

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Cubans' 'revolutionary ethics'
lead to advances against Ebola
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 79/NO. 13 APRIL 13, 2015

Oil strikers stay strong against BP, Marathon, LyondellBasell

BY ANNE PARKER

WHITING, Ind. — More than 400 members of United Steelworkers Local 7-1 and supporters rallied outside the union hall here March 27 and marched to BP's offices in a determined show of support for the oil workers strike. Strikers are fighting for safer working conditions, to organize maintenance workers into the Steelworkers and to keep gains won in previous contracts. The local went out against BP Feb. 8.

The crowd included strikers' families, members of the United Auto Workers from the nearby Ford Torsance assembly plant, Steelworkers from nearby mills, UNITE HERE Local 1 casino workers, members of the Service Employees International Union, railroad and transportation union workers, members of Chicago Jobs with Justice and others.

The bosses at BP in Whiting and at
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\$15 and a union!
 Join fast-food workers protests April 15!
 For more info on actions across the U.S. visit:
 april15.org

Capitalist greed is driving force behind deadly NY gas explosion



AP/New York Times/Nancy Borowick
 Gas explosion on NYC Lower East Side March 26 killed two, injured about 20 and leveled three buildings. City and Con Ed's refusal to replace old pipes means more blasts will occur.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS
 AND SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK — The exact cause of the natural gas explosion and fire here March 26 is not yet known — the landlord is blaming Con Edison, Con

'Militant' launches spring subscription, fund drives

Tells truth, builds solidarity with workers' fights



Militant/Ron Poulsen

Militant, communist campaigns build workers' struggles. Joanne Kuniansky, right, Communist League candidate for Australian Parliament, joins March 4 march against threat of gov't cuts.

BY EMMA JOHNSON

On April 11 the *Militant* kicks off a seven-week international campaign to win new subscribers, coupled with launching the Militant Fighting Fund to help meet the paper's 2015 financial needs. Working people need the *Militant*, a socialist newsweekly that builds solidarity with every struggle against exploitation and injustice, tells the truth about capitalism's world disorder and points a way forward for organizing a revolutionary movement to bring workers and farmers to power.

We call on readers to join in.

Members of the Socialist Workers Party, Communist Leagues in the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, readers throughout
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DC transit workers speak out against bosses' safety violations

BY ANNE REVERE

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority workers testified at an often heated hearing organized by Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689 here March 25. Workers charged the transit agency with cutting corners on safety to save money and ignoring safety warnings from workers.

Jackie Jeter, Local 689 president, and Jack Requa, Interim General Manager of the Transit Authority,

moderated the hearing. Speakers included transit union members; Herbert Harris, chair of the D.C. Legislative Board of the Brotherhood of

'WE NEED WORKERS CONTROL OF JOB SAFETY'
 — SWP candidate, page 3

Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen; other area union officials; and riders of the Metro. Most of the 100 participants were transit union members.

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Protests demand charges against Philadelphia cops in killing

BY JANET POST

PHILADELPHIA — "This is a civil rights issue. Our civil rights are being violated in this country. It is not OK that the police get to judge you, jury you, sentence you, execute you," Tanya Brown-Dickerson, the mother of Brandon Tate-Brown, told the *Militant*. Philadelphia District Attorney Seth Williams announced March 19 that he would not bring
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—On the picket line, p. 5—

'Make our wages super-sized,' say Fla. McDonald's workers
 Locked-out British Columbia rail workers win support

Canada: Thousands protest ‘terror’ law targeting rights

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL — Several thousand people in at least 70 communities across Canada joined a “national day of action” March 14 calling for the defeat of Bill C-51, the “anti-terror” law being pushed through Parliament by the Conservative Party government in Ottawa. The legislation is an assault on the political and privacy rights of all working people.

The bill was introduced in Parliament on Jan. 30 in the wake of the killing of two Canadian soldiers in separate incidents in the capital in October by self-declared jihadists. Using these incidents, and Ottawa’s participation in the imperialist military coalition fighting against Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, Prime Minister Stephen Harper declared the “threat to national and global security” posed by Islamic State requires the government to use more spying and police powers.

Harper also announced March 24 that Ottawa’s military mission in Iraq will be extended by a year and widened to include bombing of Islamic State targets in Syria.

The bill expands the power of Canada’s spy agencies, grants police wider power to take people into custody, opens up broader spying on the Internet and other attacks on political rights.

The bill was approved by Parliament Feb. 23 in a 176 to 87 vote with the Conservative and Liberal parties voting for and the New Democratic Party voting against. The Public Safety Committee is now holding hearings on the legislation to consider possible amendments before it can become law. The hearings

end March 31.

“We remember too well how after the attacks of 9/11 the CSIS [Canadian Security Intelligence Service] and the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] harassed many Muslims and workers from other racialized communities in their workplaces, resulting in job losses and harassment by employers and co-workers,” Hassan Yussuff, president of the Canadian Labour Congress, said in a statement released on the eve of the March 14 actions. The CLC represents more than 3 million unionized workers. “We are opposing this bill on behalf of those communities and because if passed into law it will compromise the rights of all our members and all Canadians.”

“It leaves peaceful work stoppages, wildcat strikes, and other forms of non-violent civil disobedience that may be deemed unlawful, susceptible to far-reaching interference and disruption by the RCMP and CSIS,” Yussuff said. “Think of peaceful yet ‘unlawful’ activism that won women the right to vote in Canada, ended racial segregation in the U.S. and defeated Apartheid in South Africa.”

In one of three February editorials against the proposed law, the editors of Canada’s national English-language paper *The Globe and Mail* accused Ottawa of granting the CSIS the power to interfere with legitimate dissent.

“Why does the bill do so much more than fight terrorism?” the *Globe* editors asked, saying the bill could allow CSIS to target Native people blocking a railroad line, a party advocating Quebec in-



Militant/Annette Kouri

“Bill C-51: Bogus law, less rights, more surveillance” says sign at left at March 14 protest in Montreal. At right, Beverly Bernardo, Communist League candidate for federal parliament.

dependence or environmental activists demonstrating against the building of a pipeline.

The breadth of opposition to the bill reflects the fact that sections of the capitalist class in Canada question whether the bill’s sweeping attacks on democratic rights, and the opposition it engenders, are necessary at this time.

Organizers of the March 14 protests included the provincial government and Service Employees’ Union in British Columbia, the advocacy group Leadnow and Open Media, an organization dedicated to online rights.

“C-51 is a bill that could seriously endanger our right to protest peacefully,” New Democratic Party federal leader Thomas Mulcair told the Montreal rally of more than 500. Shouting “Harper terrorist, Trudeau complicit,” the demonstrators marched to the offices of Liberal Party leader Justin Trudeau to demand he oppose the law.

“In the context of the deepening worldwide capitalist economic crisis and its impact in Canada, the ultimate target of this legislation — initially aimed in witch-hunt fashion at those the government claims are Muslim jihadists — are working people and our unions who will more and more resist the efforts of Canada’s ruling capitalist families to save their system on our backs,” Beverly Bernardo, Communist League candidate running in Trudeau’s

Papineau district in the October federal election, told protesters she was marching with in Montreal.

“This law is a legal tool that can be used to close the political space we need to organize, strengthen our unions and chart an independent road forward for workers and working farmers in this country,” Bernardo said. “This is why this law needs to be defeated.”

Hundreds turned out in Edmonton, chanting “Kill the bill.” Some 1,500 joined the protest in Toronto and more than 1,000 in Vancouver.

Support for bill plummets

As opposition to the bill broadens, popular support for the legislation is falling. Four former prime ministers published an open letter opposing the law, saying it contains no measures for parliamentary oversight of the activity of CSIS. Other opponents include the Ontario Federation of Labour, Canada’s largest private sector union Unifor, the Canadian Bar Association, the Canadian Muslim Lawyers Association and the Assembly of First Nations.

A poll released following the March 14 s reported only 38 percent support for the bill, with 50 percent opposed, a sharp drop from 82 percent approval in February.

Information about ongoing activities by the “Stop C-51 campaign” can be found at www.stopc51.ca.

THE MILITANT

Working-class solidarity worldwide

From farmworkers in Mexico to miners in Mauritania to workers across the United States, the ‘Militant’ tells the truth about workers’ battles against the bosses, helping share the lessons of different struggles and build international solidarity.

Striking iron ore miners and their families rally in Zouérate, Mauritania, March 5.

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

Join ‘Militant’ campaign!

Continued from front page
the world and workers seeking to get out news about the strikes and political battles they are engaged in will take the *Militant* and Pathfinder books on revolutionary politics to workers and farmers in big cities, small towns and rural areas worldwide.

The bedrock of the campaign will be taking the paper onto workers’ doorsteps in working-class neighborhoods. Participants in the drive will also introduce the *Militant* at strike picket lines, at demonstrations against police brutality, at meetings in defense of women’s right to abortion and at other political and labor events.

The *Militant* joins in the fight to end the 55-year U.S. embargo against Cuba. It reports weekly on developments in the living Cuban Revolution, a powerful example for working people worldwide.

The paper features the activities and statements of candidates of the Socialist Workers Party in the U.S. and Communist Leagues around the world — like Glova Scott running for city council in Washington, D.C., Beverly Bernardo in Quebec running for Canadian parliament and Paul Davies in Manchester, England, running for Parliament in the UK. The communist candidates explain how out of today’s class battles workers will transform themselves, gain consciousness and confidence and organize a massive proletarian movement that can take political power out of the hands of the propertied rulers.

