

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Cárdenas celebration: 'How little they know Cuban revolutionaries!'
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 79/NO. 47 DECEMBER 28, 2015

Gains against cop brutality inspire fights in Chicago

BY JOHN HAWKINS

CHICAGO — The indictment of the cop who killed 17-year-old Laquan McDonald and the firing of Chicago Police Chief Garry McCarthy have boosted the confidence of fighters against police brutality here. Family members and supporters of people killed by the cops whose calls for justice have been pushed aside by city officials are demanding that the cases be reopened.

"They all should go," Panzy Edwards, mother of Dakota Bright, killed by Chicago cops in November 2012, told the *Militant*, referring to killer cops and the government officials who cover up for them. "All these cases need to be reopened — whether there's a video or not — because it's clear what the cops did in Laquan's case they did in all the rest of them."

For nearly three weeks, following the release of a police video showing the Oct. 20, 2014, killing of McDonald, working people and youth have staged almost daily protests to demand the prosecution of the cops involved, denounce the 13 months it

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Venezuelan opposition wins vote amid deep economic crisis

BY SETH GALINSKY

Battered by the capitalist economic crisis ravaging the country, Venezuelans voted overwhelmingly for the pro-imperialist coalition opposed to President Nicolás Maduro and his United Socialist Party in the Dec. 6 legislative elections.

The Democratic Unity Roundtable, which includes two dozen capitalist parties, won 56 percent of the vote and 112 of the National Assembly's 167 seats, giving it a two-thirds "supermajority."

The opposition coalition even won in many working-class areas that had voted for Maduro and his predecessor Hugo Chávez for the past 17 years. More than 74 percent of those eligible voted.

Maduro took office in 2013 after the death of Chávez, who was first elected in 1998. Chávez was popular among working people for advocating radical change, criticizing U.S. imperialist arrogance toward Latin America, promising land for landless peasants, expanding social welfare benefits funded out of oil profits, and

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Washington's war moves spark attacks on Muslims

Protests reject assaults on mosques, refugees



Militant photos: above, Jim Rogers; inset, Lea Sherman

In a growing number of cases, solidarity actions by working people are rejecting scapegoating of Muslims in atmosphere of U.S. imperialist war drive. Above, some 150 people rally in Stone Mountain, Georgia, Dec. 12 in defense of Syrian refugees. Inset, Sarker Haque, who was beaten in his Fatima Food Mart in Astoria, Queens, shows cards and messages of support he has received.

BY MAGGIE TROWE

The atmosphere whipped up as part of Washington's imperialist war drive has led to an increase in attacks on Muslims across the country. In a growing number of instances, these attacks have been met with solidarity actions by workers and others who reject such scapegoating.

At the same time, Washington, its imperialist allies and Moscow are in-

creasing their military intervention in the Middle East in the name of combating the reactionary Islamic State. The results for toilers in the region are deadly.

After supporters of Islamic State carried out a Dec. 2 terror attack that left 14 dead in San Bernardino, California, President Barack Obama in a prime-time speech four days later

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SWP: Working-class campaign against rulers' war policies at home and abroad

BY MAGGIE TROWE

"What the working-class movement needs is space to organize a broad public discussion of the connection between the rulers' war policies at home and abroad; space to organize active opposition to those policies in the factories and through our unions; space to join with all those willing to debate the issues in a civil manner, and to take our protest to the streets; space to engage in politics in the class interests of workers, farmers, and our allies here and around the world."

That's what Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes said as Washington prepared to invade Iraq at the end of 1990, in the article "The Working-Class Campaign Against Imperialism and War" published in *New Internationalist* no. 7.

The course Barnes described, a stepped-up campaign against imperialism, is what members and supporters of the Socialist Workers Party and Communist Leagues around the

world did then and are doing today as Washington and its imperialist allies increase bombings in Syria and Iraq and attack workers' rights at home under the pretext of fighting Islamic

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NY building workers rally against concessions



Militant/Nancy Boyasko

NEW YORK — Thousands of commercial building workers — porters, cleaners and elevator operators who are members of Service Employees International Union Local 32BJ — and supporters rallied here Dec. 16 after voting to authorize a strike if necessary. The contract between more than 23,000 New York members and the Realty Advisory Board, an association of commercial and residential property owners and cleaning contractors, expires Dec. 31. The last commercial strike, in 1996, lasted 30 days.

The main issues are the bosses' demand for a two-tier wage structure with permanent lower pay for new hires and to prohibit union members from honoring the picket lines of other unions at their buildings, Iris Colón, a union strike captain, told the *Militant*. "If we lose that they will break the union," she said.

"All the workers should get the same, including whatever raise we win," cleaner Marco Gurgura said. "Otherwise, we're just giving them an incentive to get rid of the older workers. And we have to think of the next generations."

The contracts of 7,000 32BJ commercial workers in New Jersey; 3,400 in Hudson Valley and Fairfield, Connecticut; and 2,100 in Hartford and New Haven, Connecticut, also expire Dec. 31.

— DEAN HAZLEWOOD AND SARA LOBMAN

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Meetings celebrate political contributions of two cadres of Socialist Workers Party:

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'No justice, no pizza!' say New York Domino's strikers

Airport workers fighting for \$15 and union conduct 24-hour fast

London meeting debates Jew-hatred, Israel boycott

BY ÓLÖF ANDRA PROPPÉ

LONDON — There was a lively debate on Jew-hatred — the danger it poses and if it's being advanced today by some of those claiming to speak for the Palestinian struggle for national rights — at a Nov. 3 meeting here titled “The Left and Jews in Britain Today.” About 120 people came to the event at Birkbeck University, organized by the Pears Institute for the Study of Anti-Semitism.

The meeting was called in response to “the controversies that swirled around the candidacy of Jeremy Corbyn for the leadership of the Labour Party,” said David Feldman, the Institute’s director. He was referring to remarks by Corbyn referring to Hamas and Hezbollah as “friends” and defending the 2012 visit of Sheikh Raed Salah, head of the Islamic Movement in Israel, to the U.K.

The speakers panel included Alan Johnson from Britain Israel Communications & Research Centre; Lesley Klaff, lecturer at Sheffield Hallam University and UK Lawyers for Israel;

David Rosenberg from Jewish Socialist Group; and Nadia Valman, lecturer at Queen Mary University of London and Independent Jewish Voices.

Johnson said that while Corbyn is not anti-Semitic himself, if Jew-hatred “doesn’t come wearing a uniform and speaking German” he doesn’t seem to recognize it. Adding, “Salah’s vile Jew-hatred is a matter of public record.” Johnson also peddled allegations of anti-Semitism by communist leaders from Karl Marx to Vladimir Lenin.

Rosenberg protested the “demonization of the left by the Jewish right” in the “smears, allegations and innuendo thrown at Jeremy Corbyn,” and praised the Labour leader for opposition to racism and fascism and his commitment to “multiculturalism.” Rosenberg said he created a Facebook group “Jews for Jeremy” that had attracted several hundred supporters, including a few Israelis.

“A problem with the anti-Zionist left,” Klaff said, is “an unconditional and thoughtless acceptance of anybody who speaks as an enemy of Israel.”

Participants also debated the “boycott Israel” campaign. An ad signed by more than 300 academics in the liberal daily *Guardian* Oct. 27 stated they were boycotting Israeli universities, which are “at the heart of Israel’s violations of international law and oppression of the Palestinian people.”

A week earlier, in a letter entitled “Israel needs cultural bridges, not boycotts,” writers, academics, Members of Parliament and others, including writer J.K. Rowling and actress Zoë Wanamaker, argued, “Cultural boycotts sin-

Communist League: Oppose attacks on Muslims, Jews



Militant/Paul Davies

LONDON — My campaign “is for the forging of a working-class leadership in the UK and internationally,” Jonathan Silberman, the Communist League candidate for mayor of London, told the weekly *Jewish Chronicle* in an interview published Nov. 27. “Fighting the rise of Jew-hatred is an important part of any working-class campaign today.”

