

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Anti-imperialist youth discuss
Cuban Revolution, debate politics
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 79/NO. 45 DECEMBER 14, 2015

Chicago protests win arrest in cop killing of Black youth

Mobilizations lead to firing of police chief



AP Photo/Nam Y. Huh

Nov. 27 march demanding arrest of Chicago cop who killed Laquan McDonald. Signs denounce “16 shots” cop fired and “13 months” authorities refused to release video of shooting.

BY JOHN HAWKINS

CHICAGO — Thousands of protesters have taken to the streets daily here since the release of a damning and gruesome police dashcam video showing the police killing of 17-year-old Laquan McDonald.

McDonald, who was African-American, was shot and killed Oct.

20, 2014, by Chicago cop Jason Van Dyke. The video shows McDonald walking away from police when Van Dyke shot him 16 times, 14 when he was already lying on the ground. Van Dyke was dispatched to the scene after cops reported McDonald was carrying a folding knife and had a

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Colo. shootings highlight attack on Planned Parenthood

BY NAOMI CRAINE

Robert Lewis Dear Jr. opened fire at a Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and then carried out a five-hour standoff with police Nov. 27, killing three people and wounding nine others. It was the first deadly assault at an abortion clinic or against a provider since 2009.

Authorities say they still don’t know the motive for the assault, though they report Dear told them “No more baby parts” after he surrendered to police.

DEFEND RIGHT TO ABORTION, PLANNED PARENTHOOD!
 — Editorial, page 9

The killings take place as opponents of abortion rights have stepped up their campaign against Planned Parenthood. They sent undercover operatives into the group who covertly took videos and released excerpts, claiming they show Planned Parenthood “sells baby parts.” This is what Dear is referring to.

Opponents of abortion rights in Congress and in several state governments have used these charges to

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Rulers in US, France whip up attacks on Muslims

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Using the reactionary Islamic State-organized Nov. 13 attacks in France that killed 130 people as a pretext, Paris, Washington and other European imperialist powers continue their assault on working people — especially those who are Muslim or Arab — and are stepping up their military intervention in the Mideast.

Since a state of emergency was imposed in France, cops have searched 2,000 houses, detained 212 people for questioning, brought charges against 250 and put 312 people under house arrest, Bernard Cazeneuve, French interior minister, said in a Nov. 28 speech.

The Paris Climate March, organized with union support and planned for months to take place Nov. 29 on the eve of the United Nations climate summit, was banned. Two dozen environmentalists have been put under house arrest for the duration of the summit, Cazeneuve said, “because

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Protests in Twin Cities: ‘Arrest cops who killed Jamar Clark!’

BY DAVID ROSENFELD

MINNEAPOLIS — As protests calling for the prosecution of the cops responsible for the Nov. 15 shooting death of 24-year-old Jamar Clark continue into their third week, city officials and some Black political figures are pressuring demonstrators to shut down their around-the-clock encampment in front of the 4th Precinct police station.

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Celebrate political life of Frank Forrestal



Militant/Tony Hunt

Frank Forrestal, 61, a member of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee, died of cancer Dec. 1 in Minneapolis.

Over four decades, Forrestal, above left during 2014 reporting trip to Turkey, shouldered many leadership responsibilities in the party printshop, on the *Militant* staff, in defense of the Cuban Revolution and in trade union activity.

A celebration of his life and political contributions will be held Dec. 13 at the United Labor Centre, 312 Central Ave. SE, in Minneapolis, reception at 2 p.m., program at 3 p.m. For information or to send a message, contact the Twin Cities SWP branch, 416 E. Hennepin Ave., Suite 214, Minneapolis, MN 55414. Email: tcswp@qwestoffice.net.

Spirits high in Wis. UAW strike against two-tier wages at Kohler



Militant/Dan Fein

Picket at Kohler plant in Kohler, Wisconsin, Nov. 28. The 2,100-member UAW Local 833 voted 94 percent to go on strike Nov. 15 after company refused to eliminate two-tier wage scale.

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

KOHLER, Wis. — Members of United Auto Workers Local 833, on strike against Kohler Co. since Nov. 15, are united in their battle to eliminate two-tier wages. “This is not about more money for Tier A workers,” Jim Brock, local vice president, told the *Militant* Nov. 28. “It’s about

standing up for the 20 percent who are in Tier B.”

When the local approved the lower tier in 2010, “we were all afraid of not having jobs,” said Roberta Post, a Tier A assembly worker at the plumbing fixture plant. “Kohler threatened to shut down. There were massive lay-

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Black Friday: Walmart workers demand \$15 an hour

Brooklyn warehouse workers vote to join Steelworkers union

Workers’ fight to control safety is key to defending land, labor

BY MAGGIE TROWE

President Barack Obama announced Nov. 6 his administration’s rejection of the proposed construction of the Keystone XL pipeline, a decision widely described in the capitalist media as a victory for environmental activists. But for the working class, protecting nature and the environment does not involve shutting down pipelines and oil production, but which class controls them in order to meet the energy needs of the world while protecting both land and labor.

The 1,179-mile pipeline extension would have carried up to 800,000 bar-

relle to change how much Alberta oil will be produced. That oil is already extracted and taken to North American ports and refineries by rail and the existing 57,000 miles of crude oil pipelines in the United States. TransCanada, the company proposing the XL project, already sends as much as 700,000 barrels per day from Alberta to Texas through the original Keystone pipeline that was completed in 2010 and has been expanded since.

Defeat of the XL pipeline guarantees increased transport of Canadian petroleum by rail. Driven by the search for profit rail bosses have slashed train crews, even down to one person, and refused to adequately maintain their tracks, which take a beating from long and heavy oil trains. They bitterly oppose efforts by rail workers to win more control over safety on the job.

Train transport of crude in the U.S. increased from 9,500 to more than 450,000 carloads annually between 2008 and 2014. Each week, 42 mile-long oil trains travel through the Chicago metropolitan area.

The 2013 derailment and explosion of an oil train in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, that killed 47 people called public attention to the dangers of running understaffed trains carrying volatile or toxic materials on unsafe tracks.

In the hands of bosses whose icon is profits pipelines aren’t that safe either. From 1986 to 2013 there were nearly 8,000 significant “incidents” resulting in more than 500 deaths, more than 2,300 injuries, release of more than 3 million gallons of oil and some \$7 bil-



Students in Conakry, Guinea, go to airport at night to study because of lack of electricity at home. Working class must fight for electrification, to narrow gap in toilers’ conditions of life worldwide, and for union control of safety on job as only way to defend both land and labor.

COMMENTARY

rels a day of crude oil from the Alberta tar sands and North Dakota fracking fields to the Gulf Coast for refining or export.

“Climate control” is one of the handful of questions Obama intends to rest his legacy on. The timing of the Keystone XL decision was part of preparing for participation in the December United Nations summit on climate change in Paris, where Obama plans to present Washington as a leader in reducing world greenhouse gas emissions, even though per capita emissions in the U.S. is the highest in the world.

The Sierra Club, which opposes any extraction and use of tar sand oil, hailed the decision as “a monumental victory in the fight to protect our planet from the disastrous effects of fossil fuels and carbon pollution.”

But the rejection of the pipeline does

lion in damages, according to data from the federal Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration.

Most arguments for and against Keystone XL, both in the U.S. and Canada, have been presented in a nationalist framework, a deadly trap for working people. Announcing his decision, Obama said that the pipeline “would not serve the national interests of the U.S.”

At the Paris climate change conference the biggest capitalist competitors, turning their backs on the needs of power-poor countries, will grandstand about reducing carbon dioxide emissions and jockey to promote the national interests of their bourgeois government. Such summits expose the exploitive social relations between the billionaire families of the industrialized capitalist nations and countries held in semicolonial bondage. They reveal how the workings of the capitalist system worldwide deny the most basic human needs to billions of people.