The *Militant* publicizes and reports on weekly Friday night Militant Labor Forums, where workers can join free-speech discussions on key political questions as they unfold. Recent forums in different cities and countries have dealt with the meaning of the elections in Israel, opposition to Russian intervention in Ukraine, prison gag laws and building solidarity with labor battles.

Four books from Pathfinder Press —

Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power; Absolved by Solidarity; Voices From Prison: The Cuban Five; and The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning — are offered at special discounted prices to subscribers (see ad below). Local distributors will offer additional book-subscription offers on Pathfinder titles and issues of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist* in response to political developments.

The *Militant* depends on readers’ contributions to publish every week. It accepts no paid advertising. The annual Militant Fighting Fund appeals to all who appreciate and respect the paper to financially back it.

Distributors of the paper find that the bosses’ grinding offensive against workers and farmers, seeking to make us pay for the crisis of their capitalist system, means there are far-reaching opportunities to expand the *Militant*’s readership.

“I’m interested in anything to do with safety, and there is nothing out there that offers that kind of information,” Stephanie Katelnikoff, 25, told Katy LeRougetel, Communist League candidate in the provincial election in Calgary, Canada, getting a subscription as they met over coffee March 21. Katelnikoff, a former Canadian Pacific Rail conductor, is fighting a trumped-up firing by the rail bosses. She first saw the *Militant* in February on the picket line during a rail strike.

Socialist workers have been taking the *Militant* to picket lines of striking oil refinery workers across the U.S.

“We’ve gone to oil workers’ picket lines throughout the area every week,” reported Danielle London from Houston March 30. “We’ve gotten a very good response. So far 22 strikers have taken out subscriptions and more than 100 have bought a copy of the paper.”

To join in the drive, contact distributors in your area listed on page 10.

D.C.: Socialist candidate backs fight for workers control



“The fight for workers control of safety on the job is a necessity. We need to build fighting unions to do this,” Glova Scott, Socialist Workers Party candidate for D.C. City Council in Ward 4, told Greg Bowen Jr., above center, after he testified at an Amalgamated Transit Union-organized safety hearing March 25. “I work at Walmart and we’re in a fight for \$15 an hour and a union. Your testimony explained what workers are up against.”

“I was just getting started,” Bowen said. “The tunnels are old and there are cracks and vibrations. I’ve serviced the cables at L’Enfant Plaza. The problems are serious and if serious money is not put in, they will come back, again and again.”

“A temporary patch is how the capitalists look at it. Only the working class puts the lives of workers ahead of profits,” Scott said. “The Socialist Workers Party calls for a massive federally funded public works program to provide jobs and rebuild the country’s infrastructure, to expand and maintain public transit, for housing and other things workers need.”

“Bridges, tracks, railroad crossings — we’re at the point where it’s funding or our lives,” said Bowen’s father, Greg Bowen Sr., who is also a high voltage mechanic and former Amtrak engineer. “I like what you are saying. Millions of workers need jobs.”

“The working class needs to run the country,” said Scott.

— ANNE REVERE

DC transit workers speak on safety

Continued from front page

The hearing was held 10 weeks after a Jan. 12 electrical fire that filled a tunnel with thick smoke and trapped a Metro train just outside the L’Enfant Plaza station. More than 80 people were injured and Carole Glover died after waiting more than an hour before being taken to the hospital.

Many workers told the hearing that when they report safety problems they face discipline. Deshon Morant, a track repair worker, said he was suspended for five days after he told a supervisor that a generator and tools were not secured on a flat car.

“On a regular basis, my radio can lose reception for up to 15 stations or more, leaving me with no communication with the control center,” said Niya Banks, a Metro train operator. “I never know what happens when I make a

report about a hazard.”

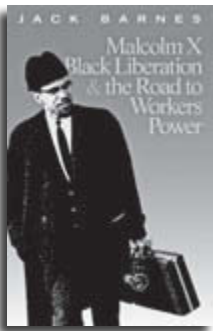
“I reported that there was a radio communication problem five years ago — dead spots throughout the rail,” said another Metro employee, who did not give his name for fear of retaliation.

The radio system in the tunnel was not working Jan. 12. One result was that it took nearly 50 minutes for Metro to turn off the power on the third rail.

“Water leakage is a major problem,” testified Greg Bowen Jr., a high voltage mechanic and Local 689 shop steward. “When water comes in and makes contact with the third rail cables, it can pose extra high safety risks to all riders and workers.”

The National Transportation Safety Board is still investigating the fire. The board can make recommendations but has no power to enforce them.

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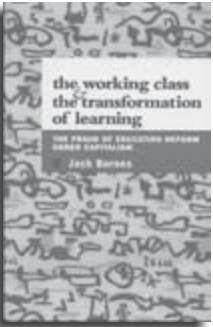
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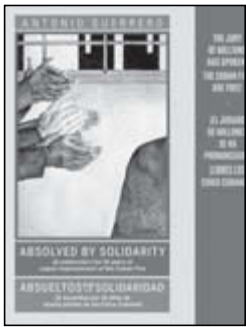
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Oil workers strike continues

Continued from front page

BP/Husky in Toledo, Ohio; at Marathon in Galveston Bay, Texas, and Catlettsburg, Kentucky; and at Lyon-dellBasell in Houston have refused to sign the March 12 national industry pattern agreement worked out between the Steelworkers and Shell, and are demanding concessions in local agreements.

Shell and Tesoro bosses have signed with the union and workers are returning to work.

Union officers from the Teamsters, Laborers and Steelworkers unions, local politicians and the president of the Indiana AFL-CIO addressed the crowd here. “One day stronger, one day longer!” chanted participants after each speaker. Then they marched to BP’s offices.

Drivers of cars, including those blocked by the march, honked support and waved to strikers.

BP is demanding to be able to make changes in the contract without bargaining with the local. “We are not giving up the right to collective bargaining,” Mike Millsap, director of Steelworkers District 7, told the rally. “We will never give up that right.”

“We will hold the line until we get a fair contract,” USW Local 7-1 President Dave Danko told the rally. “If we continue down the company’s road, we will lose everything.”

He said the union met with company representatives that morning and he could report “there was good dialogue.”

“In the last five years, things have really gone downhill with safety,” Mike Mikesell told the *Militant*. “There are two people on my job now. Two years ago five people were responsible for the same job. With the so-called fatigue policy you can’t take a day off. You can work 16 to 18 hour days up to 19 days straight. They do maintenance with people who are not regularly working on the same machines. They can get sent out to do different jobs every day, sent to locations they may not be familiar with.”

The oil workers “are doing what’s right, fighting for safety,” said Greg Stokes, a retired UAW member at the Ford assembly plant. “In 1955 there was an explosion at the refinery and the fire burned for more than a week. My neighbor remembers her mother protecting

her from flying steel and concrete that blasted into the houses. Gasoline ran through the sewer lines.”

On Aug. 27, 1995, a brand new hydro-former, known as a “cat cracker,” made of steel plate and concrete to withstand heavy operating pressures required to get more gasoline out of every barrel of crude, exploded. It leveled businesses and houses in Whiting and ignited 30 tanks that held 3 million gallons of fuel.

One USW Local 7-1 striker at the rally, who did not want his name used for fear of reprisal, told the *Militant* that during the year he has worked at BP he has seen “three full evacuations, a couple of dozen unit evacuations, a handful of fires, one hydrogen explosion and a discharge of crude oil into Lake Michigan.”

“What BP is doing is pure union busting,” said Terry Steagall, a member of USW Local 1010 at the ArcelorMittal steel mill. “If we don’t stand up to this kind of thing now, 30 years from now we won’t have rights. Our contract expires this year and we may face the same thing.”

“I admire their strength,” said Dominique Wilson, 26, a casino worker and UNITE HERE member whose union is in negotiations with Ameristar Pinnacle casino bosses. USW Local 7-1 strikers joined a March 4 labor rally in front of the casino, protesting the bosses’ demand that workers pay up to \$4,000 a year for health insurance.

“The company was hoping the younger generation would be resentful of the union and not strike,” Miguel Negrete, a machinist at BP, told the *Militant*. “As of today, only seven of the 1,100 Steelworkers have crossed the picket line. I think BP thought more would follow them. But we are standing strong. The strike has brought us together. It’s easier now to understand what the strength of a union is.”

Toledo oil strikers fight for safety, more union power

BY ILONA GERSH

TOLEDO, Ohio — Members of United Steelworkers Local 1-346 at the BP/Husky oil refinery here are determined to stay out on strike as long as necessary to push back the company’s concession demands in the local contract. The amalgamated local represents 900 workers, 320 of whom work at the refinery.

“I thought we’d be going back to work after the national settlement with Shell,” Rudy Ramirez, a lab technician with 20 years experience, told the *Militant*. “I told them, ‘Nope, we’ll go back after we’ve settled on local issues.’”

“They want to shut the lab down,” Ramirez said. “We would all be replaced by contractors.” The company wants to eliminate several job classifications, said Chad Culbertson, president of the local.

“BP/Husky wants a management-rights clause to choose what happens to jobs that become available through retirement or resignation,” said Culbertson, who works in the plant. “They could pick someone they like, without seniority even being a factor. Or they could decide to eliminate the job that opens up and combine it with other jobs.”

For that reason, Culbertson said, “negotiations are still going forward, but at a snail’s pace.”