In a follow-up letter, Silberman added a couple of points whose omission distorted his views. The author “accurately sums up the Communist League’s view that fighting Jew-hatred is a burning question,” he said. “So too, I explained, is the fight against anti-Muslim prejudice. As the UK government intensifies its war drive in the Middle East and cracks down on workers’ rights at home, this is even more important.” Silberman, right, took part in a Dec. 4 protest against the attempted firebombing of the Finsbury Park mosque.

The *Chronicle* also cited Silberman’s opposition to the campaign to boycott Israel, and quoted him saying, “I’m opposed to the capitalist government of Israel, but I’m equally opposed to the capitalist government of Britain or the United States.”

— ÓLÖF ANDRA PROPPÉ

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by Abram Leon

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gling out Israel are divisive and discriminatory, and will not further peace.”

Speaking from the floor, Jonathan Silberman, Communist League candidate for mayor of London, condemned the Israel boycott. “The rise of Jew-hatred today is an international question,” he said. “It doesn’t stem from the existence of the state of Israel but is an inevitable consequence of the slow-burning capitalist depression.”

In contrast to the left’s “we are all Hamas” views, Silberman defended the historical record of the communist movement in opposing Jew-hatred, including the leadership of the Cuban Revolution. “The salvation of the Jewish people is bound up with the struggle to overthrow capitalism,” he said.

The discussion took place in the context of an increase in reported anti-

Jewish attacks in the U.K. Meeting participants cited a number of incidents and debated whether the existence of Israel and the course of the Israeli government were behind the rise of Jew-hatred.

Several people cited remarks the previous week by Labour MP Gerald Kaufman at a Palestine Return Centre event in Parliament. Kaufman said that many of the recent stabbings of Jews in Israel by Palestinian youth had been fabricated, and that “Jewish money” was influencing the Conservative Party.

Many in the audience considered themselves part of the broad “left,” and some supported Corbyn. Others described themselves as Conservative Party voters.

Two participants picked up copies of Abram Leon’s *The Jewish Question* and six bought copies of the *Militant*.

THE MILITANT

Defend women’s right to choose abortion!

The deadly Nov. 27 attack on an abortion clinic in Colorado and 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 in defense of the right to choose abortion.



Militant/Maggie Trowe

Nov. 28 protest in New York responding to attack on abortion clinic in Colorado.

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Washington's war moves

Continued from front page

warned that “an extremist ideology has spread within some Muslim communities. This is a real problem that Muslims must confront, without excuse.” He called for prohibiting gun sales to anyone on the government’s secret and arbitrary no-fly list and putting in place “stronger screening for those who come to America without a visa so we can take a hard look at whether they’ve traveled to war zones.”

The next day Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump said he would bar Muslims from entering the U.S. “until our country’s representatives can figure out what is going on.”

In a Dec. 10 television interview on PoliticKING, Rep. Loretta Sanchez, a Democrat running for U.S. Senate in California, said that between 5 and 20 percent of Muslims “have a desire for a caliphate and to institute that in any way possible, and in particular go after what they consider Western norms, our way of life.”

In this atmosphere, more attacks on Muslims and mosques are taking place. “Get the hell out of OUR COUNTRY and go back to the desert,” read a recent anonymous letter to the Al-Tawheed Islamic Center in Jersey City, New Jersey.

“Allah is Satan,” the “Koran is evil,” screamed a woman at Rasheed Albe-

shari as he was praying in the Lake Chabot Regional Park in Alameda County, California, Dec. 6.

“I can’t wait for the U.S. to get rid of you trash,” a man told a Muslim woman waiting for a bus in Brooklyn Dec. 9. He then kicked her in the thigh. The same day subway workers in the Coney Island yard reported finding graffiti written on a seat that read, “Burn the Muslims, Heil Hitler!”

Actions defend Muslims

There are also more incidents of workers defending Muslims. The counter at the Fatima Food Mart in Astoria, Queens, is now covered in cards and messages of solidarity. Store owner Sarker Haque, originally from Bangladesh, was beaten Dec. 5 by a man who said he would “kill Muslims.” With the aid of two neighbors, the attacker was arrested and charged with assault.

Three rallies and a press conference took place in front of the shop over the following week. “I am sickened by the rhetoric of the anti-Muslim campaign,” said Amirtha Kidambi, a musician who lives in the neighborhood, at a Dec. 12 protest there.

In Stone Mountain, Georgia, more than 150 people gathered Dec. 12 opposing harassment of Muslims. “We have to stand in solidarity with those



Scene in Hawijah, Iraq, after U.S.-led airstrike in June that Iraqi officials said was aimed at destroying a car-bomb factory. Many civilians were killed in extensive destruction.

who are under attack,” Justin Christian, a child care worker active in the Fight for \$15 an hour, told the *Militant*.

Several hundred people gathered outside the Trump Tower in New York Dec. 10 to show support for Syrian and Iraqi refugees and condemn attacks on Muslims, including Trump’s statement.

Some 300 protesters marched in Seattle the same day demanding a serious investigation into the death of Hamza Warsame, 16, a Somali-American high school student who fell to his death from a balcony.

In London, 3,000 people protested

the British government’s bombing of Syria Dec. 12. “There will be a lot of civilian casualties,” said Retaj Laya, a student of Egyptian and Libyan origin who joined the rally.

War intensifies in Syria, Iraq

Since the Nov. 13 Islamic State assaults that killed 130 people in Paris, Washington has stepped up daily airstrikes of IS positions in Syria and Iraq, with limited help from the French and U.K. governments. The Obama administration is sending to Iraq about 100 special operations forces, in addition to the 3,500 U.S. troops already there, as well as 50 others to Syria. The White House is also considering a Pentagon proposal to further expand its bases from Africa to the Middle East.

Since Sept. 30, Moscow has carried out airstrikes in Syria targeting opposition forces to shore up Bashar al-Assad’s brutal regime. A United Nation-brokered deal Dec. 9 led to the withdrawal of hundreds of civilians and opposition fighters from Homs in western Syria. That city was once the center of the uprising against the Assad regime.

Secretary of State John Kerry went to Moscow Dec. 15 to solicit Russian President Vladimir Putin’s assistance in getting a representative of the Assad government to participate in negotiations Washington is brokering for a settlement of the civil war in Syria.

Tensions between Moscow and Ankara heated up after the Turkish military shot down a Russian fighter jet Nov. 24 that it said was in Turkish airspace. The Russian government has imposed economic sanctions against Turkey, and a Russian warship in the Aegean Sea fired warning shots at a Turkish fishing boat that sailed close to it Dec. 13.

The Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG) in Syria, which helps lead the Syrian Democratic Forces group, have made progress in recent weeks regaining ground from Islamic State. Washington has carried out some airstrikes to aid the Kurdish advance. But Islamic State continues its deadly assaults. On Dec. 10 Islamic State suicide bombers attacked a hospital, a market and a residential area in the Kurdish-controlled town of Tel Tamer in northeastern Syria, killing at least 50 people.

Lea Sherman in New York, Lisa Potash in Atlanta and Pamela Holmes and Anne Howie in London contributed to this article.

Campaign against rulers’ policies at home, abroad

Continued from front page

State terrorism.

“In the face of this current war drive, the Socialist Workers Party views the defense of Muslim mosques, community centers and individuals as our highest responsibility. These attacks are part of the rulers’ attempts to restrict the rights

of all as working-class resistance rises,” Steve Warshell told a Dec. 13 meeting at the Baitul Naseer Mosque in Hallandale Beach, Florida, to condemn the Dec. 2 terrorist attack by Islamic State supporters in San Bernardino, California, and protest a spate of attacks on Muslims. He called for Washington, Paris, Lon-

don and Moscow to get their military forces out of the Mideast.

