino "was the first one to go over and try to cheer him up," Pérez said. "He didn't care what nationality you were — Cuban, Nicaraguan, whatever, he'd ask you about your problem, and if there was something he could do, he did it with pleasure. That's Ramón."

Ramón would always tell him, "Try to keep your mind occupied with something productive. Since we're here, occupy yourself with something productive like chess, read a good book, make yourself a good meal."

Labañino read a lot, loaned books to fellow prisoners, followed the press, and received a lot of messages of support and other correspondence, Pérez said.

He would talk a lot about the Cuban

Revolution. "Ramón was very interested about everything that happened in Cuba, and he has a broad understanding. On any question about Cuba, any issue, we would sit down and talk. He wasn't trying to convince you — we'd talk, and we would reach a certain understanding."

Pérez added, "We kept on top of the news." They would listen to Radio Progreso, as well as radio broadcasts from Cuba. Using small battery-powered radios, "we had to be creative. You had to stand right up against the wall" to pick up a signal.

As they discussed the U.S. government's frame-up of the Cuban Five, Labañino showed him the trial record. "He gave it to me so I could read it, so it wouldn't be just what he said but so I could see the facts," Pérez said.

'Feel indebted' for what the Five did

Many fellow inmates at the Federal Detention Center became convinced that the Five "had been unjustly imprisoned," he noted. By infiltrating Cuban-American paramilitary groups in Florida, "they were watching out for the Cuban people, to prevent terrorism in Cuba. The trial never proved anything but that this is what they were doing."

He pointed to the selfless conduct of the Five, including separation from loved ones, not being able to tell their families what they were doing until after their arrests, and the long prison sentences imposed on them. "The things they gave up in order to protect the Cuban people — you feel indebted to them for life, because it was such a beautiful gesture full of love and sacrifice," he said.

"Ramón is a big guy" and he was an athlete in his youth, Pérez noted. But years in prison take their toll. "He's had some health problems, like with his knees, but he exercises a lot." Labañino now suffers from arthritis, which affects his ability to walk.

Pérez said he saw Labañino's wife, Elizabeth Palmeiro, once when she came to visit at the Miami prison. "My family has met his family in Cuba and they started a friendship that has continued. Elizabeth has waged a fight from Cuba and has made efforts so his three daughters



Granma

Top, Ramón Labañino, center, with fellow inmates in U.S. prison. Bottom, Ailí Labañino, one of Ramón's daughters, speaks at Ninth Colloquium for the Freedom of the Cuban Five in Holguín, Cuba, Nov. 13. From left, Laura Labañino, daughter of Ramón; Yadira Pérez, niece of Gerardo Hernández; and Irma González, daughter of René González.

know their father is with them, in spirit even if he is not there physically. That is very important and she's done this very well and with great courage. Support from family is important for anyone who's in prison."

Labañino, along with Antonio Guerrero and Fernando González, was transferred to the Federal Detention Center in Miami in September 2009 after a federal appeals court ordered resentencing hearings for the three on the grounds that their prison terms exceeded federal guidelines. The U.S. authorities' hope, in the words of federal prosecutor Caroline Heck Miller, was to calm the "contentiousness" and "noise" stirred up by the international campaign to free the Cuban Five. At a hearing on Dec. 8, 2009, Labañino's life sentence on trumped-up charges of "conspiracy to gather and transmit to a foreign government information relating to national defense" was reduced to 30 years.

"I remember he was feeling a little bad that evening," Pérez said. "But he's someone who bounces back, who doesn't let himself get down, and the next day he appeared more at ease. He told me, 'This fight isn't over, we have to keep on fighting.'"

Pérez said he was struck above all by the fact that Ramón "wasn't concerned about himself — he felt it was necessary to continue fighting for Gerardo."

Of the Five, Gerardo Hernández was given the harshest sentence: two concurrent life sentences plus 15 years. Although the life sentences on espionage conspiracy charges were reduced for Labañino and Guerrero, in Hernández's case it was left unchanged because the court deemed it was "irrelevant to the time he will serve in prison."