Understaffing and forced overtime are key issues, he said. Under the “fatigue policy” in place now, the company can force employees to work 21 days

New Zealand protesters defend abortion rights



Militant/Pat Starkey

WELLINGTON, New Zealand — Two dozen people protested outside the Wellington Regional public hospital here March 21 in defense of a woman’s right to choose abortion. The action was organized to counter vigils by opponents of women’s rights as part of their “40 Days for Life” campaign targeting the hospital, which houses Wellington’s one abortion clinic.

Most of the protesters were participants in a weekend conference organized by the Abortion Law Reform Association of New Zealand to discuss the fight to expand the right and access to abortion.

Abortion is legal in New Zealand only in cases of serious danger to the life or mental health of the mother, severe mental or physical handicap of the fetus, or severe mental incapacity of the mother. Any woman seeking abortion must get approval from two government-appointed “certifying consultants.”

“I have friends whose lives would be drastically different if they hadn’t had access to abortion,” Alix Mark, 26, told the *Militant* at the protest. “I wouldn’t want someone in an ivory tower telling me what to do with my body.”

After the 20th week of pregnancy, abortion is only legal in cases where death or permanent severe injury to the mother is certified. Access to abortion services are limited, especially in smaller towns and rural areas. Medical abortion is not widely available.

— FELICITY COGGAN

In Houston, Steelworkers Local 13-227 members on strike against Lyon-dellBasell held a crawfish boil March 28. Overtime was a big topic of discussion. The company can force employees to work 13 days straight before they get a day off. Workers also were angry about the bosses’ proposal to not provide holiday pay to workers not scheduled to

work that day.

“We’re not asking for anything new,” Marcos Velez, 28, told the *Militant*. “All we want is to hold on to what we currently have and create a safer work environment.”

Steve Warshell in Houston contributed to this article.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA Oakland

The Deepening Middle East Crisis and the Fight for Political Space for Toilers in the Region. Speaker: Joel Britton, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., April 10, 7:30 p.m. 675 Hegenberger Road. Tel.: (510) 686-1351.

NEW YORK New York

Ukraine Today: Working People Defend Sovereignty, Jobs and Rights. Speaker: Naomi Craine, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., April 10. Dinner, 6:45 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. Ripley Grier Studios, 939 8th Ave., Studio 2A. Tel.: (646) 434-8117.

NEW ZEALAND Auckland

Washington, Allies: Hands Off Venezuela! Speaker: Annalucia Vermunt, Communist League. Fri., April 10, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5. 188a Onehunga Mall. Tel.: (09) 636-3231.

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

MAGGIE TROWE, EDITOR

Help make this column a voice of workers' resistance!

This column is dedicated to spreading the truth about the labor resistance that is unfolding today. It seeks to give voice to those engaged in battle and help build solidarity. Its success depends on input from readers. If you are involved in a labor struggle or have information on one, please 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

'Make our wages super-sized,' say Florida McDonald's workers

TAMPA, Fla. — Chanting and holding placards reading "Not lovin' getting burned by McDonald's," some 80 people rallied here March 18 at a McDonald's restaurant across the street from Busch Gardens, a popular amusement park, as part of the Fight for \$15.

Participants included McDonald's and other fast-food workers, many of them members of Florida Fight for \$15; members of OUR Walmart, a group of current and former Walmart workers fighting for a union at the retail giant; health care workers; adjunct professors; and members of the United Steelworkers, and United Food and Commercial Workers, and other unionists.

Some people attended a class before the event and a forum afterwards hosted by Florida Fight for \$15.

Following the event, in which one chant was "Make our wages super-sized," a lively discussion ensued among several participants on the march. One worker pointed out that \$15 an hour should not be considered 'super-sized' wages, but rather the minimum that workers' time, risk and effort were worth.

The Florida Fight for \$15 movement is building participation in the April 15 nationwide day of actions.

—Daniel Alvarado

Striking Mauritanian miners face government repression

Thousands of striking iron ore miners in the West African country of Mauritania face increased repression and threats from the government and mining bosses as their strike enters its third month.

The country's six largest union confederations have called for a two-hour strike April 9 in support of the embattled miners by workers in three regions of the country.

On March 26 President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz demanded the strikers return to work, saying last year's agreement between the unions and the National Industrial and Mining Company (SNIM) guaranteeing substantial wage increases can no longer be honored because of the sharp drop in iron ore prices. "If the workers' demands are satisfied," he said, "then SNIM would have to close down."

Respecting last year's agreement is the principal demand of the strikers.

Iron ore is Mauritania's largest export. SNIM, which also runs the country's only railroad, is 70 percent government-owned.

No iron ore has been transported since the rail workers joined the striking miners.

The miners in Zouérate went on strike Jan. 30. They were joined by other miners, rail workers and dockworkers in the port town of Nouadhibou one month later. The General Confederation of Mauritanian Workers (CGTM), the principal union in the mines, reported March 25

that 3,786 miners out of 4,500 were on strike in Zouérate, as well as 1,356 out of 1,600 in Nouadhibou.

SNIM management has announced it will hire 150 strikebreakers to start up production.

The deputy military commander of the Zouérate region has told strikers to get off the streets and stop demonstrating "or I will fire on you, as I have been authorized to use live ammunition on demonstrators."

—Nat London

Locked-out British Columbia rail workers win support

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — "Morale is still quite high," locomotive engineer Craig Graham told the *Militant* March 26 while picketing Southern Railway of British Columbia. "We get visited frequently by members of our union, airline attendants, teachers, municipal workers and others." The 126 members of Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 7000 were locked out Jan. 5.

Southern Railway, which operates short-haul service over 60 miles of track, is operating with management personnel, but picketing continues to have an impact. Many unionized workers refuse to cross the picket lines. "One rail car equals four tractor trailers," Graham said. "The additional costs are having a big effect" on Southern's customers.

Safety remains a key issue. Conductor Aaron Cruikshank told the *Militant* that the company's goal is to reduce train crews from three to two by taking away the union-won "two-man crew premium" that forces the company to pay more if they reduce crew size.

"Two-man crews have to do the work of three," the picket captain said. "It



Forge workers on picket line March 27 at Pacific Steel Casting in Berkeley, California. Unionists struck for a week in March, pushing back bosses' attacks on safety, harsh attendance policy.

adds to fatigue, especially on long shifts. Accidents are most likely to happen when guys are tired. And we carry toxic materials through residential neighborhoods." The drive of rail bosses towards smaller crews across North America is "extremely dangerous," he said.

Southern Railway's office workers, members of Canadian Office and Professional Employees, are out in support. "This is our fight too. We're all part of the picketing," office worker Barb Ingram told the *Militant*.

—Mike Barker and Steve Penner

Bay Area forge workers push back takeaway demands

BERKELEY, Calif. — Workers at the big Pacific Steel Casting forge here pushed back company takeaway demands with a one-week strike March 23-29.

One of the key issues for members of Glass, Molders, Pottery, Plastics and Allied Workers Local 164B was a company demand to institute four 10-hour days, which would wipe out overtime pay after eight hours.

"This is a safety issue," said Juan Lozana, 49, who has worked at this forge for 29 years. "The 10-hour shifts are too long, especially if you are a grinder, welder or operate heavy machinery."

Working with molten metal at high temperatures, the workers produce parts for trucks, bridges and oil refineries. The

job involves heavy lifting and repetitive motion, leading to a high rate of carpal tunnel and other injuries.

Pedro Velasquez, a worker on the union negotiating committee, told the *Militant* about his concerns with the attendance program. "They don't respect a doctor's note," he said. "If you are sick, or have a sick child, they still give you a point. After seven points you are fired."

On March 29, workers voted 145 to 100 to accept a new contract that officials reported keeps the eight-hour day work schedule and includes company acceptance of at least two doctors' notes a year. It also includes a \$1.50 raise over four years.

"I'm unhappy with what we got in wages," said Alfonso Padilla, who has worked in the plant for 15 years. "But it was worth going on strike. To stay out longer would have been difficult."

No one crossed the picket line despite company moves to hire strikebreakers.

When the company tried to ship products from the plant and nearby warehouses, workers picketed the entrances.

At one point when a truck appeared at the plant, Padilla said, "We called workers who lived nearby to reinforce us. A lot of people showed up and blocked the road. So the truck turned around." In the case of a second warehouse, the company called in cops, who allowed the truck to go in.

—Betsey Stone

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



April 13, 1990

LENASIA, South Africa — "This is a historic day. This is the first time the organization that is going to lead our people to freedom is being introduced to us here. And that is the African National Congress!" said a leader of the Transvaal Indian Congress in opening a rally of 10,000 here.

Banned by the apartheid regime in 1960, the ANC has had to function as an underground and exile organization. Other anti-apartheid organizations and coalitions arose, which support the ANC and the Freedom Charter, the guiding document of the liberation struggle.

With the ANC now unbanned, these organizations are discussing the best way to reorganize the liberation movement inside South Africa. The mass rally here was organized so activists could hear the thinking of the ANC leadership on such questions.



April 12, 1965

If you feel the urgency of stopping the U.S. war of atrocity in Vietnam, you should join and build the April 17 March on Washington to End the War in Vietnam. Young and old, student and non-student, are being urged by the organizers of the March to pitch in to make this the largest and most effective demonstration possible.

Growing numbers of Americans are expressing doubts about the war and a desire for a peaceful solution. A powerful March on Washington demanding an end to this war NOW will help mobilize that sentiment into a movement — a movement which, if it becomes powerful enough, can stay Johnson's hand.

Every voice of protest must be heard now, and the best place to make your voice heard will be in Washington on Saturday, April 17, along with thousands of others.