Warshell’s remarks “opposing the calls to register Muslims and ban their entry are much needed,” Munir Khan, a member of the mosque, told the *Militant*.

As capitalist political figures from President Barack Obama to Democratic and Republican candidates call for increased surveillance aimed broadly at Muslims, attacks on Muslims and mosques have increased. In Florida a Tampa woman had her headscarf pulled off; a Palm Beach Islamic Center was vandalized; “F--- Muslims” was painted on an Islamic school; and the Islamic Center of Greater Miami received an email saying, “I want to kill every Muslim around the world.”

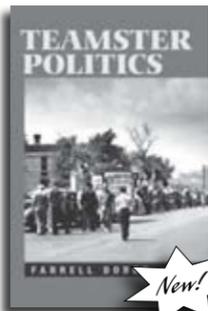
In London, Communist League members set up a table outside the Finsbury Park mosque in north London Dec. 11 with signs opposing U.K. and all foreign bombing of Syria and denouncing anti-Muslim attacks. The mosque was recently the target of a failed arson attack. The communists publicized a demonstration the next day against U.K. bombings in Syria and a Militant Labor Forum that night on “The Working-Class Campaign Against Imperialism and War.”

A worker from Albania stopped to discuss the difference between communism and Stalinism, and then brought them coffee. A Somalian-born woman who knew of Malcolm X’s discussions with Algerian revolutionaries in the 1960s bought *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes and a *Militant* subscription.

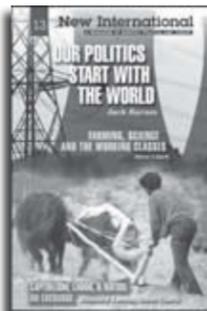
In New York, SWP members joined a Dec. 10 action of several hundred in solidarity with Syrian and Iraqi refugees and against attacks on Muslims, and were invited to a Hanukkah dinner organized by the NYC Muslim Jewish

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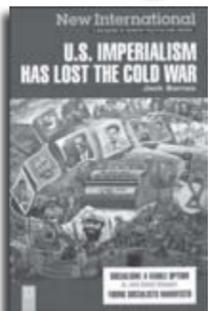
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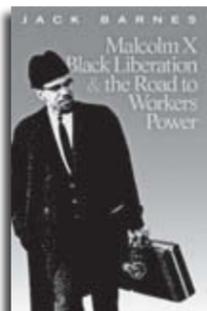
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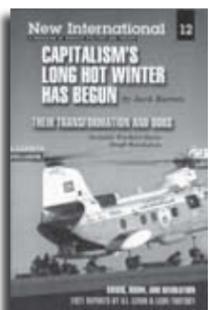
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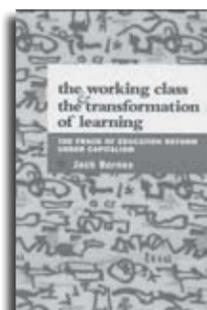
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Frank Forrestal joined the party and never looked back

BY JOHN STUDER

MINNEAPOLIS — “I first met Frank at a Militant Labor Forum,” Rafael Espinosa, from United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1189, told a Dec. 13 meeting at the Labor Centre here to celebrate the life and political accomplishments of Socialist Workers Party cadre Frank Forrestal. “I was surprised to see him working on the line at the Dakota Premium Foods packinghouse a couple weeks later. We worked together to make sure he made probation and the boss couldn’t fire him.

“When we decided we were going to fight to get a union in Dakota, they laughed at us, saying immigrant workers couldn’t do it. Well, we did it. And the SWP worked with us.

“When the bosses finally found out Frank was in the SWP, they treated him just like the rest of us Mexicans,” Espinosa said.

“The picture of Frank on the leaflet for this meeting shows him sitting with a group of miners in Turkey comfortable and relaxed, talking about conditions in their mine and fights to win safer workplaces,” said Norton Sandler, speaking for the SWP National Committee. “It could have been workers in the Red River Valley locked out by American Crystal Sugar or coal miners in western Pennsylvania. That was Frank, talking and joking, and showing them the *Militant* newspaper and books on working-class history.”

Three attractive displays traced political developments during Forrestal’s life and his activities building the party, and two booklets contained messages sent to the meeting.

David Rosenfeld, organizer of the Twin Cities SWP branch, chaired the meeting and introduced David Vasquez, who had been one of Forrestal’s co-workers at Dakota Premium; Frank’s three sisters, Nancy Becker, Jane Forrestal and Patti Higgins; and members of the Minnesota Cuba Committee.

“We look forward to following his example of confidence and determination in building the proletarian party,” Joe Young of the Communist League in Canada told the meeting, “the greatest tribute we can give him.”

“The SWP and our world movement have jumped at opportunities to join struggles that have exploded around the world,” said *Militant* editor John Studer, “to meet those fighting, tell their story in the *Militant*, win solidarity and make lasting contacts.

Teams to Ukraine, Turkey

“When the mass Maidan mobilizations in February 2014 overthrew the Moscow-backed regime of Viktor Yanukovich in Ukraine, the party put together a team of worker-correspondents to go.”

“I met Frank, John and their comrades in Maidan Square,” Oksana Demyanovych, who agreed to come along as a translator one day before they left for Ukraine, wrote in a message. “From the beginning I saw a man who gave all

his heart and soul to defend the rights of working people worldwide.”

“Oksana threw her plans aside and stayed for our whole trip,” Studer said. “And she came back for the other two trips we’ve made.”

“We visited Chernobyl and learned about the Stalinist regime’s responsibility for the 1986 nuclear disaster there,” he said. “We met with former Komsomol leaders who had approached the Cuban ambassador to see if the revolutionary government would help care for the thousands who suffered from the radiation. Cuba’s leadership acted decisively to extend internationalist aid and treat over 25,000 victims from 1990 to 2011.”

“When we went the third time this summer, Frank was getting sicker, but volunteered to go,” Studer said. “Oksana saw we functioned as a team. When she wanted to ask us something, she would call us ‘Frankjohn.’ We were the party.”

“In 1998 the SWP organized a conference in Pittsburgh to respond to a rise in working-class resistance that posed new opportunities,” said Alyson Kennedy, chair of the Illinois SWP. “In Pittsburgh, where Frank was assigned, comrades worked to get jobs in coal. He was the first to get in.

“He went wherever there was a fight, or where the mine bosses’ drive for profit led to disasters that killed and maimed fellow miners. He would write about it for the *Militant*, look to win aid and solidarity, and get the paper out and win subscribers.

“Frank was the party’s candidate for mayor in September 2001, when al-Qaeda’s attacks brought down the World Trade Center. In the face of a ferocious ruling-class campaign against Muslims and working-class rights, he explained how the rulers were using the terror attack to expand their imperialist war in Afghanistan and go after our political rights.” It was one of many times Forrestal served as a party candidate.

“Frank joined me on a 2014 reporting team in Turkey, when workers rose up after a mine disaster killed hundreds in Soma,” Kennedy said.

“Frank grew up in New Jersey, where his father was an executive for Borden Foods,” Sandler said. “He became political during the 1970s, under the impact of the defeat of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam, the Soweto uprising against apartheid rule in South Africa, the bat-



Forrestal, SWP candidate for governor, defends Maidan upsurge in Ukraine, protests Moscow’s attacks at May 2014 action in Minneapolis.