Hernández's other life sentence was

for "conspiracy to commit murder," based on the false claim that Hernández bore responsibility for the Cuban government's 1996 shutdown of two hostile aircraft that had invaded Cuban airspace in disregard of repeated warnings from Havana. The planes were flown by the rightist group Brothers to the Rescue, part of the group's escalating provocations designed to ignite a confrontation between Havana and Washington.

Asked how he was influenced by Labañino, Pérez replied, "I learned you can make mistakes in your life, but you can't live a lie. When you live the truth you have no fear. And that's Ramón."

'The caliber they are made of'

When Labañino was about to be transferred out of the Miami prison, Pérez told him, "I'm getting out of prison before you, and I'll be there for whatever you need of me."

Interviewer Edmundo García was among the supporters of the Cuban Five who attended the 2009 resentencing hearings. "You saw Ramón in prison, and I saw him in the courtroom," he said in closing the program. "And there are things I will never forget."

Ramón, he told Pérez, "entered the courtroom with his hands held high, handcuffed, and turned toward the people who, as he knew, were committed to the release of the Five for the reasons you explained. He raised his handcuffed hands in a symbol of victory, and this was very moving for me."

García thanked Pérez "for this testimony of the human qualities of Ramón Labañino." He concluded, "These are the same human qualities of all the Five, because this is precisely the caliber of men they are."

Who are the Cuban Five?



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

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

The frame-up and long sentences meted out to the Five is part of Washington's decades-long campaign to overturn the political power held by the working class of Cuba and to punish the toilers of that nation for making and defending a socialist revolution 90 miles from U.S. shores.

All but René González, who returned to Cuba in May 2013, remain in prison.

‘They don’t understand what we’re ready to fight and die for’

Below is an excerpt from Cuba and the Coming American Revolution. *The Spanish edition is one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for December. The selection is from “There Will Be a Victorious Revolution in the United States Before a Victorious Counterrevolution in Cuba,” based on two talks by Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes in March 2001 on 40th anniversary of Cuba’s victory over Washington’s mercenary force at the Bay of Pigs. Copyright © 2001 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JACK BARNES

The victory at Playa Girón reminds us of the price toilers must be ready to pay to win our freedom from exploitation and oppression and then to defend it. We can’t help but be affected by the fearlessness displayed by tens of thousands of Cuban workers and peasants, many of them very young — by their courage and determination in face of death. That’s one of the qualities of a people engaged in a profound revolutionary transformation of their circumstances and themselves.

What’s so striking about Cuban revolutionists, however, is not their courage and determination in face of death. *It’s their attitude toward life.* That, above all, is what the élan, the



Bohemia

Cuba’s First Company, 134th Militia Battalion, celebrates victory at Playa Girón, April 1961.

discipline, the bravery that ensured the triumph at Playa Girón were all about.

That’s why, as [Playa Girón Cuban Commander] José Ramón Fernández testifies, there was such surprise in Washington in April 1961 “at the scope of the Cuban people’s victory.” The outcome, he points out, “can be explained only by the courage of a people who saw the January 1 [1959] triumph as the genuine opportunity to determine their own future. This is why they proudly wore the militia uniforms and were on alert, and willing to fight, with the firm conviction they would win.”

That’s what the U.S. rulers did not understand — and even more importantly, *can never understand.* They do not and cannot understand the scope of the capacities of workers and farmers engaged in struggle, *revolutionary* struggle above all. They cannot understand human beings like the militia members in that wonderful photograph the *Militant* newspaper ran this week of the First Company of the 134th Battalion celebrating their victory at Playa Girón.

If this weren’t true — if the ruling class could understand what propels workers and farmers into revolutionary action; if they understood what we are ready to fight and die for, or could *learn* to understand it—then socialist revolution would be an illusion. But

they do not and cannot.