April 13, 1940

The Allies and Germany have chosen in Norway the scene of their first great test of military strength.

Between dawn of Monday, April 8, and Tuesday, April 9, Norway was attacked, by the Allies and then by Germany.

By nightfall of April 9, Norway itself was laid prostrate. German forces were already in possession of its capital and its chief ports. Allied forces were on the way in an effort to expel them.

The German forces came in to "protect" Norway against the Allies. The Allies moved to "protect" Norway from the Reich. Norway, which wanted protection from neither, was not consulted by either. It has become the victim of both. This is the fate that awaits the rest of the small states of Europe.

Philadelphia cop killing

Continued from front page

criminal charges against the two cops involved in the Dec. 15, 2014, killing of 26-year-old Tate-Brown. Police officials refuse to release the names of the cops, but say they have returned to street duty.

Tate-Brown was shot in the back of the head. Police say the cops pulled him over because his car's headlights were off. They say he had a gun in the car and ordered him to get out. When he complied, cops say a struggle ensued and he was killed as he reached for the gun.

After attempting for weeks to get videotapes of the shooting from the cops and the names of the officers involved, Brown-Dickerson and her lawyer were allowed to view one at the Internal Affairs Division headquarters. They both say that the videotape contradicts the cops' story. It shows that the car's lights were on and Tate-Brown was behind the car after trying to run from a police beating when he was killed, not at the window trying to reach in for a gun.

"They beat up my son bad," Brown-Dickerson told a protest rally at the site of the shooting Dec. 28. When the photos are finally released, "I'm telling you it's going to prove that my son was the one that suffered hard. It's got to stop. Police brutality has got to stop."

The police never told Brown-Dickerson that her son had been killed.

The Department of Justice released a report March 23 saying Philadelphia cops opened fire on people more than 390 times between 2007 and 2014 — roughly once a week. In 59 cases, the report says, those shot were unarmed. Most shootings involved Black suspects.

In euphemistic language, the report calls the problem "threat perception failure." That is "when the officer(s) perceives a suspect as being armed due to the misidentification of a nonthreatening object (e.g., a cell phone) or movement (e.g., tugging at the waistband)."

Philadelphia cops have been involved in 26 shooting incidents so far this year.

"Am I releasing the names? No," Philadelphia Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey told the *Philadelphia Daily News* Feb. 19. "Everybody needs to be mindful of the fact that this has gotten to the point where we had two officers shot and killed in New York by someone who wanted to use the controversies as an excuse to commit murder."

Brown-Dickerson has joined actions called by relatives of others killed by the cops, including a Feb. 28 rally in Bridgeton, New Jersey, protesting the Dec. 30 cop killing of Jerame Reid.

Even before her own son's death, she

attended events protesting the cop killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. "As much as I will fight for justice for Brandon, I will also fight for Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice and others who have been killed," she said.

"Justice has not been done yet," Terrell Tate, the father of Tate-Brown, said in a video released to the public, "because the police that shot him and beat him have not yet been tried and held accountable."

The night Williams announced he would not file charges, he and Ramsey attended a neighborhood community meeting. Members of the Racial, Economic And Legal Justice Coalition approached the table where Ramsey and Williams sat and shouted in their faces.

"As police officers tried to prevent them from pressing further," the *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported, "the protesters started shoving the police; some people tumbled to the floor, and folding chairs were sent sliding across the auditorium." Ten demonstrators were arrested and charged with disorderly conduct.

"Any protesters who speak to these



Joe Piette, International Action Center

Above, Tanya Brown-Dickerson, mother of Brandon Tate-Brown, speaking at Feb. 21 rally in Philadelphia Mayfair neighborhood where her son was killed Dec. 15. Inset, cop stands over Tate-Brown's body.

public servants disrespectfully are urged to behave with dignity," Brown-Dickerson said in a public statement. Actions like these weaken the fight against po-

lice brutality, she said. Those "who want to protest her son's death" should "do so peacefully and act respectfully toward all public officials and police officers."

1960s Black rights victory halted Jim Crow lynchings

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

For more than 70 years, from the defeat of Radical Reconstruction in 1877 until the rise of the proletarian-led civil rights movement in the 1950s, African-Americans had to confront Jim Crow segregation, enforced by pervasive racist violence. Thousands were lynched. A report released by the Equal Justice Initiative in February documents nearly 4,000 lynchings in 12 Southern states during the Jim Crow era.

The Second American Revolution, which defeated the slaveholders, led to Radical Reconstruction governments across the South, with South Carolina having a majority Black legislature. By 1870, the fight to pass the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution had been won and Blacks and other toilers began to use the right to emancipation, citizenship and suffrage to fight for equal rights and better social conditions. Important gains were won, including public education, medical care for the poor and universal male suffrage.

But none of the Radical Reconstruction governments had both the will and power to expropriate the big plantation owners and enforce a far-reaching land reform. Blacks and their Caucasian allies faced growing violence from the Ku Klux Klan and other racist gangs. Blacks were blocked from land ownership, systematically driven into sharecropping to profit the plantation bosses.

In 1877 Radical Reconstruction was overthrown. Northern industrial and banking capital feared a potential alliance between Blacks, farmers and the growing working class in the North. They backed a deal between the Democratic and Republican parties to withdraw Union troops from the South, accelerating the reign of terror by the Klan and other racist gangs.

This bloody defeat of Radical Reconstruction was the worst setback suffered not only by African-Americans but the entire U.S. working class in its history. It was sealed in the South by the reign of Jim Crow.

Lynchings were a key part of establishing and enforcing Jim Crow rule. Blacks were systematically stripped of their rights. To exact the most terror,

some lynchings were organized as public affairs.

Some 400,000 Blacks served in the U.S. Armed Forces during World War I. Expecting equal treatment and democratic rights upon their return, they had to confront the Jim Crow segregation system still in place. As Blacks expressed their dignity and resisted, racist lynchings were the response.

"In 1919, a white mob in Blakely, Georgia, lynched William Little, a soldier returning from World War I, for refusing to take off his Army uniform," the report notes.

In 1919 there were racist riots against African-Americans in Chicago and 24 other cities. Two years later racist mobs in Tulsa, Oklahoma, rioted against African-Americans, killing an estimated 100 to 300 people and destroying more than 1,200 houses.

In the 1920s the Klan grew rapidly in Indiana and other parts of the North where it targeted Catholics as well as Blacks. Grand Dragon David Stephenson organized a secret autonomous grouping within the Indiana Klan known as the Military Machine, which had a quarter-million members.

Organizers of sharecroppers' unions among exploited Black laborers in the South in the 1930s were also targeted.

Other racial and ethnic minorities faced lynchings, including Mexicans, Native Americans, Italians and Chinese. "From 1848 to 1928, mobs murdered thousands of Mexicans," reported the *New York Times*, with "local authorities and deputized citizens playing particularly conspicuous roles" in this effort.

Lynchings began to decline in the 1930s and especially the '40s and '50s. Blacks returned from military service in World War II and the Korean War were increasingly willing to resist and were trained in the use of arms.

Anti-lynching bill never passed

Organizations in both the North and South took a stand against lynchings. The NAACP was established in 1908 in response to racial attacks in Springfield, Illinois. In 1930 Caucasian women formed the Association of Southern Women to Prevent Lynching, which

won 40,000 supporters by 1940.

Though Black rights' groups fought for Congress to pass an anti-lynching bill, they were never successful. Bourgeois politicians in the North and West, especially in the Democratic Party, which rested on a bloc of big city political machines in the North, union support and Dixiecrats in the South, went along with arguments that "such legislation constituted racial 'favoritism' and violated states' rights," the report said.

"Not a single white person was convicted of murder for lynching a black person in America during this period," the report noted, "and of all lynchings committed after 1900, only 1 percent resulted in a lyncher being convicted of a criminal offense."

The mass Black-led proletarian movement that erupted in the 1950s, with battles in the streets — from Birmingham to Selma, Alabama — overthrew forever Jim Crow segregation. By the end of the 1960s, lynchings were virtually eliminated.

Finally, in 2005 the U.S. Senate apologized for not outlawing lynchings.

The revolutionary movement that toppled Jim Crow pushed back racism, strengthening the self-confidence of Blacks and the entire working class.

Some liberals and petty-bourgeois radicals argue that the racism the bosses promote in a never-ending effort to divide the working class and superexploit Blacks — reflected in the large percentage of Blacks incarcerated in recent decades, higher unemployment for Black workers, cop brutality — signifies the rise of a "new Jim Crow." But nothing could be further from the truth.

Under Jim Crow, Blacks were legally prohibited from sitting together on a bus with Caucasians, drinking from the same water fountain, voting and much more. The racist regime was enforced by lynchings and violence. Bringing this back would take a bloody counterrevolution that working people today would never accept.

Blacks and the working class as a whole are in a stronger position today to fight to overthrow capitalism and the racism it fosters, standing on the shoulders of the gains of the 1950s and '60s.



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Moscow provocations aim to roil Europe, Ukraine

BY NAOMI CRAINE

“Danish warships will become targets for Russian atomic missiles” if the government there moves ahead with plans to assist NATO’s missile defense shield, Russian Ambassador to Denmark Mikhail Vanin, wrote March 21. His comments were published in the Danish paper *Jyllands-Posten*. “Denmark will become a part of the threat against Russia. It will be less peaceful.”

The threats come at a time when Moscow is carrying out stepped-up military exercises and other provocations in the Balkans and across eastern and northern Europe. Russian President Vladimir Putin’s aim is not to start a new war, but to keep his opponents off balance, particularly in relation to Ukraine.