Militant photos: above, Tony Hunt; inset, Laura Anderson Frank Forrestal, left, a former coal miner, talks with miners in Kinik, Turkey, in June 2014 after disaster at Eynez mine killed more than 300 workers, sparking mass protests. Inset, Norton Sandler speaks for Socialist Workers Party National Committee at Dec. 13 meeting celebrating Forrestal’s 37 years as a party cadre. David Rosenfeld, left, chaired meeting.



tle for busing to desegregate the schools in Boston and the revolution that overthrew the Washington-backed dictatorship of the shah in Iran.”

“Whatever his family background, his experiences led him to the fight for revolutionary change,” Sandler said. “He worked with the Liberation News Service when he ran into the party in 1978, and within weeks he was working on the production line in the Ford plant in Metuchen, New Jersey.”

‘Factory production worker’

“He never looked back and led the rest of his life through the working class and his party. When he went into the hospital a couple weeks ago, his companion, Diana Newberry, had to fill out all kinds of paperwork, much of which asked what his occupation was. She wrote ‘factory production worker,’ and that was the life Frank chose.

“He thought this was the only way to effectively advance the fight to overthrow the dictatorship of capital,” Sandler said. “He served on the party’s National Committee for 20 years and worked in rail, auto, coal mines and packinghouses.”

Forrestal set an example campaigning to free the Cuban Five revolutionaries. “It was Frank’s arrival to our committee that made sure that their liberation and return to Cuba became a priority for us,” August Nimtz, a leader of the Minnesota Cuba Committee who was at the meeting, wrote in a message. “I think no place in the world had as many showings of the paintings and cartoons of respectively Antonio Guerrero and Gerardo Hernández, two of the Five, as the Twin Cities.”

One of the last things Forrestal did was to write a review for the *Militant* of Visions of Freedom, Piero Gleijeses’ powerful book about how Cuba sent tens of thousands of volunteers to Angola to help defeat apartheid South Africa’s efforts to overthrow the victorious independence struggle there.

Forrestal spent nearly a decade working in the party’s print shop, producing

the *Militant* and books on revolutionary politics published by Pathfinder Press.

“Like most cadres in the shop, Frank had no previous experience in printing,” Sandler said. “So he didn’t know what we couldn’t do, only what we needed. We put out beautiful four-color book covers on a one-color press.”

“Last summer I joined Frank to speak at a Communist League meeting in Montreal. I found him sick in the bathroom at the airport,” Sandler said. “When he and Diana Newberry, his companion in the party for 17 years, got the cancer diagnosis, they set an example in how they handled themselves.

“Frank was proud Diana continued to help lead the Minneapolis party branch. Whenever he had enough energy, Diana encouraged him to get out into politics. They reinforced each other.

“Over the last year, the Minneapolis SWP has lost three members — Frank, fellow national committee member Tom Fiske and his companion Becky Ellis,” Sandler said. “Tom and Frank were a real team, and worked together to make the branch one of the party’s strongest.”

Supporters of the party did a bang-up job preparing a spread of food and flowers, as well as drinks afterward. Most of the 70 participants stayed around sharing experiences and talking politics.

“The best way to celebrate our comrade Frank’s life and the contributions he made as a worker-Bolshevik — make more efforts to follow his example,” Joe Swanson, who came up in a carload from Nebraska, wrote in a message to the meeting.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

UNITED KINGDOM

Manchester

Firsthand Report on Cumbria Floods — Why the Stewardship of Nature Also Falls to the Working Class. Speaker: Peter Clifford, Communist League. Sat., Jan. 9, 6:30 p.m. Room 301, Hilton House, 26-28 Hilton St. M1 2EH. Tel.: 0161-478-2496.

Betsy McDonald: 45-year cadre of Socialist Workers Party

BY BETSEY STONE

LOS ANGELES — A meeting to celebrate the life and political accomplishments of Betsy McDonald was held here Dec. 13. McDonald, a 45-year cadre of the Socialist Workers Party, died Dec. 7 in Tucson, Arizona, at the age of 95. She had been active in SWP branches in Tucson, Phoenix and Los Angeles.

As participants entered they saw a display highlighting events in McDonald's political life, including a message from Isabel Garcia, Guadalupe Castillo and Raquel Rubio-Goldsmith, members of the Coalición de Derechos Humanos in Tucson, which organizes in defense of immigrant workers.

"From our earliest memories of you, protesting the Vietnam War, supporting the Cananea miners when the Grupo Mexico bullies devastated the strong Mexican labor union town, organizing against police abuse, to every action and social movement in Arizona," they wrote, "your image as a fierce fighter for full cultural and economic justice for all will remain with each and every one of us."

Born in 1920, McDonald lived through the hardships of the 1930s Great Depression. During World War II she was in the WAVES, the Navy women's auxiliary. She raised six children.

A collage sent to the meeting by her daughter Jan McDonald included a description by Betsy about how she got involved in working-class struggles in Tucson in the 1950s. "My first political activity was picketing the segregated Pickwick Inn," she recalled. "I finally came to realize that the only thing that could explain that level of racism is that we live in a class society."

"In the 1950s and '60s Betsy earned respect as a fighter in the labor, Black rights, Mexican American and anti-Vietnam War movements," Dave Prince, a member of the Socialist Workers Party's National Committee, told the meeting. "She was a 100 percent. Someone you could count on."

In the late 1960s, McDonald began to work with members of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance, as the party expanded its work in the Southwest. They included Morris Starsky, a professor at Arizona State University who was a leader in the fight against the Vietnam War, against racism, and active in labor struggles.

Starsky was targeted by the FBI's notorious COINTELPRO operation. The governor of Arizona pressed the Board of Regents to fire Starsky, and they did in June 1970. McDonald joined the fight to get his job back. This became part of



Inset: Militant/Eric Simpson

Betsy McDonald, left, campaigns in defense of Cuban Five at 2013 Tucson Book Fair. Inset, SWP National Committee member Dave Prince speaks at Dec. 13 meeting celebrating McDonald's contributions as a cadre of the Socialist Workers Party for 45 years. "She became convinced working-class revolution is not a dream, but can be reality," Prince said. Others on platform, from left: Dan Fein, Willie Cotton and Ellie García.



the historic Socialist Workers Party lawsuit that exposed and helped push back FBI spying and disruption against political activists and organizations.

In 1968 McDonald campaigned for Socialist Workers Party candidates Fred Halstead for president and Paul Boutelle for vice president.

"Betsy made a political decision in the face of big developments in the class struggle in those years that was to guide her life and conduct from then on," Prince said.

The Southwest at that time was a stronghold of the Communist Party. CP members were active in the unions and many of the organizations and struggles McDonald was part of. They tried to recruit her, Prince said. But she decided to throw in her lot with the SWP.

Confidence in working class

"She chose to build a revolutionary party looking to the example of the Russian Revolution and the Bolshevik party led by Lenin. To have confidence that the working class can take on and win that struggle here, that it's not a dream, but can be a reality," said Prince.

McDonald rejected the CP's support for the capitalist Democratic Party. At the same time she continued to work with everyone she could, including members of the CP, without compromising her principles, Prince said.

In 1978, when the party decided to get the large majority of its members working in industry and carrying out politics based in the working class and industrial unions, McDonald jumped in. She was 58 at the time. The question for her was not if she could do it, but *how* to do it.

With the worldwide capitalist recession in 1974-75 "the capitalists began to attack the unions, seeking to drive down wages and get more production without regard to health and safety on the job," said Joel Britton, organizer of the Socialist Workers Party in Oakland. "And workers resisted."

"It opened up new vistas for waging fights from *within* the unions," Britton said, "in support of the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, protesting cop brutality, opposing imperialist war moves in Central America and the Middle East." There was a political fight in

the SWP over this perspective, he said. An opposition that argued it should not and could not be done was defeated.