The key question for the working class is that these inequalities deprive billions of people in Africa, Asia and Latin America of electrification, a necessity to narrow the gap in the conditions of life, the possibilities of education and culture, the political experience between them and toilers living in the industrially more advanced countries.

Under capitalism the transport of oil and other volatile or toxic substances by

pipeline, rail or truck is carried out with contempt for the life and limb of workers on the job and in the surrounding communities and with the certainty of accidents that contaminate air, land and water. At the heart of a working-class response is the fight for unions and for their control over safety on the job. This fight is inextricably linked to the stewardship of nature.

In a 2001 talk titled “Our Politics Start With the World,” Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes spoke about nuclear power production. “The question is how long will the design and construction of containment vessels, the monitoring of reactor operations, and disposal of atomic waste products — with all the consequences for public health and safety — be carried out by governments beholden to the imperialist ruling families and other capitalist exploiters,” he said. “How long before these vital matters, including the eventual transition away from nuclear power toward other, safer energy sources yet to be developed, will be organized by workers and farmers governments acting in the interests of the great majority of humanity. The stakes in the resolution of that question — an outcome that will be settled in historic class battles — could not be clearer.”

The same can be said of the extraction, processing and distribution of carbon fuels.

THE MILITANT

Fight cop brutality, from Idaho to Chicago

The ‘Militant’ builds support for fights against police killings and brutality in cities and rural towns. It explains the importance of these fights for all working people and how every victory won to rein in the cops strengthens our class. Don’t miss a single issue!



Nov. 21 rally in Boise, Idaho, calls for release of video of cop killing of rancher Jack Yantis.

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The Militant

Vol. 79/No. 45

Closing news date: December 2, 2015

Editor: John Studer
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Published weekly except for one week in January, one week in June, one week in July, one week in August and one week in September.

Business manager: Lea Sherman
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E-mail: themilitant@mac.com
Website: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

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SWP campaigns against war drive, witch hunt of Muslims

BY NAOMI CRAINE

In response to stepped-up war moves and attacks on workers' rights by the capitalist rulers following the terrorist assault by the reactionary Islamic State that killed 130 people in Paris, the Socialist Workers Party and Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom are campaigning against the imperialist war drive and the witch hunt against Muslims.

"When a section of the population comes under attack as Muslims are today," New York SWP Chairman Norton Sandler said in a statement released by the party there and printed in last week's *Militant*, "the working-class vanguard must immediately come to its defense. The ultimate target of the rulers' assault on Muslims is the working class."

SWP members joined a Nov. 29 rally of several thousand protesting the rulers' assaults on the environment — similar to one planned in Paris but banned by the French government — on the eve of the international climate summit in Paris. Two young participants from France subscribed to the *Militant*, saying they oppose the government's attacks on Muslims and state of emergency banning political demonstrations.

Four SWP members went to the Masjid At-Taqwa mosque in Brooklyn after Friday prayers Nov. 27 and talked with people in the area.

"Everyone we spoke with expressed outrage at the murders of civilians in Paris by Islamic State attackers," Maggie Trowe reported.

"As Muslims we believe that all lives matter," Muhammad Harby, owner of Muhammad's Place Islamic Books next to the mosque, told her. "We are harm-

ing our humanity when people do this. We have to stand up for justice."

"Do you have more copies of that?" a halal butcher asked, pointing to the statement by Sandler, when Trowe went into his store. "I want to pass them out." He, his son and a customer bought copies of the *Militant*. "In all we sold eight papers that evening."

When members of the party visited a coffee shop in Fremont, California, where there is a large Muslim community, one of the baristas subscribed to the *Militant* and others got copies, Betsey Stone reported. "Islamic State is not Muslim," said Noor Ben Ali, whose family is from Tunisia.

Ben Ali said she participated in the 2011 popular revolt there that began what became known as the Arab Spring. "I saw people standing up together, united, sharing," she said. "The police that supported the dictator disappeared from the streets and we formed our own security. Once you see people standing up, you know it can happen anywhere."

She explained there is an island in Tunisia called Djerba, where a lot of Jewish people live. "The Jewish people are Tunisians just like us," she said.

Evan Kurzrok, a 20-year-old student



Militant/Maggie Trowe

Naomi Craine speaks for Socialist Workers Party in New York at Nov. 28 rally responding to attack at Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado the day before, part of a weekend of campaigning against Washington's war drive at mosques, in working class areas and at protest actions.

at Broward College, signed up for a subscription when SWP supporters from Miami went door to door in Hollywood, Florida, Cindy Jaquith reported. "To mark people by their religion is exactly what Nazi Germany did to the Jews," he said.

"Kurzrok asked why we thought there were so many 'radical' ideas, such as Donald Trump's proposal to register Muslims," Jaquith said. "We said that as the capitalist crisis deepens workers look for how they can change things.

Some are attracted to Trump because he scorns the powers that be and appears to be outside the 'establishment.' But what working people need is to organize ourselves politically independent of all the capitalists and their parties, which is what the Socialist Workers Party campaigns for."

If you'd like to join in this campaign, contact the party branch in your area, listed on page 8. And please send in reports, and photos, so we can share these experiences in the pages of the *Militant*.

Colo. shootings highlight attack on Planned Parenthood

Continued from front page

campaign to cut off government funding for health care services Planned Parenthood provides, such as birth control and cancer screenings. Government funding for abortion is already barred, with few exceptions.

There has also been an increase in vandalism and threats to the clinics.

Since July four Planned Parenthood facilities have been targeted for arson, a man was arrested for bringing a bomb into a Kansas clinic, and someone with a hatchet destroyed equipment at a facility in New Hampshire.

"We are learning that eyewitnesses confirm that the man who will be charged with the tragic and senseless shooting ... was motivated by opposition to safe and legal abortion," said Vicki Cowart, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains, in a Nov. 28 statement.

"This is an appalling act of violence targeting access to health care," she said. "We don't back down because of protestors, violent extremists, or anyone else. ... These doors stay open."

National Organization for Women President Terry O'Neill said Dear's assault was "an act of domestic terrorism."

The political campaign against Planned Parenthood and the right to choose abortion hasn't stopped. Republican presidential candidate Mike Huckabee joined in calling Dear's assault "domestic terrorism," and then went on to denounce abortion. "There's no excuse for killing other people, whether it's inside ... Planned Parenthood clinics, where many millions of babies die, or whether it's people attacking Planned Parenthood," he told CNN Nov. 29.

Speaking to Fox News the same day, fellow Republican candidate Carly Fiorina said that while "nothing justifies" the shootings in Colorado, Dear's rampage had nothing to do with the campaign against Planned Parenthood that she has been a vocal participant in. She claimed "the vast majority of Americans agree what Planned Parenthood is doing is wrong."

President Barack Obama issued a statement Nov. 28 that presented the issue as one of "gun violence," and called for doing "something about the easy accessibility of weapons of war on our streets to people who have no business

wielding them." He also took the opportunity to praise the police, who face widespread protests for brutality and killings across the country. One of the people killed and five of those wounded in Colorado were cops.

Editorials in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* also presented the main issue involved as "gun violence," not funding for Planned Parenthood or the right to choose abortion.

Dear is being held without bond. Colorado officials say they plan to charge him with first-degree murder, which could carry the death penalty. Most news accounts have described him as a "loner" and "malcontent," with no apparent ties to anti-abortion organizations.

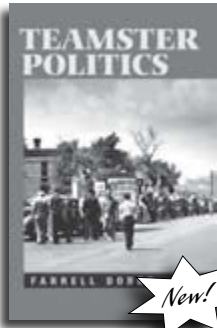
Supreme Court takes abortion case

Earlier in November the Supreme Court announced it will consider a challenge to a state law that would force the closure of all but about 10 clinics that provide abortions in Texas. The 2013 legislation requires clinics to meet the standards of "ambulatory surgical centers" and that doctors performing abortions have admitting privileges at a nearby hospital — mandates that defenders of women's rights point out are expensive, medically unnecessary and designed to drive clinics out of business.