In order to rationalize the legitimacy of their exploitative system before the eyes of society as a whole, the rulers rely on *ideology*. Contrary to the bourgeoisie’s pretensions to civilization and culture, there are no “great ideas” or scientific social theories whose inexorable conclusion is that a handful of property-holding families must forever grow wealthy off the labor of the majority of humanity, maintaining their class dictatorship by whatever force and violence is necessary. That’s not a law of nature, or of political economy. ...

[B]ourgeois ideology is not a conspiracy. It’s not some clever plot they hatch. The closer the rulers’ rationalizations come to something with a family resemblance to social thought, the more impossible it becomes for them and their children to disentangle what they, as a class, *want* and *claim* to be true from the truth itself. The same ideological illusions hold sway among the middle-class and professional layers who look to the bourgeois rulers and act on their behalf. ...

Because the bourgeoisie and their servants believe their own ideology, they end up making political misjudgments about the capacities of working people — about the toilers whose courageous actions allow them to begin escaping the domination of these ghosts. Thus, at decisive moments the

rulers make big miscalculations. And, in the end, that’s one of the main reasons why they will lose.

Over the years, I’ve frequently heard the question: “Didn’t most top CIA and White House officials really know there would be no uprising by the Cuban people in response to the Bay of Pigs invasion?” The answer is, no. It’s not that simple. And it’s worth taking a few minutes to discuss why.

A good place to start is Fernández’s judgment that “from a strategic and tactical point of view, the enemy’s idea was well conceived.” We should take that assessment as dead serious. But it contradicts all the most common evaluations promoted for forty years by the U.S. rulers and their propagandists to rationalize Cuba’s stunning victory. They point to the CIA’s supposed blunders, or to Kennedy’s claimed vacillations, or to a combination of both.

Fernández rejects this. “The mercenaries came well organized, well armed, and well supported,” he says. “What they lacked was a just cause to defend. That is why they did not fight with the same passion, courage, conviction, valor, firmness, bravery, and spirit of victory as did the revolutionary forces.”

Che Guevara made the same point just a few weeks after the victory at Playa Girón. ...

The U.S. rulers, Che said, figured they needed only 1,000 men to carry out a successful invasion and hold a beachhead in Cuba. “But they needed 1,000 men there who would fight to the death,” he emphasized, and that they did not have. “Someone whose daddy had 30,000 acres of land, and who comes here solely to show his presence so the 30,000 acres of land will be returned to him — you can’t ask him to die at the hand of a peasant who had nothing and who has a ferocious desire to kill him because they’re coming to take the peasant’s land away.”

“They have always been wrong about us,” Che concluded. “They have always arrived late. And they have never done anything that did not serve instead to strengthen the trust of the people in their government, to make the revolution more militant: in short, to strengthen us more.”

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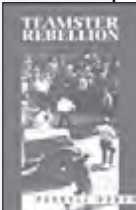
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Only working class can enforce safety

Disasters — like the Dec. 1 Metro-North passenger train derailment leading to four deaths and more than 70 injuries — are *not* “accidents,” but the inevitable result of cold-blooded calculations by the bosses endemic to capitalism.

And the bosses always move might and main to foist blame for such profit-driven catastrophes onto workers.

Their cutthroat drive to boost profits, driven even harder by the deepening crisis of capitalist production and trade today, pushes the bosses to increase the rate of exploitation of the working class. This translates into slashed personnel, longer hours, relentless speed-up and cutting corners on safety — accompanied by a rising toll on workers’ lives and limbs.

Black lung is once again on the rise among U.S. coal miners. There was a 37 percent leap in construction deaths in New York City last year — 75 percent among nonunion workers, many of whom are undocumented.

And there has been a rise in rail deaths — among workers, passengers and those who live near the

tracks. In July, 50 people were killed when a parked Montreal, Maine & Atlantic Railway oil train started rolling and derailed in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec.

The bosses do a cold calculation — how likely is a derailment vs. how much profit will be lost to make it less likely or less catastrophic if it does happen. But “accidents” inevitably do happen as “small risks” calculated by bosses become ever bigger and are repeated and multiplied over and over day after day.