"As a union member and as an SWP candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives from Arizona in 1978 and in 1990, Betsy put forward our program — for revolutionary change, for a class-struggle perspective in the unions, for breaking with the parties of the bosses and forging a labor party based on the unions, and in defense of the Cuban Revolution," Britton said.

Ellie García, a member of the party in Los Angeles, chaired the meeting. When the party made its turn to industry, García said, she was working as a farmworker organizer. They won some important victories, and then saw this channeled by the union leadership into support for the Democrats. McDonald convinced her that she should be in the party and its work in industry.

McDonald's first industrial job was at the Reynolds Metals Extrusion Plant in Phoenix, organized by the United Steelworkers. "Betsy always built the party," wrote Josefina Otero, who worked there at the same time, "talking politics, introducing co-workers to the *Militant*, building solidarity at work for strikes and social movements and helping to convince workers to see the SWP as their party."

Dan Fein, SWP candidate for mayor of Chicago in the recent election, described how party members, including himself and McDonald, joined the mass picketing that shut the plant down during the hard-fought Phelps Dodge copper miners strike in 1983. Democratic governor Bruce Babbitt called out the National Guard, armed with tanks, to reopen the plant.

Recruitment of youth

McDonald helped win new members to the Young Socialists and the party. One was Willie Cotton, a student at the University of Arizona and a Navy ROTC member when he first met her.

Cotton described how McDonald organized a campaign in Tucson against the U.S. imperialist war drive after the Sept. 11 attack on the World Trade Center. And she debated with him and won him to see the need to join a party based in the industrial working class.

In 1992, while McDonald was a member of the Los Angeles branch, a social explosion followed the acquittal of cops who brutally beat Rodney King, a 34-year-old African-American. Over four days businesses were set on fire. Cops and troops occupied the area and killed over 50 people, most of them Black and Latino, and arrested 17,000.

The party headquarters was destroyed after flames spread from a shoe store that was targeted. McDonald helped raise funds to rebuild the hall and the Pathfinder bookstore there.

Betsy Stone described the solidarity that poured in, and how the SWP condemned the brutal government response to the anti-cop riot while pointing to the need for disciplined, mass protests of the kind we are seeing today in the movement that is pushing back cop brutality.

While enjoying a tasty buffet, participants studied the displays, including a section on McDonald's work in recent years in the party's print project. Project volunteers turn completed manuscripts into Pathfinder books that the party campaigns with in the working class.

Members of the party, supporters and others from Oakland, San Diego, Seattle, Chicago and New York as well as Los Angeles came to the celebration. Thirty-six people attended. Messages were received and read from the Communist Leagues of Canada and New Zealand and many individuals.

Participants contributed more than \$1,300 to advance the work of the Socialist Workers Party.

The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

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by Jack Barnes

Building the kind of party working people need to prepare for coming class battles. A handbook for those seeking the road toward effective action to overturn the exploitative system of capitalism

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Collage by Jan McDonald includes her mother Betsy's words explaining why she joined civil rights struggle. "That and the Vietnam War are what radicalized me and made me a Marxist," she said. Photos show Betsy with her kids and a young Vietnamese woman and children.

'How little they know Cuban revolutionaries!'

Event celebrating return of Elián González, Cuban 5 looks to 'battles ahead'

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL
AND RÓGER CALERO

CÁRDENAS, Cuba — Some 1,500 residents of this town in central Cuba welcomed the five revolutionaries who won their freedom after spending a decade and a half in U.S. prisons for their actions defending the Cuban Revolution.

The Dec. 6 event here was a celebration of that victory. The downtown theater was packed.

The day was an affirmation of the Cuban people's strength and confidence in facing "all the battles we have ahead of us," as Gerardo Hernández, one of the Five, put it.

Almost one year earlier, on Dec. 17, 2014, the last three of the jailed revolutionaries returned home. The same day, the U.S. and Cuban governments announced that diplomatic ties between the two countries, which Washington severed in January 1961, would be re-established. That was an acknowledgment that after more than five decades, the U.S. rulers' efforts to crush the socialist revolution through military assaults, economic war and political isolation have failed.

The activities here also marked another victorious battle that has special meaning in this city. It was the 16th anniversary of the start of the fight by the Cuban people for the return of a young boy, Elián González, to his family in

Cárdenas. Elián — now 22 years old — and his father Juan Miguel González took part in the event along with other family members.

In November 1999, 5-year-old Elián was picked up off the coast of Florida after his mother and 10 other Cubans drowned during a perilous attempt, organized by smugglers, to reach the United States by boat. U.S. authorities turned the child over to distant relatives in Miami and for seven months refused to return him to his father's custody, in violation of international conventions and Cuba's sovereignty.

On Dec. 6, 1999, the day Elián turned six, the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) led a march in Cárdenas and hundreds of thousands demonstrated in other cities and towns across the island demanding Washington return him to his father. It was only through the insistent demands of the revolutionary government, backed by sustained mass actions throughout Cuba, that the boy, accompanied by his father, came home in June 2000.

Odalys García, FMC general secretary in Matanzas province, reminded the audience that since the initial march for Elián's return, the women's organization has led a march in Cárdenas every



Militant/Róger

Dec. 6 to fight for release of the Cuban Five, who in June 2001 were convicted in a U.S. court on trumped-up charges that included "conspiracy to commit espionage."

This year's event, originally planned as a march, was moved to the Cárdenas Theater-Cinema due to rain. Several hundred high school students attended, along with construction workers, teachers and other working people. Many FMC members were present, proudly waving their organization's signs. Par-

ticipants included officials of Cuba's Council of State, the legislature and Cuban Communist Party in Matanzas province and Cárdenas, the general secretary of the FMC, and family members of the Cuban Five.

The festive program included music, dance, poetry and theater performances by local artists. Each of the Five Cuban Heroes, as they are known — Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, Antonio Guerrero and René González — was awarded the distinction of Adoptive Son of Cárdenas. And the Federation of High School Students (FEEM) was honored on the 45th anniversary of its founding, which also happens to be Dec. 6.

'The battle of ideas will not be lost'

Below is the talk given by Elián González Dec. 6 in Cárdenas, Cuba. Translation is by the Militant.

Today Cárdenas, the City of the Flag [where Cuban flag was first flown, in 1850], is full of joy for having with us Gerardo, René, Fernando, Ramón, and

ELIÁN GONZÁLEZ

Antonio, Heroes of the Republic of Cuba. Exceptional men, they deserve the respect and the admiration of our people for having been in the belly of the beast defending our people from terrorism, from death, and for having resisted 16 years of unjust sentences in the prisons of the empire.

Sixteen years ago, the battle of our people for my return was beginning, a battle of justice against injustice, a battle in which you together with my father and my family demanded my return to our homeland. To all of you, my eternal gratitude, especially to the outstanding leader of our struggles, Fidel Castro Ruz.

This conflict arose because of the absurd and criminal Cuban Adjustment Act, the same law that has brought such death and suffering to our families, the one that today is causing nearly 4,000 Cubans in Costa Rica to risk their lives trying to reach the United States. All this is happening nearly a year after the statements of Dec. 17, 2014. So then, where is the change in policy toward



Militant/Róger Calero

Elián González in Cárdenas, Cuba, Dec. 6.

Cuba? When will they reach a migration agreement with Cuba? When will they end the genocidal U.S. blockade that has been condemned by 182 nations around the world? When will they return the territory of the illegal Guantánamo Naval Base? As long as this remains part of the policy of the United States government towards Cuba, the people of Cárdenas and all Cubans will continue marching each Dec. 6 to demand justice.

"The battle of ideas must not be lost nor will it be lost, the human species depends on it," declared Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro Ruz at the inauguration of this "Battle of Ideas" Museum on July 14, 2001. Thanks to this battle many social and educational programs were established for the benefit of our people and many clinics, rehabilitation centers, schools and art institutions were renovated or built.