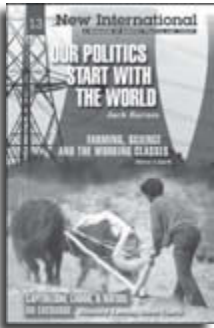
Other anti-abortion restrictions in the Texas law have already forced about half of the 41 clinics that provided abortion there to close. If the court upholds the provisions being challenged, abortion services would only be available in the metropolitan areas of Austin, Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston and San Antonio — not in rural areas, the Rio Grande Valley and all of west Texas.

Opponents of the right to choose abortion have pushed through hundreds of state laws in recent years restricting access. Some 24 states now have some version of the type of regulations being challenged in the Texas case.

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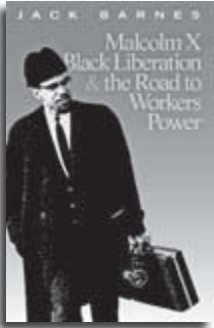
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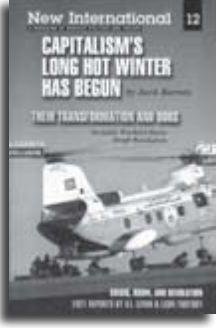
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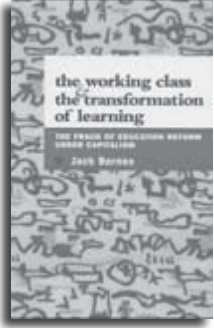
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Rulers scapegoat Muslims

Continued from front page
they have been violent during demonstrations in the past and because they have said they would not respect the state of emergency.”

Thousands of people, including several rail workers from the Solidaires union, defied the ban and formed a human chain at the site of the cancelled march Nov. 29. Cops tear-gassed the crowd and arrested 317 people.

Repressive actions by the Belgian government have given a green light to anti-Muslim rightists there. A week after Prime Minister Charles Michel threatened to close “certain radical mosques” in the Molenbeek district of Brussels, and after a four-day lockdown of the entire city on grounds of an alleged terror plot, a group calling itself “Christian State” threatened to attack a mosque. “We will slash your brothers’ throats like pigs and crucify them like our savior to save their souls,” they said.

The German government said Islamist radicals there were trying to recruit newly arrived refugees in the country’s mosques. “They start by saying, ‘We will help you live your faith,’” Torsten Voss, head of the Hamburg branch of the German domestic intelligence agency, told the *Wall Street Journal*. “The Islamist area comes later — that is, of course, their goal.”

In the U.S., Republicans and Democrats alike claim that Islamic State is growing rapidly, that more attacks are imminent and that Syrian refugees seeking to enter the country are laced with IS operatives. Thirty-one governors have said Syrian refugees are not welcome in their states.

In New York Mayor Bill de Blasio and Police Commissioner William Bratton announced the creation of a special 500-cop Critical Response Command to fight terrorism. During the annual Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade Nov. 26 the NYPD fielded 2,500 uniformed and plainclothes police of-

icers, including forces from the new anti-terror command.

Many presidential candidates have joined the chorus, scapegoating Muslims and calling for stepped-up U.S. military operations in Iraq and Syria.

Hillary Clinton, the leading Democratic contender, has taken greater distance from President Barack Obama and his refusal to commit ground troops in the Middle East. At the second Democratic candidates debate Nov. 14, she said IS “cannot be contained, it must be defeated.”

“We’re going to have to look at the mosques. We’re going to have to look very, very carefully,” Donald Trump, who’s leading Republicans in the polls, said Nov. 19, adding he wouldn’t rule out registering Muslim Americans with “a special form of identification that noted their religion.”

The vast majority of Muslims find Islamic State abhorrent. IS is a reactionary cult that has been able to establish itself in Syria and Iraq as a consequence of the vacuum of leadership left by decades of betrayals of worker and peasant struggles by Stalinist parties in the region and the exhaustion of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalist forces there.

Increased attacks on Muslims

“I’m going to kill everyone I [sic] there you Muslim f---,” read a death threat received by the Islamic Center of Lexington, Kentucky, Nov. 27. The Council on American-Islamic Relations, a national Muslim civil rights organization, reported Nov. 24 “that it has received more reports about acts of Islamophobic discrimination, intimidation, threats and violence targeting American Muslims (or those perceived to be Muslim) and Islamic institutions in the past week-and-a-half than during any other limited period of time since the 9/11 terror attacks.”

The council issued a statement the



AP photo/Laurent Cipriani

Police in Paris attack climate march protesters who defied government ban of Nov. 29 action.

day of the Paris attacks, saying, “These savage and despicable attacks on civilians, whether they occur in Paris, Beirut or any other city, are outrageous and without justification.”

In Peterborough, Ontario, the Masjid al-Salaam mosque was firebombed Nov. 14. The board of nearby Beth Israel Synagogue voted unanimously to invite the Muslim congregation to use its facilities, which the Muslim group accepted.

Imperialist assaults expand

French President Francois Hollande, who launched intensive airstrikes against Islamic State positions in Syria after the Paris attacks, visited Moscow Nov. 26. The trip followed a meeting with Obama in Washington to drum up support for a “grand, single coalition” to step up attacks.

The effort was set back Nov. 24, when Ankara shot down a Russian warplane it said had entered Turkish airspace. Moscow responded by levying economic sanctions against Turkey. The Russian government claims it is bombing Islamic State, but most of its strikes have targeted opponents of Assad, including the Turkmen forces near the Syria-Turkey border where the plane was shot down.

On Dec. 1 Defense Secretary Ashton Carter announced formation of a new special “expeditionary” force to conduct raids in Iraq and Syria. “It puts everybody on notice in Syria that you don’t know at night who is going to be coming in the window,” he told a congressional hearing.

U.S.-led forces have escalated attacks on IS-controlled oil production and transport in eastern Syria. Washington and Baghdad have announced plans to retake the Iraqi city of Ramadi from Islamic State. They dropped leaflets urging residents to flee, but IS, which uses civilians as human shields, has blocked exits from the city. Formerly populated by 500,000 people, Ramadi today is inhabited by several thousand families.

The Obama administration is pressing Ankara to deploy some 30,000 troops along a 60-mile section of Turkey’s border with Syria to cut infiltration by Islamic State forces. Washington is also urging Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States “to build their ground forces and use them,” Carter told the media.

The German government announced plans Nov. 29 to send some 1,200 troops to the Middle East to operate aircraft and ships.

U.K. Prime Minister David Cameron called a Dec. 2 vote in Parliament on joining the war in Syria. New Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn, until re-

cently chairman of the Stop the War coalition in Britain, decided against enforcing the “whip” on party members in Parliament, releasing them to vote in favor of Cameron’s motion.

Celebrate political life of Priscilla March



LOS ANGELES — Priscilla March died Nov. 30 in Los Angeles after an extended illness. She was a member of the Socialist Workers Party for more than 60 years, dedicating her life to building the communist movement.

Her life and political contributions will be celebrated in Los Angeles Sat., Dec. 12. For more information or to send a message to the meeting, contact the Los Angeles branch of the Socialist Workers Party at 2826 S. Vermont, Suite 1, Los Angeles, CA 90007. Email: swpla@att.net.

— BILL ARTH

Communist League candidate denounces UK war drive



Militant/Anne Howie

LONDON — “Working people need to oppose Prime Minister David Cameron’s deployment of more armed cops on the streets and British military intervention in the Mideast,” Jonathan Silberman, Communist League candidate for mayor of London, said at the Nov. 19 Militant Labour Forum here.