The rail barons resist installing systems that could reduce the chance of derailment or methods shown to be less disastrous if a derailment does happen because they just cost too much.

Workers can’t rely on the Federal Railroad Administration or other government agencies to protect them. Only the working class and its allies prioritize safety and lives of others and have no reason to do otherwise. The only way to gain more control over safety and health is to bring the collective strength of working people to bear. This includes organizing unions and using union power to fight for control over working conditions and the safety of others.

Profit drive behind NY train disaster

Continued from front page

ed for years. “For more than 20 years the NTSB has recommended the use of Positive Train Control technology,” stated Weener, that “could have prevented” the crash.

Over the past few decades, the railway bosses’ relentless drive for productivity and profits has led to cuts in crew size, skimping on maintenance and refusals to install safety equipment.

Like almost all passenger trains today, Metro-North runs with only the engineer operating the train and keeping an eye out. Conductors in the passenger cars are tasked first and foremost with making sure every last fare is collected. In decades past, three rail workers worked together to run the trains.

Engineers on commuter trains have radio contact with other workers, “but it’s not like having another person there to check the settings, to verify the speed, to monitor the track restrictions,” James Stem from the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Union told the *Wall Street Journal* Dec. 4.

William Rockefeller, Jr., the train’s engineer, has never been disciplined for his work in the 10 years he has been operating trains. He told investigators he had lost focus shortly before the derailment.

“It’s like a highway hypnosis,” one unidentified investigator told Reuters. “You’re looking straight ahead and you’re seeing rail and rail and rail, and you lose perspective.”

“Track maintenance is so bad and we have complained bitterly to the company,” Wendy Banen, a Metro-North engineer who retired in 2011, told the *Militant* Dec. 3. “The jobs are really long and the company runs trains back to back. Engineers are always exhausted and the problem is getting worse. On-time performance is all the company cares about. If you slow down they get all over you because you’re losing time and the pressure is really tremendous.”

All the trains have signals inside the cab that tell the operator the maximum allowed speed. If the train does not slow down, the device stops the train. But on curves like where the derailment occurred Metro-North has not installed sensors to activate the system.

“Metro-North could have long ago put something in the curve to drop the cab signal,” a Metro-North conductor, who asked that her name not be used, told the *Militant*. “That would have brought Billy out of his ‘fog’ and alerted him to an overspeed. Humans are imperfect, but Metro-North wants to believe otherwise and throw the blame on others.”

In July a CSX freight train went off the tracks just 1,700 feet from where this most recent derailment occurred.

Rail workers also point to the absence of an alerter in the Metro-North cab, a device that activates the brakes if the engineer fails to frequently push an acknowledgment button.

“Anytime you’re going down from 70 mph to 30 mph, that’s a dangerous curve,” Amtrak conductor Mindy Brudno said. “To have the engineer up there all by himself and not even have an alerter — I have worked on the railroad for 25 years and never would have dreamed a major commuter railroad would run trains from a control stand with no alerter.”

Injuries from derailments, collisions and other “accidents” on Metro-North trains are up this year, the Associated Press reported Dec. 1.

On May 17, a Metro-North passenger train derailed in Bridgeport, Conn., and was hit by a train running on an adjacent track; 73 passengers, two engineers and a conductor were injured.

On May 28 track foreman Robert Luden was hit and killed by a passenger train in West Haven, Conn. The train crew had been told to run on a section of track that had been taken out of service for maintenance.

On Sept. 25, an electrical cable failed in Mount Vernon, N.Y., knocking out service for 132,000 daily commuters for 12 days.

In November, Metro-North chief engineer Robert Puciloski told federal investigators looking into the May derailment that the railroad was “behind in several areas” in needed maintenance.

Most commuter trains, including the Metro-North one that derailed Dec. 1, are operated on a “push-pull” basis. When the train runs one way the locomotive is at the front, pulling the train. On the return trip, the engine is at the back, pushing the train, and the engineer controls the engine by remote control from the cab at the front of the train. This was the case Dec. 1.