It is a convincing demonstration of the truth of these words of the leader of the revolution that I am able to celebrate my birthday joyfully together with my people, my family, and my Five "uncles."

When that historic battle began, Fidel declared, "The enemy who clings to stupid and loathsome injustice will not be able to resist our moral values, our truth, and our unstoppable strength in asserting our just demand. It will have no alternative but to return Elián as soon as possible." And I did return to my family and my people.

In June 2001, when he reported the imprisonment of the Five to our people, Fidel said, "I will simply tell you this: They will return!" And here they are, the Five, in Cuba, with their people, with their families, in their revolution.

In the name of our people I would like to express our admiration for your commitment, your dedication, your selflessness, and your patriotism. You may be certain that the Cuban youth, the pioneers, the students of the FEEM who today are celebrating their anniversary, the university students, young workers and young combatants will be true to the principles to which we have been educated by Fidel and Raúl.

Let's continue fighting this historic battle. Let's continue having confidence in the value of ideas.

These ideas have always given us victory.

Long live the Cuban Revolution!
Long live Fidel and Raúl!
Socialism or death!
Homeland or death! We will win!

Elián's return bolstered Cuban Five

Speaking on behalf of his four comrades and himself, Hernández thanked the people of Cárdenas for their support along with that of millions of Cubans in the successful battle for their release.

The victory in the fight to win Elián's return, Hernández said, had given the Five a tremendous boost while they were in a Miami federal prison awaiting trial. They and other inmates followed the nonstop news barrage about Elián at the time. This included the offer of \$2 million by the director of a right-

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Above: Cuban Five at celebration in Cárdenas, Cuba, Dec. 6. From left: René González, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González and Antonio Guerrero. **Right:** Dec. 30, 1999, march in Santiago de Cuba — one of many across the island — demands return of 6-year-old Elián González, sequestered in Miami. Elián returned home with his father in June 2000. Federation of Cuban Women organized Cárdenas march Dec. 6, 1999, and afterwards held annual events there to demand release of Cuban Five, jailed in the U.S. on frame-up charges. **Left:** Dec. 6 celebration in Cárdenas.



Granma/Ricardo López Hevíá

wing Cuban American radio station to Juan Miguel González — a worker at a restaurant in nearby Varadero — if he stayed in the U.S. instead of returning to Cuba with his son.

“How little they know Cuban patriots,” Hernández said. “How little they know Cuban revolutionaries, who have no price. They neither surrender nor sell themselves. How little they knew Juan Miguel!”

Hernández later elaborated informally on the impact of González’s dignified conduct. “There was a lot of discussion among inmates about whether Juan Miguel would go back,” he said. “If he had stayed in the U.S., we would have been so ashamed to face other prisoners that we wouldn’t have been able to leave our cells for at least six months. But when he returned, it was a proud day for us. We told other inmates, ‘There are millions of men in Cuba like Juan Miguel.’”

The victory in the battle to free the Cuban Five was due to the mobilizations of the Cuban people, the unwavering support of Cuba’s revolutionary leadership and the international defense campaign, Hernández said. He saluted participation in the Cárdenas event of a delegation from the U.S. Socialist Workers Party. They are “representing the many brothers and sisters around the world, including in the United States, who supported us and spared no effort until the victory was won,” he said.

“Keep counting on us, on Juan Miguel, on Elián, on the revolutionary

people of Cárdenas, for all the battles we have ahead,” Hernández concluded.

‘New U.S. tactics won’t confuse us’

“Today, we are continuing the battle to defend socialism,” said FMC leader García, drawing on recent victories of the Cuban Revolution.

“We are not going to let the diplomatic exchange with the United States confuse us,” she said. “We know they are changing their methods but their goals remain the same” — to undermine the revolution.

Washington maintains its economic embargo against Cuba, she said. It refuses to return Guantánamo to Cuban sovereignty. It continues to use “its immigration policy as a weapon against the revolution.”

As an example, García cited the U.S. government’s Cuban Medical Professional Parole Program, aimed at luring Cuban doctors serving abroad into deserting their internationalist missions. She also pointed to the Cuban Adjustment Act, which offers expedited U.S. legal residence to undocumented immigrants from Cuba, while those from

elsewhere are arrested and deported.

Elián González also spoke. Now an industrial engineering student at the University of Matanzas, he noted that when he was sequestered in Miami, President Fidel Castro had pledged he would return. “And I *did* return to my family and my people.”

When the Cuban leader in June 2001 first spoke to the Cuban people about the imprisonment, frame-up trial and conviction of the Five, González said, “Fidel declared, ‘I will simply tell you this: They shall return!’”

“And here they are, the Five,” González said, “in Cuba, with their people, with their families, in their revolution.” Calling them his five “uncles,” he said they had set an example “for your commitment, your dedication, your selflessness and your patriotism.”

González, too, condemned Washington for encouraging Cubans to emigrate to the U.S. outside legal channels and under dangerous conditions. Not only was the Cuban Adjustment Act a big factor in what happened to him 16 years ago, he said, but today it is “causing nearly 4,000 Cubans in Costa Rica to risk their

lives trying to reach the United States.”

Until the U.S. government ends its embargo and other hostile policies against the Cuban Revolution, González said, “The people in Cárdenas and all Cubans will continue marching each Dec. 6.”

The popular mobilizations demanding his return to Cuba gave birth to what is known here as the Battle of Ideas, González explained — a political campaign to deepen participation by working people and youth in the revolution by broadening access to culture and education.

A visit to the local Museum for the Battle of Ideas by the Cuban Five and other guests closed the day’s main activities. One section is devoted to the Five, highlighting the experience of Hernández, René González and Fernando González as internationalist combatants in Angola. They were among hundreds of thousands of Cuban volunteers who from 1975 to 1991 helped defeat invasions of newly independent Angola by the South African government, accelerating the downfall of that white-supremacist regime a few years later.

‘Thank you Cárdenas, thank you Cuba’

Below are remarks by Gerardo Hernández, one of the Cuban Five, at the Dec. 6 rally in Cárdenas, Cuba. Translation is by the Militant.

Thank you, Cárdenas, for all your support and for this great honor of recognizing us as your adopted sons. We will never let you down.

Congratulations, Elián. Congratulations to the FEEM [Federation of High School Students] on its anniversary.

GERARDO HERNÁNDEZ

We were in Miami when that sad chapter, the case of Elián, was underway. That little boy, with all his innocence, could not possibly imagine how much strength he was giving to five men in a U.S. prison.

Juan Miguel [Elián’s father] is very modest. Even today, even though we have tried to explain it to him — but there are things that cannot be explained with words — he still is far from imagining how much his example, his determination, his patriotism, strengthened



Militant/Róger Calero

Gerardo Hernández at Cárdenas rally.

the Five inside a U.S. prison. Thank you, Juan Miguel. Thank you, Elián.

In those days we had the luck and the misfortune of having access to broadcasts from Miami radio stations, and sometimes to one or another television station that was available in prison. Twenty-four hours a day they bombarded us about Elián. And we had to listen when they offered money to Juan Miguel and his relatives.

They eventually offered 2 million dollars. And if anyone doubts this, the person [who made the offer] is Jorge Rodríguez, the director of the former *Radio*

Fe [Radio Faith], at that time called *La Poderosa* [The Powerful One]. On air he said: “I will give him 2 million if he stays.”

How little they know Cuban patriots. How little they know Cuban revolutionaries, who have no price. They neither surrender nor sell themselves. How little they knew Juan Miguel.