British imperialists, like their French counterparts, have used the Islamic State-organized terror attacks in Paris that killed 130 people to justify airstrikes in Syria, the demonization of Muslims, stepped-up police presence and the closing of political space, Silberman said. Mickey McCarthy, a hairdresser attending the forum, asked Silberman whether the rulers were happy to have an excuse “to divert people from the crisis happening here, like the terrible state of housing.”

“Imperialist wars are not a diversion from their attacks on workers at home, but an extension of them,” Silberman said. “The working class needs its own voice. We need to organize independently of the exploiters, to form a labor party based on the unions to lead workers and farmers to take power from the capitalist class.”

— PAUL DAVIES

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CANADA

Montreal

Resistance Grows to World Capitalist Crisis: Opportunities and Challenges for Building the Communist Movement in the World. Speaker: Michel Prairie, Communist League. Fri., Dec. 11, 7:30 p.m. 7107 St. Denis #204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

—CALENDAR—

GREECE

Athens

Celebrate Publication of Greek Edition of ‘Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution’ by Vilma Espín, Asela de los Santos and Yolanda Ferrer. Speakers: Sophia Roditi, Committee of Fired Steel Workers from Aspropyrgos; Kostas Sanidas, José Martí Cultural Association; Natasha Terlexi, Diethnes Vima publishing house; greetings from Cuban Ambassador Osvaldo Cobacho Martinez. Sun., Dec. 6, 11 a.m. *Alkionida Cinema, Ioulanou 42-46. Tel.: 210 88 33 002. Sponsored by New Star Productions, José Martí Cultural Association and Diethnes Vima.*

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

MAGGIE TROWE, EDITOR

Help the *Militant* cover labor struggles across the country!

This column gives a voice to those engaged in battle and building solidarity today — including workers fighting for \$15 and a union; locked-out ATI Steelworkers; autoworkers on strike against Kohler; steel and Verizon workers opposing concessions. I invite those involved in workers' battles to contact me at 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018; or (212) 244-4899; or themilitant@mac.com. We'll work together to ensure your story is told.

—Maggie Trowe

Brooklyn warehouse workers vote to join Steelworkers union

NEW YORK — Workers at two B&H Photo Video warehouses in Brooklyn voted 200-88 Nov. 4 to join the United Steelworkers union.

"It was a higher vote than I expected," Javier Jordan, who works at the Navy Yard site, told the *Militant* Nov. 15. "We voted for the union because the wages are too low and there's a lot of discrimination." Workers are also demanding improved job safety, medical insurance and an end to forced overtime.

Backed by the Laundry Workers Center United and the Steelworkers, the workers made their yearlong fight for union recognition public with a rally



Workers fighting for a union rally outside B&H warehouse in Brooklyn, NY, Oct. 15.

Oct. 11 outside the company's superstore in Midtown Manhattan.

Following the rally, Jordan said, B&H used bribes and threats to pressure workers not to back the union. When the company then fired those who refused to renounce the union, workers responded by striking at the Navy Yard and Bushwick warehouses. The company backed off. Three days before the Nov. 4 vote, workers held another rally outside the superstore.

—Seth Galinsky and Emma Johnson

Chicago fast-food workers back dairy workers' fight for safety

CHICAGO — Some 100 people — half of them fast-food workers fighting for \$15 and a union — joined a picket line at a downtown McDonald's here Nov. 16 to draw public attention to the unsafe conditions that dairy farmworkers face at farms that supply Washington state milk processor Darigold.

Marching at the front of the protest was Nubia Guajardo, wife of 27-year-old Randy Vasquez, who drowned Feb. 24 in Mabton, Washington, when the front-loader truck he was driving on night shift fell into a manure pond.

Chicago was the first stop in a four-city tour to deliver thousands of petitions to some of the largest Darigold customers — McDonald's, Kroger, Walmart and Safeway/Albertsons — demanding the dairy producer operate safely at the farms.

"Randy was an experienced dairy worker," Guajardo told the *Militant*. "He had been working at Darigold for six months, but had five years' experience in the industry. The problem is the ma-

nure pond looks just like the dirt roadway. Ponds need to be fenced off and labeled."

"We are here to show solidarity and sympathy for Nubia," McDonald's worker Michelle Lewis of Fight for \$15 told the crowd. "We want to let her know that she is not alone. No one should die doing their job. What happened to Randy just underscores why we have to step up and fight for our rights."

"In the restaurants it's common for the machines to be in disrepair and for management to skimp on training," Lewis told the *Militant*. "A friend lost the tip of her finger at a pizza place. For months before her accident workers had been telling management to fix the machine."

—John Hawkins

New Zealand meat workers gain against AFFCO's anti-union drive

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Meat workers won a battle in an ongoing war Nov. 18 when the Employment Court ruled in favor of a Meat Workers Union case against AFFCO New Zealand Ltd. The ruling affects the workforce at eight AFFCO plants on the North Island, including some 1,000 union members. The company has said it will appeal.

This is "a significant win," Justin Kaimoana, Meat Workers Union Shed Secretary at the AFFCO works in Wairoa, a rural town 330 miles southeast of here, told the *Militant* in a Nov. 22 phone interview. Some 200 workers at the Wairoa plant were locked out Sept. 9 after they refused to sign the company's "Individual Employment Agreements." They have led resistance to AFFCO's anti-union offensive with regular rallies, protests and appeals for solidarity.

In a summary of the ruling, the court said the company had "acted unlaw-

Black Friday: Walmart workers demand \$15 an hour



Militant/Lisa Rottach

Walmart workers fighting for \$15 an hour and regular schedules, supported by unionists and others, organized spirited protests at Walmart stores in some dozen cities Nov. 27, the big "Black Friday" shopping day after Thanksgiving.

Some 100 people marched in front of the store in Pico Rivera, California, near Los Angeles, demanding reinstatement of workers who lost their jobs when the store closed in April and weren't rehired when it reopened in November. Many of the workers who lost their jobs were members of Organization United for Respect at Walmart (OUR Walmart). "The company retaliated and closed this store because the workers were organizing effectively," Cecily Myart-Cruz, vice president of the United Teachers of Los Angeles, told the rally.

In Minneapolis, above, more than 200 low-wage workers marched through downtown for \$15, full-time hours and paid sick leave and against the Nov. 15 cop killing of Jamar Clark there.

Protests also took place at Walmarts in Oakland, San Leandro and San Jose, California; Federal Way, Washington; Calgary, Alberta; and in New York in front of the residence of Walmart heiress Alice Walton.

—MAGGIE TROWE

fully" in requiring workers at AFFCO plants to sign such agreements while "collective bargaining with the Union" was underway.

The ruling means that "workers at all plants who want to are supposed to go back on the original collective agreement," Warren Allison, acting MWU organizer at the Napier tannery, said by phone Nov. 24. Workers there refused to sign the individual agreements.

Workers at Wairoa soundly rejected the company's proposal to put them together on a "special night shift" as a condition for returning to work, said MWU organizing director Darien Fenton on the Maori-language television news program *Te Karere* Nov. 26. "We said 'no' in no uncertain terms," veteran butcher Hilton Rohe told the *Militant* Dec. 1.

"We're willing to work, but under the right conditions," Wairoa meat worker

Stacey Taurima told *Te Karere* from the grounds of Parliament in Wellington at the time of the ruling. She was among 30 from Wairoa who went there to publicize their fight.

—Patrick Brown

Further reading



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25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



December 14, 1990

Stepped-up solidarity with striking New York *Daily News* workers can now help win the battle against the newspaper's union-busting drive.

For months the owners of the *Daily News* prepared with almost military precision to bust the newspaper unions. They thought locking out the workers, herding scabs, violence-baiting the unions, and threatening the strikers with goons and thugs would quickly allow them to run the newspaper as a non-union operation.