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen has argued against the “push” mode of train operation for years over safety concerns.

The Federal Railroad Administration did a study of the push method after a Metrolink commuter train derailed in Glendale, Calif., in 2005, killing 11 people and injuring 180. Although the “raw numbers” would suggest push-pull is slightly more prone to derailment, the report said, the difference is not “statistically significant.” It also said the “record did show a higher fatality rate for occupants of cab car-led trains,” but opposed banning the practice because “substantial investments” would be needed to buy land, lay more track and implement other changes.

After the release of the study, Metrolink barred passengers from sitting in the first 11 seats on their commuter trains during push mode operation.

In 2008, Congress adopted a law mandating that rail companies install Positive Train Control systems on all trains by 2015.

Metro-North and other rail bosses have called for the requirement to be dropped or at least put off until 2020 or beyond. Three of the four major U.S. freight railroads and four of the seven major commuter lines — including Metro-North — have told federal regulators they won’t meet the deadline.

Pope leads shift

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members around the world. “All people should be accepted the way they are,” Ortiz said.

“The church has to catch up with changes in society, even if it still doesn’t admit divorce,” 22-year-old student Aria das Gracas Lemos in Brasilia told AP.

End ‘witch hunt’ against contrary views

On Nov. 24, Francis issued his first “Apostolic Exhortation.” In it he calls for an end to “the veritable witch hunt” against those with views contrary to the Catholic hierarchy. He sharply criticized clergy in the U.S., who have refused to give Communion to politicians who have taken political positions at odds with official church doctrine. “Whom are we going to evangelize if this is the way we act?” he asks.

In leading this shift Francis has initiated a fight against the most ossified elements of the church hierarchy, whose moral authority has been further weakened by the church’s attempt to cover up sexual abuse by priests. “The people of God want pastors, not clergy acting like bureaucrats or government officials,” he told the *Civiltà Cattolica*.

“I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets,” he says, “rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security.”

And he has been speaking to the economic and social pressures bearing down on toiling humanity under the impact of the world crisis of capitalism.

“How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points? This is a case of exclusion,” Francis writes. “Can we continue to stand by when food is thrown away while people are starving? This is a case of inequality.”

According to the *2013 Pontifical Yearbook*, there are 1.2 billion Catholics, one of every six people in the world. The countries with the largest number are Brazil with nearly 127 million, Mexico with 96.5 million, the Philippines with 75.5 million and the United States with 75.4 million.

The selection of Francis by the church hierarchy is also a shift of focus from Italy and Europe, where the number of Catholics are stagnant or declining, to Africa, Latin America, Asia and the U.S. From 1978 to 2012 the number of Catholics on the African continent grew from 55 million to 175 million.

The Catholic Church is a capitalist institution that lends its moral authority to ruling classes around the world. According to the *Economist*, the church and church-owned businesses and charities spent some \$170 billion in 2010 and employed more than 1 million people.

Opposition to liberation theology

Some conservative writers have expressed concern that Francis’ statements criticizing the evils of capitalism are a concession to liberation theology, which arose in the 1950s, ’60s and ’70s as revolutionary struggles in Latin America found an echo inside the Catholic Church. Peruvian priest Gustavo Gutiérrez, one of the best-known proponents of liberation theology today, has said that “Authentic liberation will be the work of the oppressed themselves” and has called for “a social revolution that breaks up that dependence, will allow a different society, a socialist society to come to pass.”

Francis is a well-known opponent of liberation theology “even when this stand left him isolated among the Jesuits” in Argentina, the U.K. *Catholic Herald* recently said, and has criticized those who “anachronistically, would like to propose it again.”

Francis is not anti-capitalist, even if he criticizes the “tyranny” of “the new idolatry of money.” He told *La Repubblica* in an Oct. 1 interview that “if necessary,” he is for “direct intervention from the state to correct the more intolerable inequalities.”

Leaving no room for doubt, in the exhortation Francis says that while the church favors “a preferential option for the poor” it is not for “an unruly activism.”