The Danish government announced last August that it would equip at least one frigate with radar as part of expanding the missile defense shield of the U.S.-dominated NATO military alliance, in the works for more than a decade. Moscow has long opposed the expansion. In 2012 the chief of Russia’s general staff threatened a pre-emptive nuclear strike on any country hosting the shield on its soil.

There have been a number of recent

incidents of Russian warplanes violating the airspace of Estonia, Finland and Sweden, and flying unannounced in international airspace near countries in the Baltic region with their transponders off, in violation of international aviation accords. Last year Moscow carried out a simulated attack on Bornholm, a Danish island in the Baltic Sea.

Russian officials announced March 16 several days of what they described as a “snap combat readiness exercise” of Moscow’s North Fleet, involving 38,000 troops, 41 ships, 15 submarines and 110 aircraft. The next day, Moscow said it will deploy advanced Iskander missiles to Kaliningrad, a Russian enclave sandwiched between Poland and Lithuania on the Baltic Sea, and station nuclear-capable bombers in Crimea, the Black Sea peninsula that Moscow seized from Ukraine a year ago.

At the same time, NATO member states are carrying out a number of smaller-scale exercises in eastern Europe.

In Ukraine, daily skirmishes continue between Russian-backed separatists and Ukrainian units, especially in the town of Shyrokyne on the outskirts of Mariupol on the Black Sea.

Fight against SKorea naval base gains solidarity in Philadelphia

BY JOHN STAGGS

PHILADELPHIA — Hee Eun Park and Paco Michelson, two participants in the fight against construction of a South Korean naval base in Gangjeong village on Jeju Island off the southern tip of the Korean Peninsula, told two meetings here that building support for the struggle in the U.S. is critical. All inquiries about the base are referred to the Pentagon, meaning it is really a project of the U.S. military.

The March 26 meeting at the Calvary United Methodist Church was sponsored by the Philadelphia Committee for Peace and Justice in Asia. The event the next day at the Circle of Hope Church featured “Gureombi — The Wind Is Blowing,” a film that documents the fight against the base. Both meetings were part of a national tour organized by Peaceworkers, the Korea Policy Institute and the Channing & Popei Liem Education Foundation.

Park and Michelson described the long history of battles by the workers, farmers and fishermen on the island, including the “Jeju massacre” in 1948, when some 30,000 people, according to some historians, were killed during

mass protests against the U.S.-imposed regime of Syngman Rhee. The government of South Korea refused to allow any reference to the massacre to appear in print until after 1993, the speakers said.

For more information on the tour go to www.savejejunow.org.

Engineer in Lac-Mégantic disaster faces frame-up trial

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL — In an unusual development, Quebec Crown prosecutor Jean-Pascal Boucher moved to annul Tom Harding’s right to a preliminary hearing and pushed instead for an immediate trial against the locomotive engineer. Harding is being framed up for the July 2013 oil train derailment and explosion that killed 47 people in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec. A court hearing will be held April 20 in Lac-Mégantic to set the date for the trial.

Under a special dispensation given to the now-bankrupt Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway by the Canadian government, railroad bosses ran their oil trains with a one-man “crew.” Harding was the one person working on the 72-car train, which carried more than 2 million gallons of highly volatile crude oil. He parked it, leaving the engine running to set the air brakes and set seven handbrakes as required by company rules, and left to get some sleep.

The engine caught fire. Local firefighters put it out and turned the engine off. Railroad dispatchers called Harding to tell him about the fire. According to a transcript of the call, Harding asks, “Do I need to go up there?” The dispatcher tells him, “No, no, no, no,” saying another company worker is there. “There’s nothing to do?” Harding asks. “There’s nothing to do,” the dispatcher



Rally of 2,000 in Minsk March 25 celebrating Belarus independence, opposing Moscow’s seizure of Crimea and expressing solidarity with Ukraine. Banner reads, “Freedom Day.”

Under the cease-fire agreement, brokered by the German and French governments in Minsk, Belarus, Feb. 12, the Ukrainian government will not regain control of the country’s eastern border with Russia until a political settlement is reached allowing for a decentralized, special status of the separatist-held areas in Donetsk and Luhansk. Such an agreement is nowhere in sight. If the separatists, who receive fighters and weapons from Russia, can take more ground without too high a cost — especially opening a land route between Russia and Crimea that the capture of Mariupol would open the door to — Moscow would benefit. If not, maintaining a frozen conflict along the cease-fire line keeps pressure on the government in Kiev.

The Ukrainian government reported March 29 that Moscow had sent 22 additional tanks and hundreds of new troops across the border into Luhansk over the weekend.

Moscow’s goal is to keep the pot simmering, looking to gauge the reaction in Washington and Europe, probing for opportunities to strengthen the position of the so-called Peoples’ Republics in

eastern Donetsk and Luhansk.

On March 31 the Australian government began implementing a previously announced embargo on weapons, oil production equipment and bank loans to Russia, as well as a ban on Australian business activity in Crimea. The European Union is planning to extend its economic sanctions against Moscow, although some EU members, including Hungary and the new Syriza-led government in Greece, hope to see them end.

The main effect of these economic sanctions is to put a squeeze on working people in Russia and Crimea, damaging the fight for working-class solidarity across national borders.

Meanwhile, some 2,000 people marched in Minsk March 25 opposing Moscow’s policies and expressing solidarity with Ukraine. The rally was approved by the authorities, reflecting the distance Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko, a longtime ally of Putin, is taking from Moscow. “Ukraine is fighting for our independence too,” student Inga Shakhnovich told the Associated Press at the rally.

answers. He tells Harding to go to sleep.

With the engine off, the airbrakes bled out. The train began to roll, derailing in the center of Lac-Mégantic and exploding.

“A preliminary inquiry is a way a guy can find out what case the Crown has got against him and to act accordingly,” Thomas Walsh, Harding’s attorney, told the *Militant* March 26. “So it’s kind of a low blow.”

Harding, Richard Labrie, who was rail controller at the time of the disaster, both members of the United Steelworkers union, and company manager Jean Demaître were charged with 47 counts of criminal negligence causing death. They face the possibility of life in prison.

No company official has been charged.

When the explosion woke Harding up, he rushed to the site, risking his life to help firemen depressurize brakes on some of the cars that had not caught fire so they could be moved.

For this reason he is considered a hero by many in Lac-Mégantic. They were angered when he was charged, arrested at gunpoint at his home by the riot squad and then paraded in handcuffs to a courthouse.

“I had planned to call as yet unnamed and hidden officials from the Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway to testify

under oath,” Walsh said, “as well as officials from the Transportation and Safety Board.”

The board had issued a report on the derailment. Walsh said he wanted to ask them about one thing they discussed, but did not include in their report, “that is the role the one-man crew played in that situation.”

While refusing to comment on Harding’s case, the prosecution said pushing to go straight to a trial can be in the “public interest.”

“What ‘public interest’ is served by this?” Walsh said. “It’s all pretty hollow. Every time you hear the phrase ‘public interest’ you know there is nothing there.” The decision reflects either “an element of panic or political pressure,” he said.

The Steelworkers and fellow rail workers in Canada and the U.S. are raising funds for Harding and Labrie. To contribute in Canada, send checks to Syndicat des Métallurgistes, 565 boulevard Crémazie Est, bureau 5100, Montreal, Quebec H2M 2V8. Online contributions can be made by credit card at www.justice4USWrailworkers.org.

In the United States checks can be sent to Tom Harding Defense Fund, First Niagara Bank, 25 McClellan Dr., Nassau NY 12123. Credit card donations can be made by visiting: www.tomhardingdefensefund.com.

**‘If You Don’t Give Up,
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Oppose Jeju Island, SKorea,
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US-Iran talks, war in Yemen

Continued from front page

bia and Egypt; and opposition to his course from the reelected government of Benjamin Netanyahu in Tel Aviv.

As Washington pulled its forces out of Yemen, Saudi Arabia, backed by a number of other predominantly Sunni, Middle Eastern regimes, launched airstrikes against Houthi forces in Yemen March 26. Egypt sent warships and threatened the use of ground forces.

At the same time, President Obama sought to take the mantle of a war president, ordering massive bombing of Islamic State positions in the city of Tikrit, Iraq. His hope is this will make it easier to counter criticism if he can reach a “reset” with Iran, trading relief from economic sanctions for an agreement where Iran will not develop nuclear weapons for the foreseeable future.

Saleh, who had ruled Yemen for 33 years, was forced out of power by mass popular protests in early 2011 as part of the “Arab Spring.” Hadi, vice president under Saleh, became president in February 2012 in an election where he was the only candidate.

Washington worked with both the Saleh and Hadi governments in operations against al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. AQAP controls areas in central and southern Yemen and has used the country as a base for attacks around the world. Since 2009 the CIA and Pentagon have carried out dozens of drone strikes and special operations raids against al-Qaeda forces in Yemen, often killing civilians and bystanders, earning the anger of many residents.

The Houthis, who are Shiite Muslims based in northern Yemen, have waged a rebellion for years, first against Saleh and then Hadi. In recent months they allied with Saleh and have received arms and advisers from Tehran. In January the Houthis took over Sanaa. Hadi fled to Saudi Arabia as Houthi forces advanced on Aden March 25.