They ran into a force that had not been factored into their calculations — the determination of the strikers and the solidarity of working people across New York City. Today it is rare to find even a single copy of the *Daily News* on the stands. Circulation of the paper has dropped 80 percent.



December 13, 1965

In flagrant abuse of their authority, at least two state selective service directors (Michigan and Delaware) have decided that students can be put into 1-A for participating in protests against the Vietnam war.

Four students in Michigan have lost their deferments for being arrested in a demonstration at a local draft board. Col. Arthur Holmes, an old Army man who heads the state selective service, says "people accuse me of being a Hitler."

Army induction centers may not be too happy about this move by the draft boards. The induction centers have shown a marked aversion to drafting outspoken opponents of the war, obviously in fear that their views might prove contagious within the armed forces.



December 14, 1940

A joint campaign to aid political refugees is now being conducted by the International Relief Association and the New World Resettlement Fund.

Almost all these refugees have no other organization to help them. They are the ordinary humble people, penniless, unknown, but the most courageous fighters against reaction. The International Relief Association takes pride in helping these brave men and women whose records in their native lands and in emigration entitle them to more than a concentration camp in France or Germany.

This campaign is endorsed and supported by many leading trade unions, including the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, ILGWU, and by fraternal organizations such as the Workmen's Benefit Fund.

SKorea: 100,000 protest attacks on workers' rights

BY SETH GALINSKY

In the biggest labor demonstration in seven years, more than 100,000 workers, farmers, students and others marched and rallied in Seoul Nov. 14. “The government is pushing ahead with the labor reform bill which would make it easier for the employers to fire workers, cut wages and expand the number of temporary workers,” Mikyung Ryu, international director of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, which initiated the action, said by phone from Seoul Nov. 24.

Stopping the proposed labor-law “reform” was one of the central demands of the protest.

Some one-third of workers in South Korea are temporary with hourly wages that are just 54 percent of what permanent workers receive, and that percentage is falling.

Protesters assembled throughout Seoul and converged near City Hall. Some 22,000 police set up barricades

made up of 700 buses and doused demonstrators with water cannons and tear gas to prevent them from marching to the presidential offices.

Another key target was a new “official” textbook on Korean history that the government announced it has begun writing. The book would be required reading for all students.

“I will use correct history textbooks to unify the divide in public opinion,” President Park Geun-hye told the National Assembly Oct. 27. Prime Minister Hwang Kyo-ahn said at a government briefing Nov. 3 that one widely read textbook has a “sneaky passage” that creates “the incorrect impression that North Korea might not have been to blame for” the 1950-53 Korean War.

More than 2,700 professors at 170 universities have opposed the plan.

One of the contingents attacked by the cops were farmers demanding relief for plummeting rice prices. Baek Nam-gi, a 69-year-old farmer, was seriously



KCTU

Seoul, South Korea, Nov. 14 rally against law making it easier for bosses to fire workers, cut wages, hire temps. Among the signs: “Smash the evil labor reform!” and “Layoffs = murder!”

injured after being knocked down by the high-pressure water stream. Cops kept spraying him as fellow protesters dragged him to safety.

Farmers have been hard hit by Seoul’s participation in free trade agreements that benefit capitalist producers in the United States and China at the expense of South Koreans. “Only 5 percent of

food consumed here is produced locally,” Ryu said.

Since winning the 2012 elections, Park has attacked the unions, restricted free speech and disbanded the Unified Progressive Party, which her government and national spy agency accuse of having ties to the North Korean government.

In October 2013 the Ministry of Employment and Labor stripped the Korean Teachers and Education Workers’ Union of its legal status because it allowed fired teachers to keep their union membership. In a victory for the union, the Seoul High Court suspended enforcement of the revocation Nov. 16. A final ruling is expected by January.

On Nov. 21 police raided eight offices of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions in Seoul and affiliated unions, confiscating files and other documents. The unionists “are suspected of leading the illegal, violent protest, and we will secure evidence to find those who orchestrated them,” a police official told Yonhap news agency.

“The violence at the Nov. 14 demonstration was all provoked by the government and the police,” Ryu said. “It was a peaceful action but the government is trying to give it a negative image. They are even trying to link us to Islamic State terror.”

Another nationwide strike is planned for later in December.

Chicago protests win arrest of cop for killing Black youth

Continued from front page
“strange gaze about him.”

After the shooting, the video shows, cops made no effort to check his condition or render medical aid.

Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, prosecutors and cops suppressed the video for 13 months, claiming its release would damage the investigation into the killing. The city awarded McDonald’s family a \$5 million settlement in April before they had even filed legal action.

Protesters have called for the resignation of Chicago Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy and for a special prosecutor to replace Cook County State’s Attorney Anita Alvarez.

In response to mounting pressure, Emanuel fired McCarthy Dec. 1.

Responding to a lawsuit filed by freelance journalist Brandon Smith, Cook County Judge Franklin Valderrama ruled Nov. 19 the city had seven days to make the video public.

Citing “limited bandwidth,” the city released the tape Nov. 24 by posting it on a third-party website for one hour. The site crashed almost immediately. The graphic footage has since been posted all over the web.

More than 1,000 demonstrators gathered Nov. 27 at Michigan Avenue and Wacker Drive for a 10-block Black Friday march north to Water Tower Park in the heart of the trendy Magnificent Mile shopping district. Following the march, demonstrators blocked doors to a number of upscale shops.

Chanting “16 shots, 13 months” demonstrators focused their fire not only on the killing of McDonald, but also on the cover-up by city officials.

Protesters came from throughout the state. While the majority of marchers were Black, a number of others took part. Several trade unions had contingents, the largest from the Chicago Teachers Union, whose president, Karen Lewis, joined Rev. Jesse Jackson and others in calling the action.

“For 13 months they sat on this. They paid the family \$5 million. Now after a judge orders the release of the video they

break their silence and say how awful it was,” Brian Owens, an African-American teacher who has worked in Chicago’s public schools for 14 years, told the *Militant*. “Why not 13 months ago?”

“I’m here with my daughter and her friend, both of whom are 16, to protest what happened to Laquan and the cover-up,” said Nancy Lortz, a professor of theatre at Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington who is Caucasian. “It’s important for young people to be a part of this. In the ’60s I was involved in the civil rights movement. Today we seem to be in a second wave of the civil rights movement. And it’s important for them to be on the right side of history.”

“What happened to Laquan McDonald is a reflection of the morals this country was built on — slavery and racism,” said Damarius Allen, a 32-year-old union pipefitter. “African-Americans need to fight back.”

“The time for change is now,” said Latoyia Kimbrough, who is African-American and an attorney for the Chicago Teachers Union. “Van Dyke shouldn’t just be charged, but convicted of first degree murder. The mayor, the police chief and the state’s attorney didn’t just cover this up. They were withholding evidence, in essence tampering with evidence, for 400 days after the murder.”

“The problem is much larger than the police. They are doing exactly what the people who control this system want them to do,” said Bill Filmore, a retired pastor who is Caucasian and grew up in South Africa. “This is the way our country works and has worked for more than 200 years. What we need is systemic change. Fights like this will help us get there.”

City officials pushed to make sure Van Dyke was charged and arrested before the video was released. After the shooting last year Van Dyke was taken out of service but kept on the police department’s payroll doing desk duty. He was charged with murder by Cook County State’s Attorney Alvarez and arraigned before Judge Donald Panarese

Jr. Nov. 24, then locked up in protective custody at the Cook County Jail.

Shortly after Judge Panarese set bail at \$1.5 million Nov. 30, Van Dyke was released from jail after posting a \$150,000 bond.

Van Dyke is the first on-duty Chicago cop to be charged with first-degree murder in almost 35 years.