That man [Fidel Castro] who today is here among us. That giant who, perhaps, if we are fortunate, is enjoying this event or will at some future time. That captain of peoples, captain of masses who guided the Cuban people towards the incredible and smashing victory of the return of Elián González. He knew and trusted man’s dignity. He knew and trusted that simple, modest man — a man who was unknown at the time, who was called upon to play his role in history. Nobody had prepared him. Nobody had been training him for years for that moment. He was suddenly confronted with the responsibility. And like many, many Cubans he knew how to fulfill that responsibility with honor, with pride. He knew how to uphold the name of his people and of its revolution.

Once again, thank you, Juan Miguel.

Continued on page 9

Cuban Revolution ...

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—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

'No justice, no pizza!' say New York Domino's strikers

NEW YORK — "No justice, no pizza!" 70 people shouted outside a Domino's restaurant in Washington Heights here Dec. 4. The rally was organized to support some 20 workers, more than half the workforce, who walked out on a busy Friday evening in a one-day strike to protest discriminatory treatment by management of those trying to organize a union.

Some neighborhood residents joined the action as did other fast-food workers who have been part of the fight for \$15 an hour, full-time work and a union.

A giant cheer rose each time another worker punched out and joined the rally. "We are on strike now because it's been two years since we started this fight and the workers are retaliating," José Sánchez, one of the leaders of the fight, told the protest. "They cut our hours and show favoritism towards those who are not for the union. When we try to meet with the manager, he tells us everything is fine. We're here to inform him that the union is a force."

In December 2013, 25 workers at this Domino's were fired after complaining about their wages. Several days later, after organizing a picket line outside the store, they won their jobs back.

"Workers come first," said Kenneth Brister, a Papa John's worker who, like many at the action, is part of the fight for \$15. "We make the business, it doesn't make us."

—Sara Lobman

Connecticut State University faculty oppose concessions

HARTFORD, Conn. — Some 150 faculty members and students from the four Connecticut State University campuses rallied outside a meeting of the Board of Regents for Higher Education here Dec. 3. Many members of the American Association of University Professors are incensed by contract proposals that include monitoring faculty email to enforce a rule against using email to discuss union business, denying tenure rights to newly hired librarians and counselors and allowing the transfer of faculty members without their consent from one campus to another.

"They tell us to do more with less," Rachel Siporin, chair of the Art Department at the Central Connecticut campus, told the crowd. "Well, we have been doing more with less for years. Students and faculty need to stand together to fight the cuts."

"We can't let the Board of Regents mess up our education," said John Cannone, one of many students there to support the faculty. "Faculty and students are in this together."

"We want a university, not a website," read the sign of one student, opposing the administration's move to have more courses taught online.

—Tim Craine, member of AAUP at Central Connecticut State University

Airport workers fighting for \$15 and union conduct 24-hour fast

PHILADELPHIA — Airport workers in more than a dozen cities organized a 24-hour fast two days before Thanksgiving to call attention to their fight for \$15 an hour and a union. Service Employees International Union Local 32BJ led the protests, which involved cleaners, skycaps, wheelchair attendants, baggage handlers and ramp workers. The protests took place in Atlanta; Chicago; Los Angeles; New York; Denver; Minneapolis; San Francisco; Philadelphia; Boston; Newark, New Jersey; Fort Lauderdale, Florida; Washington, D.C.; Cleveland and Columbus, Ohio. This followed a national one-day strike Nov. 18-19.

In Philadelphia, workers ended the



Militant/Tamar Rosenfeld

José Sánchez, second from left, speaking at Dec. 4 rally outside Domino's pizza in New York after 20 workers fighting for \$15 an hour and a union walked out in a one-day strike.

fast Nov. 25 at a banquet table in front of the busy airport, sponsored by Local 32BJ and Philadelphians Organized to Witness, Empower & Rebuild, a social justice coalition of area churches.

"We appreciate all support as we continue our struggle to raise wages and win the right to form a union," said Onetha McKnight, a wheelchair attendant. "We know that this fight is not over."

Gregory Holston, pastor at New Vision United Methodist Church, wel-

comed workers to the lunch. His church held an "Economic Dignity Teach-in" earlier this year that included Fight for \$15 speakers, and supports suburban janitors organized by 32BJ who are fighting for a contract.

Debra Kleiss, a wheelchair assistant who came to the action during her lunch break, told the *Militant* she can't live on the \$8.40 an hour she makes. The bosses have no respect for the workers, she said. "They just treat us any way they want."

—Janet Post

Gains against cop brutality inspire fights in Chicago

Continued from front page

took before Chicago officials agreed to release the video, and demand the resignations of Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Cook County State's Attorney Anita Alvarez.

Video footage shows McDonald walking away before police officer Jason Van Dyke shot him 16 times. Van Dyke was finally charged with first-degree murder Nov. 24.

Emanuel fired McCarthy Dec. 1, saying it was needed to rebuild "trust and confidence with the public." The mayor addressed the City Council Dec. 9, apologizing for the killing of McDonald that "happened on my watch."

While Emanuel spoke, demonstrators outside City Hall were demanding his resignation.

Later that evening at the meeting of the Chicago Police Board more than 200 people demanded the firing of Dante Servin, the cop who shot and killed Rekia Boyd in March 2012.

"Shooting unarmed men and women is not justice. Withholding dashcam videos is not justice," Mark Bradford, one of 25 members of Fight for \$15 who attended, told the board. "Lying on police reports is not justice. They are showing by their actions that they don't think Black lives matter."

Speaker after speaker pointed to other police killings: Philip Coleman, a video of which was released only days earlier; Cedrick Chatman, a video of which Chicago officials are still fighting to keep under wraps; Bright; and Darius Pinex and Flint Farmer, both killed by cop Gildardo Sierra.

"Anita Alvarez may have refused to charge the cop who killed my son, but that doesn't end the matter," said Dorothy Holmes, the mother of Ronald Johnson, who was killed by officer George Hernandez. "I'm going to keep on fighting until he pays for what he did."

On Dec. 10 students from the American Medical Student Associa-

tion, Student National Medical Association, Students for a National Health Program, White Coats for Black Lives, and the Latino Medical Student Association staged a 16-minute "die-in" — one minute for each shot fired at McDonald.

Later that evening close to 300 protesters organized by the Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression rallied and marched to City Hall. Among those speaking were Danelene Powell-Dickens, mother of 15-year-old Stephon Watts, killed by Calumet City cops in 2012; and Ralph Peterson, cousin of Darrin Hanna, killed by North Chicago cops in 2011.

Reflecting the impact of the protests in the area, Fox Lake officials released a video Dec. 11 that shows three cops roughing up Jeffrey Grzonka, a 36-year-old Caucasian worker, in December 2014. Three of four cops involved were suspended for up to 30 days. The fourth is on paid administrative leave.

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Greetings to workers behind bars

The *Militant* sends New Year's greetings to fellow workers behind bars. More than 2.3 million people in the U.S. are locked up in federal and state prisons, local jails, juvenile facilities, immigration detention centers, military brigades and Bureau of Indian Affairs prisons.

Some 11 million have spent time in local jails this year, many not convicted of anything, just unable to afford bail. Another 5 million are caught up in the capitalist "justice" system on probation or parole.

With only 5 percent of the world's population, the U.S. is home to 25 percent of the world's prisoners, and has the largest number of prisoners in solitary confinement. No other country comes close.

The purpose of the rulers' cops, courts and prisons is to intimidate and break workers, especially those who protest capitalism's injustices and exploitation.

This year we registered important gains. The release a year ago of the last three members of the Cuban Five, framed in 1998 for defending the Cuban Revolution, is a victory for the Cuban people and for workers here. The Five set an example of human dignity and solidarity with all their brothers and sisters behind bars.

Their victory inspires all who demand freedom for Puerto Rican independence fighter Oscar López Rivera, jailed in the U.S. for 34 years. The *Militant* extends solidarity to all political prisoners, including Leonard Peltier; Mumia Abu-Jamal; the Omaha Two, Mondo we Langa and Ed Poindexter; and others.