Worried about growing Iranian influence in Yemen, Syria and the region, as well as Obama’s efforts to reach a quid pro quo with Iran, the Sunni Muslim Gulf monarchies of Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, as well as the governments of Jordan, Morocco, Pakistan, Sudan and Turkey, backed the Saudi assault. A summit of Arab government officials in Egypt announced they were forming a joint military force to intervene in the region.

Washington is now providing targeting information from surveillance flights over Yemen, as well as bombs and aerial refueling.

Saudi-led naval ships blockaded Ye-

meni ports March 30 and Saudi planes reportedly hit a camp for displaced civilians, killing at least 29, reported the *Wall Street Journal*. Even before the recent fighting, the United Nations reports 334,000 people have been driven from their homes in Yemen.

Obama’s ‘reset’ with Iran

Intervention in Yemen by the rulers of Saudi Arabia and other Sunni monarchies is in part a reaction to Obama’s attempts to carry out a “reset” of Washington’s relations with Tehran.

“Saudi Arabia simply cannot allow Iran under any scenario to use its ‘near status’ as a nuclear power to expand its influence and prestige,” wrote Nawaf Obaid, a former adviser to several Saudi government officials, in an op-ed in the March 27 *Washington Post*. “Whatever deal the Iranians get, the Saudis will pursue an equivalent program to reach nuclear parity.”

The White House is still in what some media outlets call a “Bibi panic,” using the nickname of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, over his recent election victory and his scathing March 3 speech to the U.S. Congress denouncing the negotiations with Iran. Getting a deal with Tehran is a centerpiece of



Obama’s foreign policy strategy.

The U.S.-Iran negotiations now involve top officials from France, Britain, Germany, the European Union, Russia and China. The March 31 deadline has been pushed back while talks continue.

With the blowing up of his strategy in Yemen, and the Iran deal under fire, Obama is more prone to lashing out unpredictably to try to show that he is capable of defending U.S. interests by any means necessary. That’s what is behind what observers described as U.S. “carpet bombing” in Tikrit.

Washington has been in a tacit alli-

ance with Iranian-backed Shiite militias, who have a long record of sectarian violence against Sunni villagers throughout Iraq, in the battle against Islamic State there. U.S. officials said the Iraqi army should take the lead in the battle for Tikrit and that they wanted the militias to pull back. But Baghdad has neither the forces nor the fighting spirit for street-to-street fighting.

Leaders of the Shiite militias initially said they would withdraw in opposition to the U.S. involvement in Tikrit. Most have not left, however, and intend to resume fighting.

London meeting debates cop ‘stop and search’

BY ÖGMUNDUR JÓNSSON

LONDON — More than 150 people packed a room at the House of Commons March 17 for what became a lively debate on police use of stop and search powers to harass working-class youth.

One million stop and searches were carried out in England and Wales in 2013. Even according to official government statistics, around a quarter of those stops were illegal. Young blacks were six times as likely to be stopped as Caucasians.

Members of the audience, which was substantially young and black, described their experiences with arbitrary stops, harassment and brutality by the police. “I’ve been stopped seven times when I’m with my brothers,” Lashonte Myton told the meeting. “Once I was strip-searched in a police station. They never gave specific reasons.”

The meeting was organized by StopWatch, a group that promotes “effective, accountable and fair policing,” and hosted by Diane Abbott, the Labour Party Member of Parliament for Hackney North and Stoke Newington. In the audience were community members, groups that monitor police practices, candidates in the May 7 general election and a few police officers.

Bradley and Leon Fields, who are active in the Shipman Youth Centre in East London, were on the platform. The center is part of a broader CitySafe project launched by Citizens UK to collaborate with police and local businesses to create “safe havens” for young people who come under threat in the streets, and to report crime. “Many young people don’t want to participate because of their experience with the police,” Bradley Fields said. “I don’t blame them.”

Some panelists urged young people to stand on their legal rights. “I’m all for knowing your rights,” responded Temi Mwale from the floor. “But police don’t respect our rights. If you talk back, they’ll say, ‘You’re a cocky one, aren’t

you?’” Mwale heads up the group called Get Outta the Gang.

Terry Justice, president of the Dagenham and Rainham Conservative Association, challenged opponents of stop and search to propose alternatives. “It’s there to stop crime. Used properly, it’s an effective tool.”

“There’s no evidence stop and search helps fight crime,” Abbott replied, saying it should be replaced with “evidence-based techniques.”

“Stop and search is a microcosm of the attitudes of the state to people of color,” she argued. “Its roots are in the legacy of chattel slavery. No single issue has poisoned relations between the community and the police more.”

“Police are not there to fight crime,” Jonathan Silberman, the Communist League candidate in Hackney North and Stoke Newington, told the crowd, countering both Justice and Abbott. “When police harass young people with stop and search, including disproportionately targeting black youth, when there are deaths in police custody, when hundreds of innocent people are jailed under ‘joint enterprise’ laws and when police attack striking workers’ picket lines, that’s police doing their job for the propertied rulers. They act to push working people back, to cut down political space.”

“In the face of today’s crisis and the grinding erosion of living standards, jobs and safety, working people need space to discuss out a working-class alternative and organize to fight back,” he said. “This is a decisive issue for the labor movement as a whole.”

“There is no way to reform the police in the interests of the working class,” Silberman said. “But the resistance that’s been expressed is important. It points to the sort of struggle that’s needed. In today’s conditions, victories can be scored.” He pointed to the successful campaign to win a “jury of millions” that led to freedom in December 2014

for the Cuban Five, five Cubans imprisoned in U.S. jails for their efforts to defend the Cuban Revolution.

Rulers’ concern about police image

Police inspector Nick Glynn of the College of Policing, tasked by the police with monitoring abuse of stop and search, lauded StopWatch and Abbott for organizing “an uncomfortable but necessary conversation.” Glynn, who is black, said he has been stopped 30 times while off-duty. “If anybody thinks there isn’t a racial element to stop and search, they’re living on a different planet.”

“But if we didn’t have stop and search, we would have to arrest more people,” Glynn said, adding recent measures introduced by Home Secretary Theresa May are “a step in the right direction.”

In August 2014 May announced a “Best Use of Stop and Search Scheme,” under which “no suspicion” stop and searches are curtailed and members of the public have the right to apply to accompany police officers on patrol. Police will record data on stops and make them public. If a police department gets over a certain number of community complaints, it would have to justify how and why they are using their powers.

Supporting May’s moves, the London *Times* editorialized, “The powers of stop and search are a waste of time and a drain on confidence in the police which, after a series of scandals, is already low.”

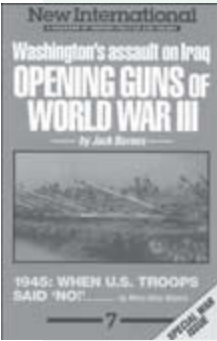
“Theresa May needs to be given some credit,” Abbott wrote in the *Guardian* last May, for her attempts to make progress on the misuse of stop and search.

Participants at the House of Commons meeting said the “Best Use” scheme means little on the ground. Estelle du Boulay, who works for the Newham Monitoring Project, pointed to the example of a young man who sought their help after sustaining 40 injuries in an encounter with the police. “Why would he even contemplate using the complaints system?” she asked.

In New International no.7

Washington’s Assault on Iraq Opening Guns of World War III

by Jack Barnes



Lessons from the Iran-Iraq War

by Samad Sharif

1945: When U.S. Troops Said ‘No!’

by Mary-Alice
Waters \$14

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Cubans' 'revolutionary ethics' lead to advances against Ebola

BY SETH GALINSKY

With only one new case of Ebola in Liberia in the last few weeks and a steep drop in new infections in Sierra Leone, Cuban volunteers, who have been at the forefront of combating the epidemic in those two countries, are returning home. The 38 internationalist volunteers in Guinea-Conakry, where the epidemic is not yet under control, continue to fight the virus.

At the outset of the epidemic, Cuba's revolutionary government organized the largest delegation from anywhere in the world of medical personnel, all volunteers, to fight the disease.

"The Cuban doctors didn't care about the risk, they said they were brothers from across the ocean and they came to help us as brothers," Liberian Foreign Affairs Minister Augustine Kpehe Ngafuan told Cuban reporters in late March.

Juventud Rebelde reported that 150 Cuban doctors and nurses who have been fighting Ebola for the last six months in Liberia and Sierra Leone returned home March 23. The 66 volunteers remaining in Sierra Leone will return April 1. All will spend 21 days in quarantine to ensure that the disease is not introduced onto the island.

Dr. Leandro Castellanos Vivancos described his experience in Sierra Leone in an article on the Cubadebate website. Castellanos was stationed in the Port Loko district, a rural area 35 miles from the capital Freetown.

"We first arrived at a small camp very similar to what in Cuba are known as rural schools, with the difference that we had air conditioning for 12 hours a day," Castellanos wrote.

"We could see all along the road some of the customs of the people, for example, the long treks of women, with huge logs on their heads and an ax in their hands," he said. "Yes, here the women do the hard work and sometimes the men accompany them as if to raise their spirits."

"The patients were not used to being in beds and we would find them on the floor. Some of them feared us, they didn't have even a little bit of faith in the 'astronaut' they had in front of them," Castellanos said, referring to the protective clothing doctors and nurses have to wear.

"Little by little we did what was necessary, it wasn't easy," he said. "Sometimes we had to communicate with gestures, crazy antics, since just a few of them spoke English."

Brought down death rate

The Cubans worked out of a field hospital with volunteers from other countries, including the United States, and with local personnel, succeeding in bringing the death rate down from 70 percent to 30 percent, Castellanos said.