In a related development, McCarthy had announced Nov. 23 that he would recommend to the Chicago Police Board that Detective Dante Servin be fired. Servin killed 22-year-old Rekia Boyd in March 2012.

Servin was charged and tried for the killing in April, but freed by Judge Dennis Porter on a legal technicality. Porter ruled the cop couldn’t be convicted of acting recklessly, as he was charged, because pointing a gun and shooting someone is intentional.

Dan Fein contributed to this article.

Protests, encampment in Twin Cities

Continued from front page

Protests swelled when five protesters were shot Nov. 23 near the encampment by racists they were escorting from the area who had been harassing them. Felony charges were filed seven days later against Allen Scarsella, who says he fired the shots that hit the five protesters, and three other racists. Scarsella and another man had gone to the encampment Nov. 19, making racist comments. They filmed a video of themselves, one holding a gun, saying they intended to carry out “reverse cultural enriching.” At the end of the video, one says “stay white.”

The encampment continues to be the focal point for rallies, meetings, and other protest actions. On Nov. 28, 150 people rallied in a solidarity action called by East Africans in the area. The next day a religious service took place.

The same day charges were filed against the four racists, Democratic Farmer-Labor Mayor Betsy Hodges called on protesters to take down their

encampment. Congressman Keith Ellison, the most prominent African-American politician in the area, joined her.

Campfire smoke is hurting air quality, Hodges said, and protesters are blocking emergency vehicles and snowplows.

Hodges also charged protesters with harassing police. “There have been near-daily threats to burn the precinct, kill our officers and to hurt people, causing harm and fear that must end,” she said.

Ellison said the actions against police brutality have attracted “domestic terrorists ... to the protest to start trouble.”

“We will not let politics or politicians drive a wedge between us,” Kandace Montgomery of Black Lives Matter told the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. “We will not allow white supremacists to terrorize us.”

Minneapolis NAACP President Nekima Levy-Pounds said her organization stands in solidarity with the protesters’ encampment and their demands for

Continued on page 7

Anti-imperialist youth discuss Cuban Revolution, debate politics

BY ANNALUCIA VERMUNT

HAVANA — “Our assembly takes place under the conditions of the capitalist crisis on an international level,” said World Federation of Democratic Youth President Nikolas Papadimitriou at the opening of its 19th General Assembly here Nov. 9-12. More than 130 delegates representing 62 organizations and 35 countries took part, marking the 70th anniversary of the federation’s founding.

The conference came on the heels of winning freedom for the Cuban Five and opening of diplomatic relations between Havana and Washington for the first time in six decades, said Yuniasky Crespo, first secretary of the National Committee of the Union of Young Communists (UJC) of Cuba, welcoming delegates to the island.

The UJC organized a program in conjunction with the assembly that allowed delegates to learn more about political developments in Cuba, including a visit to a neighborhood Committee in Defense of the Revolution and a report about the political decisions at the organization’s 10th congress held in July.

Exchange with González

A political highlight was an exchange with one of the Cuban Five, Fernando González. The Five, imprisoned by the U.S. government for their efforts to defend Cuba from attacks by counterrevolutionaries in Florida, are all free and leading political work in Cuba.

“The Five spoke to the 10th UJC congress about the opportunity we have to fight to continue socialism and influence our own liberation” remarked José Maury del Toro, head of the UJC International Relations Department.

González emphasized that worldwide solidarity was key to winning freedom

for the Five. Since their frame-up and imprisonment in 1998, the fight to free them was a centerpiece of the World Festivals of Youth and Students, organized by WFDY every four years.

“Young people must understand that now Washington is changing its methods, but not its policy objectives,” he said. “So we must always be alert and defend the cause of the Cuban Revolution. We continue to be a revolutionary, socialist and united country. Nothing will make us give in and change our principles.”

“Did the U.S. government try to buy you?” Bimal Rathnayake of the Socialist Youth Union of Sri Lanka asked.

“We knew we were in prison not because of who we are as individuals, but because of what we represent,” González replied. “Our imprisonment was an act of aggression by the U.S. government against Cuba.”

Francisco Santiago, a leader of Juventud Hostosiana of Puerto Rico, asked González about his experiences sharing a cell with Oscar López for four years. López was framed up for his support for independence for Puerto Rico and has served more than 34 years in U.S. jails.

López is a man devoted to the cause of Puerto Rican independence and if necessary willing to die in prison for this cause, González said, adding it was a privilege to share his cell.

Hamdi Yusef, international secretary of the Saharawi youth organization UJSARIO, asked if González had a message to send to the hundreds of Saharawi youth in Moroccan jails as they continue their fight for the independence of Western Sahara.

“A message of optimism, confident that in spite of the circumstances I am sure the Saharawi will obtain victory,” he responded. “Some may not witness that victory, but it will be theirs.”

Political discussion and debate

A wide range of political questions were discussed and debated at the assembly. The fight against imperialism is a central part of WFDY’s program, but member groups hold a wide range of views about world developments and what to do next.

One debate focused on perspectives in Syria and the Middle East. Iraklis Tsavdaridis, of the World Peace Council, expressed a view echoed by many delegates, saying groups such as Islamic State are nurtured and tolerated by imperialism. He argued that the instability created by jihadists in the region is in the interests of imperialism because it gives them a pretext for their war aims.

A delegate from the Youth of Communist Party of Turkey argued that the “Arab Spring” and protest movements from the Middle East to Europe have served the interests of imperialism and capitalism, another common view among delegates. As an example, he pointed to mass protests in Turkey in 2013 demanding political rights and an end to government repression and attacks on the Kurds.

Fifteen delegates led by the Communist Youth of Syria attended. They argued for support for the Bashar al-Assad regime there, which they described as leading a war

Cuban farmers host int’l conference on agriculture



Militant/Sam Manuel

GÜIRA DE MELENA, Cuba — Some 200 participants attended the opening ceremony of the 5th International Conference on Agroecology and Sustainable Agriculture and Cooperatives Nov. 23 at the national training school of the Cuban National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP) here. Following the event, participants boarded buses to visit and talk with farmers across the island. Some 65 of the participants came from the United States, including farmworkers from Florida and farmers from Georgia, Iowa and elsewhere. Others came from Brazil, Canada, Congo, Denmark, Guadeloupe and Martinique, India, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Zimbabwe and the Basque country in Spain.

— SAM MANUEL

against imperialism.

“Intervention by Washington and other imperialist powers has created conditions that have helped fuel the wars in the region,” said Rebecca Williamson, representing the Young Socialists in the U.S. “But Washington is not the source of the increased resistance toilers have mounted against dictatorial regimes or national oppression, nor of Islamic State and other reactionary jihadi forces.”

She pointed to the need to support popular protests like those against the Assad regime that swept Syria beginning in 2011, demanding political rights, and support Kurdish victories against Assad and IS.

“Today we can organize solidarity with growing fights by workers and small farmers the world over resisting the effects of the slow burning capitalist depression,” she said. “The biggest obstacle facing the toilers is the capitalist

rulers of their own countries.”

There was unanimous backing for WFDY’s long-standing support for the Palestinian people’s fight for national rights. At the same time, delegates from Palestine and elsewhere in the Middle East engaged in sharp debate over which political course to pursue today.

Delegates also united in backing struggles for the self-determination of Western Sahara and Puerto Rico.

The largest representation came from Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe, with smaller delegations from Asia and the Middle East as well. A newly elected General Council met and re-elected the Cypriot communist youth organization EDON to hold the position of president and the UJC to hold the general secretary post.

Jacob Perasso contributed to this article.

Twin Cities cops

Continued from page 6

justice for Clark and all victims of police violence.

Minneapolis cops Mike Ringgenberg and Dustin Schwarze were the ones involved in Clark’s death, authorities say, although they have not said which one fired the shot that killed him.