From Chicago to Idaho, protests against police killings and brutality have forced the capitalist rulers to place some restraints on their cops, with more facing firing, indictment and trial for attacks on African-American and other workers.

In September a court ordered California prison officials to stop throwing prisoners at Pelican Bay State Prison into solitary indefinitely by labeling them "gang affiliated," a result of hunger strikes involving more than 30,000 inmates.

Undocumented workers held in immigration detention centers, including women forcibly separated from their children in Texas, have stood up to barbaric prison conditions, organizing hunger strike protests.

Cop frame-ups and the unconstitutional plea-bargain system that railroads millions to prison are under fire. In 2014, a record number of 133 people won exoneration with close to 90 more so far this year.

Executions and death sentences continue to fall. This year there were the fewest executions since 1991. Opposition to the death penalty is rising.

We stand with workers behind bars in the fight for dignity, respect and democratic rights. The *Militant* is proud to offer complimentary or reduced-rate subscriptions to prisoners, and the number requested is increasing. Readers can help by contributing to the Militant Prisoners' Fund to help us continue this working-class tradition.

'Thank you Cárdenas, thank you Cuba'

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Your example helped us greatly. Your example strengthened us in those prisons.

This, obviously, is not Elián's first birthday in his homeland. But perhaps it could be, in his own words, the happiest. The Five will never forget what he told René, who was first to return: "I will never have a truly happy birthday until all the Five have returned to the homeland." Today is that birthday, Elián, congratulations, congratulations.

Let's celebrate, Cárdenas. Let's celebrate this victory which is also yours. Let's celebrate together with all our people. There in prison we received news of your marches. How many times did our mothers march at the head of the people of Cárdenas. With how much pride did we receive the photos and news reports from our press. They encouraged us so much. We felt very proud of you. And today it is with even more pride that we receive the honor of being considered the adopted sons of Cárdenas. Once again, my brothers, thank you.

I want to take the opportunity to welcome, because they are here with us, a delegation from the Socialist Workers Party of the United States. Róger Calero, Martín Koppel, and Mary-Alice Waters, who is also president of the Pathfinder Press publishing house. One of the few oases of truthful information that exists in that country, where the big corporate news media lie every day. There the voice of the *Militant* has been raised for many decades in the effort to educate and bring the truth to the American people. It was a solid bastion of support that the Five had in our fight for justice. Thank you, Pathfinder, thanks to the party,

and thanks to the three of you as well.

They are here today representing the many brothers and sisters around the world, including in the United States, who supported us and spared no effort until the victory was won. It was that solidarity together with the support of our people and the outstanding leadership of our commander Fidel, and of Raúl, that made it possible that the Five are here among us today.

You know better than we, a day like today cannot go by without making reference, once again, to Fidel. Commander-in-Chief, we will never tire of telling you with how much pride we listened to your words from that platform in Cotorro [in June 2001]. You said perhaps those five men are listening to me, and yes, we were listening, Commander. We heard you when you said that it would be a battle that would last for years. When you expressed your confidence that we would resist. And when you said: "They will return!"

From that day on, Commander, we knew that nothing, that no one, could break the Five nor prevent our return to the homeland. Thank you again, Fidel. Thank you, Raúl, for making real that promise and bringing us back to our people. Thank you, Cárdenas. Thank you, Cuba. You can count on the Five. Keep counting on us, on Juan Miguel, on Elián, on the revolutionary people of Cárdenas for all the battles we have ahead.

Until victory always!
Long live Fidel!
Long live Raúl!
Long live the revolution!
Homeland or death! We will win!
Thank you.

Campaign against rulers' war policies

Continued from page 3

Solidarity Committee at the nearby headquarters of the Islamic Society of Mid-Manhattan. More than 100 Jews, Muslims and others were at the meal and party. The solidarity committee was formed this year as a way for Muslims and Jews to oppose "hate crimes, incitement or discrimination directed at either community."

The previous week New York socialists knocked on doors in Bayonne, New Jersey, discussing and debating the connection between the war at home and the war abroad with workers born in the U.S., Egypt, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico. Three people bought subscriptions to the *Militant*.

When SWP member Candace Wagner was discussing the attacks on Muslims with co-workers at Walmart, one of them told her that some customers in the Valley Stream, New York, store had yelled at a Muslim couple ahead of them in line to "get out of the country. You don't belong here." A couple at a nearby cash register shouted back, "They have as much right to be here as you."

Cindy Jaquith in Miami contributed to this article.

Venezuela elections

Continued from front page

establishing programs set up with the aid of revolutionary Cuba that improved health care and education for millions in Venezuela.

These same measures earned Chávez and Maduro the enmity of Washington. The U.S. government backed more than one attempt to overthrow Chávez, including a 2002 coup that was reversed after thousands of working people took to the streets. In March this year, the Barack Obama administration imposed sanctions on a number of officials and issued an executive order declaring that Venezuela was a "threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States."

From the beginning Chávez — and then Maduro — rejected emulating the example of the Cuban revolution. They organized to administer and regulate capitalism, calling their course the Bolivarian Revolution and 21st Century Socialism, instead of building a proletarian party that could mobilize Venezuela's workers and farmers to overthrow the dictatorship of capital.

"We accept the results," Maduro said in a Dec. 6 speech. He blamed the defeat on the "economic war" waged by Venezuelan capitalists and imperialism, charging that businesses hoarded goods or sold them on the black market to avoid price controls and rationing as well as to deliberately create shortages to increase popular discontent.

Deepening economic crisis

Production of oil, which accounts for 95 percent of Venezuela's export earnings, has dropped by 350,000 barrels a day since 2008. Both supporters and opponents of the government attribute this to corruption and mismanagement. The economy has been further battered by the worldwide plunge in oil prices, which dropped more than 60 percent in the last year alone, to less than \$40 a barrel Dec. 8. This has left the government with less hard currency to fund social programs.

Inflation is estimated to be as much as 200 percent annually, the highest in the world, and the gross domestic product is projected to contract 10 percent this year.

While many basic items including eggs, rice, flour, cooking oil, and detergent are regulated, working people must spend hours in line to purchase them at the official price — if they are available — or buy them on the black market at double, triple or five times the cost.

The new legislature takes office Jan. 5. The opposition says it intends to end price and currency controls. They also say they will pass an amnesty for leaders of the opposition who were arrested and accused of carrying out violent actions aimed at overthrowing the Maduro government in 2014.

Divisions within opposition

The opposition coalition is not united in its approach on how far and how fast to move. Some factions want to launch a recall campaign to force Maduro out of office.

But Henrique Capriles, who lost to Maduro in the 2013 presidential election, told the *Wall Street Journal* that going after Maduro and his supporters "would be the worst thing that could happen."

While saluting the election results, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry called for a "dialogue among all parties in Venezuela."

So far the opposition has been vague about continued cooperation with Cuba. Cuban internationalist missions, including tens of thousands of health care workers and teachers, are popular among working people. Cuban volunteers provide medical care in the poorest neighborhoods and most isolated regions, where doctors trained in Venezuela do not go. Before the arrival of the Cuban volunteers, health care services "were practically nonexistent" in the shantytowns of Caracas, Spain's *El País* daily notes. "If the Cubans leave, the health system for the poor would collapse."

The opposition has said they want to "review" Petrocaribe, the government program that subsidizes oil sales, not just to Cuba but to 17 Caribbean and Central American nations.

U.S. Deputy National Security Adviser Ben Rhodes announced Dec. 9 that those governments shouldn't expect U.S. help. "We're not going to be able to simply substitute American oil for Venezuelan oil," he said.

'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.