"We've done our duty, with revolutionary ethics, with medical ethics," Dr. Leonardo Fernández, one of the Cuban *brigadistas* in Liberia, told *Granma* in an interview published in the March 20 issue.

Fernández said that the training they received at Cuba's Institute of Tropi-

cal Medicine was excellent. "We left knowing what we faced, knowing the dangers, and prepared psychologically and technically," he said. "During the first week we started out with a tremendous fear, but as time went by we had to slow down some of the volunteers, because they wanted to do more than what we had been asked to do."

"We saw entire families die, children who were alone, their mom, their dad, three little brothers who died, it was terrible," Fernández said. "But we also saw how Ebola survivors picked up and adopted orphan children. There isn't any better pay for us than seeing this solidarity among the Liberians themselves."

Fernández noted that when the brigade first arrived in Liberia the streets were deserted because of fear of contracting the disease. "Now, what a difference," he said. "People on the street greet us, whenever we go out to eat or buy anything, they treat us with tremendous affection."

Like other volunteers, Fernández has been on previous internationalist missions, including in Pakistan after an earthquake, in Nicaragua, East Timor and in Haiti.

'I always volunteer for missions'

"Whenever they ask for volunteers I raise my hand and then I ask later what



Cuban doctors and nurses, internationalist volunteers at the forefront of fight against Ebola in Liberia and Sierra Leone, arrive home March 23. "We've done our duty, with revolutionary ethics, with medical ethics," said Dr. Leonardo Fernández, who served in Liberia.

I'm volunteering for," he said.

All the Cuban volunteers agreed to serve for at least six months. Only one of the Cuban volunteers, Félix Báez, contracted Ebola. He survived and returned to complete his assignment in Sierra Leone. Two Cuban volunteers were infected with malaria and died during the mission.

Fernández said he didn't see what they did in Liberia as heroic. Thousands of Cuban internationalists have carried out missions around the world, he said, pointing to medical brigades deep in the jungle in Brazil, in indigenous communities in Venezuela and in villages in other parts of Africa. "The only difference is that this international mission is well known in the

media," he said. You had to be brave, "but it was just another assignment."

"We don't need any monetary compensation," Fernández said. "I am recognized as a complete revolutionary, firm in my principles. That's enough."

"The first thing you feel is satisfaction at having carried out our assignment," Dr. Ronald Hernández, who was part of the Liberia brigade, told Cubadebate. "Having helped those peoples is one of the best things I have personally ever done."

"The people of Africa deserve a better destiny," Hernández said. "I have seen social problems in my previous missions, but in Africa everything is more complicated. They need a few Fidels over there."

Mexico: Fight for truth about 'disappeared' students

BY SETH GALINSKY

Six months after Mexican police disappeared 43 students the fight to get out the truth about what happened remains a big issue in Mexican politics.

Municipal police in Iguala, Guerrero state, launched two armed attacks Sept. 26 on students from the teaching school in nearby Ayotzinapa. The students were in town preparing for an upcoming protest in Mexico City. Two were killed in the attacks, one was found dead the next day and the rest are presumed dead.

Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto says the case has been solved and those responsible are under arrest or indicted. Federal Attorney General Arely Gómez González, appointed March 3 after the previous attorney general resigned over protests against the government's handling of the investigation, called it an "isolated case."

But millions in Mexico refuse to accept the official version of events. The 43 have become a symbol in the fight against the impunity of police, soldiers and the private armies of capitalist drug cartels; of outrage over government corruption; and in defense of democratic rights.

A delegation of 10, including family members and classmates, began traveling in three caravans across the U.S. March 16 to win solidarity and bring those responsible to justice. (For information on activities in your city, visit www.caravan43.com.)

"The parents of the Ayotzinapa students and the members of human rights groups that have been by their side have denounced the decision of the Mexican government to close the investigations,"

Roman Hernández, a spokesperson for the Tlachinollan Human Rights Center of the Mountain, which works closely with the families, told the *Militant* in a phone interview from Guerrero shortly before the caravans to the U.S. began. "Peña Nieto is trying to recreate the image that Mexico is a prosperous country where human rights are respected, a safe place for business to invest."

Widespread disappearances

Amnesty International estimates that about 25,000 people were disappeared in Mexico since 2006.

The drug trade to the U.S. is a major capitalist industry in Mexico. Killings and disappearances are concentrated in regions where rival capitalist drug cartels compete for control. These bloody wars involve police, sections of the military and government officials from all the main bourgeois political parties.

Some 10 years ago, sections of the Mexican ruling class, backed by Washington, decided the drug trade was interfering with capitalist investment, production and trade. Felipe Calderón, president from 2006 to 2012, launched a "war on drugs," bolstered by the U.S. government's Mérida Initiative — funded to the tune of \$2.3 billion since it began in 2008 — to train and arm the Mexican police and army to "systematically capture and jail the leaders" of the drug trade.

But the Mexican government has not moved decisively to confront the capitalist drug business. By attacking some drug cartels, weakening their control over some of their territory, it has set off violent fights among competing gangs. The unintended consequence was sky-

rocketing kidnappings and killings under Calderón that have continued since.

According to a report by the University of San Diego Trans-Border Institute, there were more than 50,000 murders in Mexico tied to the drug trade from December 2006 to November 2011.

Drugs part of capitalist business

CNN reports that more than 30 percent of Mexico's gross domestic product comes from drug smuggling and related activities. Drug profits are laundered in banks both in Mexico and the United States and used to finance legal investments from real estate to gas stations.

A 2013 report by Human Rights Watch documents more than 140 cases where Mexican security forces — from local and federal police to Navy personnel — were involved in disappearances, kidnappings and murders.

The violence is centered in areas where the drug cartels flourish, including Guerrero state, where both Ayotzinapa and Iguala are located. "Drug cartels rule large swaths of land" in Guerrero, ABC News reported Feb. 27, "extorting business owners, buying off authorities and disrupting important industries such as agriculture and tourism."

The Mexican federal prosecutor's office says that the mayor of Iguala, José Luis Abarca, and his wife, Maria de los Angeles Pineda, are allied with the Guerreros Unidos drug gang.

"According to the attorney general, the 43 were detained by the Iguala municipal police and handed over to an organized crime group that killed them,

Continued on page 11

Stalin’s class collaboration betrayed 1925-27 Chinese Revolution

Below is an excerpt from Leon Trotsky on China, a collection of articles and letters about the powerful revolutionary upsurge that shook the cities and countryside of China in 1925-27, opening the possibility for working people in that country to take political power. But the revolution was crushed at the hands of Chiang Kai-shek and his bourgeois and landlord allies. A central cause of the defeat was the disastrous course of Joseph Stalin, general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, in subordinating the Chinese Communist Party to an alliance

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

with the capitalist Nationalist Party (Kuomintang). Trotsky, a leader of the Russian Revolution who was driven into exile by Stalin in 1928, fought to reverse this course. The excerpt includes a piece Trotsky wrote in 1925 as the upsurge began and an evaluation written in 1940 on the lessons of its defeat. Copyright © 1976 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Workers in 1927 insurrection in Canton. Under Stalin, Moscow “utilized its whole weight to subordinate the Chinese proletariat to the bourgeoisie,” leading to defeat, Trotsky wrote.

BY LEON TROTSKY

The *Times*, the leading newspaper of the English bourgeoisie, writes that the movement of the Chinese masses reveals a “Moscow spirit.” Well, for once in a way we are prepared to agree with the conservative denunciators. The English press in China and in the British Isles brands the striking workers and students as Bolsheviks. Well, we are prepared to a certain extent to support even this terrible revelation. The fact is the Chinese workers object to being shot down by the Japanese police, so they have declared a protest strike and are proclaiming their indignation in the streets. Is it not evident that here the “Moscow spirit” prevails? The Chinese students, filled with sympathy for the workers in their struggle, have joined in the strike against the exercise of violence by foreigners. It is evident, as far as the students are concerned, that we have to deal with Bolsheviks.

We of Moscow are prepared to accept all these accusations and revelations. We should like however to add that the best agents for spreading the “Moscow spirit” in the East are the capitalist politicians and journalists. To the question of the ignorant coolie: “What is a Bolshevik?” the English

bourgeois press replies: “A Bolshevik is a Chinese worker who does not wish to be shot by Japanese and English police; a Bolshevik is a Chinese student who stretches out a brotherly hand to the Chinese worker who is streaming with blood; a Bolshevik is a Chinese peasant who resents the fact that foreigners, whose arguments are deeds of violence, behave on his land as though they were lord and master.” The reactionary press of both hemispheres gives this excellent description of Bolshevism. ...

When the half-naked and half-starved Chinese worker who is oppressed and degraded begins to become conscious of his dignity as a human being, he is told: Moscow agents have egged you on! If he allies himself with other workers to defend his elementary human rights, he is told: this is the “Moscow spirit.” If in the streets of his own town, he tries to defend his right to existence and development, he hears cries of: This is Bolshevism! ...

From now onwards every Chinese will know that the “Moscow spirit” is the spirit of revolutionary solidarity which unites the oppressed in the fight against the oppressors; and that on the other hand the atmosphere which pervades the cellars of the

English prisons of Shanghai incorporates the spirit of “British freedom.”



The tragic experience of China is a great lesson for the oppressed peoples. The Chinese revolution of 1925–27 had every chance for victory. A unified and transformed China would constitute at this time a powerful fortress of freedom in the Far East. The entire fate of Asia and to a degree the whole world might have been different. But the Kremlin, lacking confidence in the Chinese masses and seeking the friendship of the generals, utilized its whole weight to subordinate the Chinese proletariat to the bourgeoisie and so helped Chiang Kai-shek to crush the Chinese revolution. Disillusioned, disunited, and weakened, China was laid open to Japanese invasion.