Cops confronted Clark, saying he was disrupting paramedics aiding his girlfriend after a domestic dispute. Eyewitnesses from the neighborhood say Clark had been handcuffed before he was shot. Lt. Bob Kroll, head of the Police Officers Federation and de facto spokesperson for the two cops, claims Clark was trying to take an officer’s gun.

One of protesters’ central demands is that the state Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, which is conducting the investigation, release videos of the shootings. The bureau says it has cellphone video and video from a nearby ambulance dashcam, public housing surveillance and mobile police cameras.

More than 400 people attended Clark’s funeral Nov. 25, which was open to the public. After the ceremony the funeral procession drove past the encampment. Funeral-goers honked their horns and leaned out of car windows, fists raised. Protesters lining both sides of the street did likewise.

Oil worker gives ‘blood money’ to build SWP

The Socialist Workers Party received a check for \$1,030.76 Nov. 21 from Mitchel Rosenberg, an oil refinery worker and member of the United Steelworkers union in Philadelphia.

“This particular piece of blood money comes with a unique twist,” he wrote. Blood money is a bribe workers get from the bosses in an effort to get us to acquiesce to rotten contracts, speed-up, discrimination and other indignities.

“All blood money comes with a lie intended to weaken workers’ solidarity and get us to ‘team up’ with the capitalist owners,” Rosenberg wrote. “After a tentative contract was negotiated this year with the refinery, Steelworker union members got a letter from the bosses promising we would get a ‘contingency’ bonus if we approved the deal. If we didn’t approve it, they said, they would use the money to implement their contingency plan — hire replacement workers and try to beat us into submission.

“While I’m always proud to be able to put blood money to good use by handing it over to the Socialist Workers Party, my experiences this year make me unusually enthusiastic,” he said. “From the USW oil workers’ strike at the beginning of the year; through the door-to-door campaigning with SWP candidates Osborne Hart and John Staggs in my Northeast Philadelphia neighborhood and others; building solidarity with the current USW contract fights at ATI, ArcelorMittal and U.S. Steel; joining with fighters for a \$15 minimum wage and unionization at the recent airport strike and street actions; campaigning against cop brutality; and winning support in my local for fellow Steelworkers Tom Harding and Richard Labrie, who face frame-up charges for the rail disaster in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, and for Joe Dougherty with the Ironworkers here — it’s been quite a year to be a communist.

“I look forward to more of the same. The 2016 SWP national election campaign holds more promise than any in my memory,” Rosenberg said. “From Havana to Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Ukraine and Kurdistan, we’ll find like-minded fighters who appreciate the SWP and join us on the revolutionary road to fight for socialism.”

— JOHN STUDER

Struggle between social classes is driving force of history

Understanding History by George Novack, one of the Books of the Month for December, addresses how communists view progress as the product of the revolutionary struggle of contending social classes. Born in 1905, Novack joined the communist movement in 1933, remaining a member and leader of the Socialist Workers Party until his death in 1992. The excerpt is from the chapter "The long view of history." Copyright © 1972 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY GEORGE NOVACK

Hiring and firing seem to us a normal way of carrying on production. But such peoples as the Indians never knew it. Before the Europeans came, no Indian ever worked for a boss (the word itself was imported by the Dutch) because they possessed their own means of livelihood. The slave may have been purchased, but he belonged to and worked for the master his whole life long. The feudal serf or tenant was likewise bound for life to the lord and his land.

The epoch-making innovation upon which capitalism rested was the institution of working for wages as the dominant relation of production. Most of you have gone into the labor market, to an employment agency or personnel office, to get a buyer for your labor power. The



Militant/Hilda Cuzco

Steelworkers protest bosses' concession demands in Pittsburgh Sept. 1. "Exploitation and abuses, inherent in capitalism, provoke workers to undertake militant action," writes Novack.

employer buys this power at prevailing wage rates by the hour, day or week and then applies it under his supervision to produce commodities which his company subsequently sells at a profit. That profit is derived from the fact that wage workers produce more value than the capitalist pays for their labor.

Up to the twentieth century, this mechanism for pumping surplus labor out of the working masses and transferring the surpluses of wealth they create to the personal credit of the capitalist was the mightiest accelerator of the productive forces and the expansion of civilization. As a distinct economic system, capitalism is only about 450 years old; it has conquered the world and journeyed from dawn to twilight in that time. This is a short lifespan compared to savagery, which stretched over a million years or more, or to barbarism, which prevailed for four thousand to five thousand years. ...

The industrial age was launched around the beginning of the nineteenth century with the application of steam power to the first mechanized processes, concentrating large numbers of wage workers into factories. The capitalist captains of this large-scale industry became masters of the field of production and later of entire countries and continents as their riches, their legions of wage laborers, social and political power swelled to majestic proportions.

This vigorous, expanding, progressive, confident, competitive stage of industrial capitalism dominated the nineteenth century. It passed over into

the monopoly-ridden capitalism of the twentieth century which has carried all the basic tendencies of capitalism, and especially its most reactionary features, to extremes in economic, political, cultural and international relations. While the processes of production have become more centralized, more rationalized, more socialized, the means of production and the wealth of the world have become concentrated in giant financial and industrial combines. So far as the capitalist sectors of society are involved, this process has been brought to the point where the capitalist monopolies of a single country, the USA, dictate to all the rest.

The most important question to be asked at this point is: What is the destiny of the development of civilization in its capitalist form? Disregarding in-between views, which at bottom evade the answer, two irreconcilable viewpoints assert themselves, corresponding to the world outlooks of two opposing classes. The spokesmen for capitalism say that nothing more remains to be done except to perfect their system as it stands, and it can roll on and on and on. ...

Socialists give a completely different answer based upon an incomparably more penetrating, correct and comprehensive analysis of the movement of history, the structure of capitalism and the struggles presently agitating the world around us. The historical function of capitalism is not to perpetuate itself indefinitely but to create the conditions and prepare the forces that will bring about its own replacement by a more efficient

form of material production and a higher type of social organization. Just as capitalism supplanted feudalism and slavery, and civilization swept aside savagery and barbarism, so the time has come for capitalism itself to be superseded. How and by whom is this revolutionary transformation to be effected?

In the last century, Marx made a scientific analysis of the workings of the capitalist system which explained how its inner contradictions would bring about its downfall. The revolutions of our own century since 1917 are demonstrating in real life that capitalism is due to be relegated to the museum of antiquities. It is worthwhile to understand the inexorable underlying causes of these developments, which appear so inexplicable and abhorrent to the upholders of the capitalist system.

Capitalism produces many things, good and bad, in the course of its evolution. But the most vital and valuable of all the social forces it creates is the industrial working class. The capitalist class has brought into existence a vast army of wage laborers, centralized and disciplined, and set it into motion for its own purposes, to make and operate the machines, factories and all the other production and transportation facilities from which its profits emanate.

The exploitation and abuses, inherent and inescapable in the capitalist organization of economic life, provoke the workers time and again to organize themselves and undertake militant action to defend their elementary interests. The struggle between these conflicting social classes is today the dominant and driving force of world and American history, just as the conflict between the bourgeois-led forces against the precapitalist elements was the motivating force of history in the immediately preceding centuries.

The current struggle, which has been gathering momentum and expanding its scope for a hundred years, has entered its decisive phase on a world scale. Except for Cuba, the preliminary battles between the procapitalist and the anti-capitalist forces have so far been waged to a conclusion in countries outside the Western Hemisphere. Sooner or later, however, they are bound to break out and be fought to a finish within this country, which is not only the stronghold of capitalist power but also the home of the best-organized and technically most proficient working class.

December

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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Defend Planned Parenthood, abortion rights!

The Nov. 27 attack at a Planned Parenthood clinic that provides abortions in Colorado and the strident political campaign to demonize and defund Planned Parenthood pose sharply the need for the labor movement and all defenders of women's rights to speak out and mobilize: Defend women's right to choose abortion! Stop the attacks on Planned Parenthood!

The right to control one's body, to decide whether and when to bear children, is fundamental to women's equality. Ever since the Supreme Court was obliged to decriminalize abortion in 1973 — under the pressure of a rising women's movement on the shoulders of the massive working-class struggle for Black rights — opponents of women's rights have waged a relentless campaign to drive the medical procedure out of hospitals and limit access, especially for working-class women.

This chipping away has accelerated in recent years, with hundreds of new state laws placing restrictions on the right to choose — from “waiting periods” and parental consent laws to onerous regulations designed to force clinics to close.

Working people are paying the price for the refusal of labor officials and the main women's rights organizations over many years to mobilize a nationwide campaign of public action to bring to bear the broad support that exists for women's right to choose abortion. Instead, they tell people don't rock the boat, work to elect and rely on “pro-choice” capitalist politicians.

In the early 1990s Operation Rescue attempted to physically shut down abortion clinics across the country. Defenders of women's rights, after some early blows, effectively countered the rightists with mass mobilizations that kept the clinics open in Buffalo, New York, and across the country. It's an example



Militant/Hilda Cuzco

Some 100,000 turned out for April 9, 1995, march on Washington defending right to choose abortion.

history of anti-abortion violence. These were acts of weakness, which won no support within the working class or more broadly.

There's no evidence this kind of terrorist anti-abortion campaign is starting again. But the steady drumbeat against the right to choose abortion, including the political campaign against Planned Parenthood — especially when not answered by the mobilization of working people to defend women's rights — increases the odds of individuals carrying out acts like the attack in Colorado.

Because of historic social changes over the past 50 years, women now make up 47 percent of the workforce. To fully participate alongside their brothers on the job — and in battles to defend wages and working conditions — women's ability to control their reproductive lives is crucial.

Many working people today are gaining confidence in our capacity to organize and fight through concrete experiences — in the movement for \$15 an hour and a union, in fights against police brutality and in union battles like the strike against two-tier wages at Kohler in Wisconsin, to name a few. A public fight to defend a woman's right to abortion will be part of strengthening and unifying the working class in these struggles. It's a fight the entire labor movement must take on.

Spirits high in Wis. UAW strike at Kohler

Continued from front page

offs all over the area. Kohler laid off workers and later brought them back as Tier B doing the same work at less pay.”

Local President Tim Tayloe said morale is strong. “One day I let everyone know we needed more on the line and over 400 showed up to picket.”

“When you have the moral high ground, it's a lot easier to fight,” Jesse Felde said. “Kohler pushed the contract aside. They even had a flex workforce sometimes working as little as 15 hours a week.”

The local maintains a well-stocked food pantry to sustain strikers and their families. “Everything in this room is donated by union locals and the community,” Brock said.

Kohler has again threatened to shut down the plant

if strikers don't give in to the company's demands. However in May President and CEO David Kohler told the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* that company sales totaled a record \$5.87 billion last year. Even at the height of the capitalist downturn, Kohler bragged, the company “didn't get close to losing money.”

“I came by the picket line to honor my grandfather, who was a union man at Kohler,” Kati Walsh, a teacher from Madison, told strikers. She was one of many unionists who came to the picket line to help that day.

“I'm not going to retire until after the strike. I'm out here for the younger people,” said Terry Giese, who was three days from retiring when the strike began. “We must stand our ground. I have been union my whole life and I will go out union.”

LETTERS

Attacks on refugees in Norway

The situation with refugees arriving in Norway is dominating the news here. The Labor Party is closely collaborating with the Conservatives to attack a range of rules regulating rights of asylum seekers and refugees. Among those announced Nov. 9 was ending direct cash payments to those approved for asylum and starting a food stamp program in its place. They are doing everything they can to portray thousands of people arriving here as a threat to welfare and retirement benefits for “Norwegians.”

Greg McCartan
Oslo, Norway

‘Militant’ very special

The *Militant* is very special to me. It gives me a lot of information and is also my English teacher since I am Hispanic from Cuba.
A prisoner
Florida

‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

The Prisoners' Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the Militant and earmarked “Prisoners' Fund” to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

More about Puerto Rico

I would like to read more about the struggle that the people of Puerto Rico had with the United States, the history of abuse, massacres, slavery and the total imperialist domination of the people of my island.
A prisoner
Florida

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Kurdish fighters gain against Islamic State

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In recent weeks Kurdish-led fighters have made major gains pushing back Islamic State forces from territory the reactionary group had seized in Syria and Iraq.

The Kurds, an oppressed nationality of some 30 million people living in Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey, have been fighting for a century for a homeland against imperialist domination and oppression by ruling capitalist regimes. At the end of the first imperialist world war, France and Britain drew new boundaries splitting control of the area and creating the four countries, dividing the Kurdish people.

Kurdish units have been the only effective fighting force taking on Islamic State on the ground.

Kurdish forces drove IS out of the Iraqi city of Sinjar Nov. 13, ending 15 months of brutal rule where large numbers of the Yazidi religious minority living there were killed and women enslaved. Before being overrun by Islamic State, Sinjar and surrounding villages were home to about 200,000 people, mainly Kurdish and Arab Muslims — both Sunni and Shiite — as well as Christians and Yazidis.

Some 7,500 forces from Peshmerga, the army of the Kurdistan Regional Government in northern Iraq, led the offensive. Also participating were fighters from the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) of Turkey and the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) of Syria. When IS invaded the area, these groups helped lead thousands of Yazidis who had taken refuge on Mount Sinjar to safety in Syria and then to refugee camps in Iraq and Syria.

The retaking of Sinjar, which was aided by some U.S. airstrikes, severed a strategic Islamic State supply line between Iraq and Syria.

In Hasakah province in northeastern Syria, YPG-led Syrian Democratic Forces have driven Islamic State out of nearly 200 villages and towns, encompassing some 526 square miles of territory, reported ARA News Nov. 17. This includes the town of Hawl, a few miles from Iraq's border, which had been a key access point for IS between the two countries.

Fearing Kurdish advances would inspire Kurds in Turkey to intensify their fight for national rights there, Ankara has conducted attacks and provocations against Kurdish fighters in Syria. In a Nov. 25 statement, YPG spokesman Redur Khalil warned Ankara that it “will take the necessary procedures to target” any plane that breaches airspace in the Syrian Kurdish region.

Ankara, with Washington's blessing, has been bombing PKK-held areas in northern Iraq and towns in southeastern Turkey where Kurds comprise the vast majority of inhabitants. Curfews and martial law have been imposed and military assaults conducted in civilian areas.

Turkish armed forces conducted daily attacks “from both the air and the ground” in November during a 12-day curfew imposed in Silvan in Diyarbakir province in southeastern Turkey, the Kurdish-based People's Democratic Party (HDP) reported.

Residents of Nusaybin, a city of 115,000 in Mardin province near Turkey's border with Syria, took to the streets Nov. 26 to protest occupation by Turkish forces during a 14-day curfew imposed there. Turkish authorities lifted the curfew the next day, but reimposed it three days later.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is seeking to lift parliamentary immunity for HDP Co-chair Figen Yuksekdag in an effort to imprison her on trumped-up charges of insulting the president.

Corrections

In the Dec. 7 issue, the article “Jew-Hatred, Attacks on Free Speech Threat to Working Class” incorrectly attributed the origin of the anti-Jewish slogan “From the river to the sea, Palestine must be free” to a 2012 speech by Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal. Hamas and other Islamists have been promoting the slogan since at least 1990.

The article “New York Meeting: ‘Join Fight Against US War Drive’” incorrectly said the Iranian SWP took part in oil strikes in the Arab region by Isfahan. This occurred around Ahwaz. Isfahan is not in the Arab region and there is no oil there.