Like every doomed regime, the Stalinist oligarchy is already incapable of learning from the lessons of history. At the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War, the Kremlin again placed the Communist Party in bondage to Chiang Kai-shek, crushing in the bud the revolutionary initiative of the Chinese proletariat. This war, now nearing its third anniversary, might long since have been finished by a real catastrophe for Japan, if China had conducted it as a genuine people’s war based on an agrarian revolution and setting the Japanese soldiery aflame with its blaze. But the Chinese bourgeoisie fears its own armed masses more than it does the Japanese ravishers. If Chiang Kai-shek, the sinister hangman of the Chinese revolution, is compelled by circumstances to wage a war, his program is still based, as before, on the oppression of his own workers and compromise with the imperialists.

The war in eastern Asia will become more and more interlocked with the imperialist world war. The Chinese people will be able to reach independence only under the leadership of the youthful and self-sacrificing proletariat, in whom the indispensable self-confidence will be rekindled by the rebirth of the world revolution. They will indicate a firm line of march. The course of events places on the order of the day the development of our Chinese section into a powerful revolutionary party.

April

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10 The Militant April 13, 2015

Capitalist greed to blame for NY gas blast

The following statement by Maggie Trowe, Socialist Workers candidate for Congress in the 11th C.D. in New York, was released March 31. Trowe and Seth Galinsky, in State Assembly District 43 in Brooklyn, are the SWP candidates in the May 5 elections.

For the second time in a year, a gas explosion caused death and destruction in New York. Two people died and 22 were injured in the blast that demolished three buildings on the Lower East Side March 26.

No matter what is uncovered in the city government investigations now underway, one thing is clear. The disaster was the result of a system that puts profits before human safety and a government that represents the interests of the propertied rulers.

Con Edison says they can't afford to rapidly replace the hundreds of miles of old corroding gas pipes across the city. Landlords maximize profits by spending as little time and money as possible on buildings that house the working class. The city government says it doesn't have the \$47.3 billion it would take to maintain the safety of New York's aging infrastructure.

This is not a budgetary question, but a moral one.

When such disasters happen, the bosses and their government always try to blame the workers or one or another of their own to take our eyes off the true culprit, the profit-driven capitalist system.

My campaign calls for a massive, government-funded public works program to provide jobs for those thrown out of work by the capitalist economic crisis, to rebuild crumbling infrastructure, including decrepit gas and electric lines, and build housing,

public transportation, schools, day care centers, and hospitals that working people badly need.

I support unionists fighting to take greater control over conditions on the job, like the Steelworkers engaged in a national strike against the oil barons under the banner "Safe refineries save lives." Workers control is the only way we can guarantee safety at work and for surrounding communities.

No boss, landlord, capitalist politician or government regulator will guarantee safe gas lines or safe anything else. Only the working class has the moral interest to do so.

Through strikes, organizing drives and solidarity with social struggles — from the fight against police brutality to the defense of a woman's right to choose abortion — we transform ourselves, thinking socially and acting politically, gaining confidence in ourselves and the working class as a whole. Along this road we will rebuild our unions, organize a fighting labor party and build a movement of millions to overthrow the dictatorship of capital and replace it with a government of workers and farmers.

The Cuban Revolution overthrew the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship in 1959 and brought the toilers to power. For more than 56 years they have defended their sovereignty and socialist revolution against Washington's embargoes, invasions and threats. Their example of internationalism and human solidarity, like that shown by the medical volunteers leading the fight against Ebola in West Africa, stand today as an example of what working people in power can accomplish.

Pregnant worker wins round against UPS

BY MAGGIE TROWE

By a vote of 6 to 3, the U.S. Supreme Court March 25 handed a victory to UPS driver Peggy Young and all pregnant workers. It overturned an appeals court decision denying she was a victim of sex discrimination during a difficult pregnancy and ordered the lower court to reopen the case.

Young, who worked for UPS in Landover, Maryland, was denied light duty in 2006, despite her doctor's recommendation that she not lift more than 20 pounds because of a history of miscarriages. "We're not making an accommodation for her because she is not disabled," the company said. Young took unpaid leave and lost her medical coverage.

A district court ruled in favor of UPS and the Fourth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals agreed, saying the company's policy was "pregnancy-blind."

Young had filed her case based on the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978. The act prohibits sex discrimination on the basis of "pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions," and directs employers to treat pregnant workers the same "as other persons not so affected but similar in their ability or inability to

work."

Speaking for the Supreme Court majority, Justice Stephen Breyer wrote that the Pregnancy Discrimination Act makes clear that the prohibition against sex discrimination in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 "applies to discrimination based on pregnancy."

Breyer said that the appeals court and UPS were right that the Pregnancy Discrimination Act did not justify a "most favored nation" status for women. But, he wrote, this did not settle the key factual question — "whether UPS provided more favorable treatment to at least some employees whose situation cannot reasonably be distinguished from Young's."

During the deliberations, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg accused UPS of having a "least favored nation" approach to pregnant workers. She challenged UPS lawyer Caitlin Halligan to provide "a single instance of anyone who needed a lifting dispensation who didn't get it except for pregnant people."

Meanwhile, UPS has changed its policy. Starting Jan. 1 this year pregnant employees became eligible for light duty.

Truth about 'disappeared' Mexican students

Continued from page 9

incinerated their bodies and threw their ashes in the river," Hernández said. "This version is based mostly on testimony from three people. Some had signs of having been tortured."

The government also reported that the killers believed the students had been infiltrated by a competing drug gang, Los Rojos, Hernández said, charges that "are just slanders."

Nearly 100 people, including municipal police, alleged drug gang members, Abarca and other local officials have been arrested and charged.

Students report that soldiers from a base in Iguala briefly detained them after the most serious attack when many were wounded and delayed access to medical care. The government has refused to investigate the role of the Mexican army.

"Everywhere in town you could hear the shots the night of the attack," Juan Antonio, a teacher who lives in Iguala, told the *Militant* by phone. "There were so many shots we expected more deaths."

The day after the attack state police detained the entire Iguala police force and disarmed them. Ten days later federal police took over.

At first people in Iguala applauded their arrival, Velasco said. "But it ended up being the same with the *federales*."

On Feb. 13, Norma Angélica Bruno, a member of the group "Family of the Other Disappeared," was assassinated in front of two of her children in Iguala in broad daylight.

Many in Mexico's capitalist class are uneasy with the murders, disappearances and disruption caused by the drug cartels. Twenty major business groups took out a full-page ad in Mexican newspapers in January demanding that Peña Nieto work to guarantee "total security, in all of the country."

But the bosses also took aim at protesters who continue to demand the truth behind the disappearances, marching, blocking highways, even shutting down airports. "How long with this go on?" the business group complained.

NY gas explosion

Continued from front page

of the gas companies and landlords and the inability of the capitalist government to ensure safety.

The blast leveled three buildings on Manhattan's Lower East Side, killing two and injuring more than 20. Residents in 60 surrounding apartments were evacuated.

A gas explosion a year ago destroyed two buildings in East Harlem, killing eight and leaving more than 100 working people homeless. The main pipes that provided gas for those buildings dated back to 1887.

On Aug. 6, seven months before the most recent blast, the *New York Times* reported March 26, Con Ed workers investigating a strong gas odor found a "strange-looking attachment with hoses coming out of it" attached to the gas line for the Sushi Park restaurant on the ground floor of 121 Second Avenue, one of the now destroyed buildings.

Con Ed ordered the improper tap removed and shut all gas to the five-story building for about 10 days, but those living above the restaurant somehow continued to receive gas service, the *Times* reported.

DNAinfo website writes that, according to its sources, city investigators believe the landlord installed a "jury-rigged hookup" a second time after Con Ed refused to turn on gas for apartments in the building, which was being renovated.

Sushi Park owner Hyeonil Kim told the *Times* that he frequently checked to make sure the gas line to the restaurant was not tapped again. He told the paper he suspected landlord Maria Hrynenko had been drawing gas for the apartments from the building she owned next door.

On the day of the blast contractors were working on gas lines in the basement to prepare a new connection to the upstairs apartments. Con Ed inspectors were on site to evaluate the work, the *Wall Street Journal* said, but it failed to pass inspection for the second time and the inspectors left 30 minutes before the explosion. They left without unlocking the valve that would allow gas to flow through the new pipe, although gas continued to flow through the old pipe, the *Times* said.

DNAinfo reported April 1 that investigators believe someone reinstalled a tap after the inspectors left.

The restaurant manager smelled gas shortly after Con Ed's inspectors left, he told the *Times*, and called the landlord. Her son and one of the contractors returned and went to the basement. The building exploded.

The *Journal* reports police investigators are apparently looking at possible criminal charges against the landlord and the contractor.

"I think Con Ed is really culpable here for not shutting off the gas," Thomas Curtis, the landlord's lawyer, told the *Times* April 1. "They could have shut off the main valve."

The city's 100-year-old infrastructure is deteriorating, former New York City Fire Marshal Gene West, who investigated the East Harlem explosion, said in a March 27 video interview on the Bloomberg News website. Gas explosions and fires are "going to happen and continue to happen," he said. "There's no way around it."

Sixty percent of Con Ed's gas pipes are made of cast iron and unprotected steel. According to the federal Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, serious leaks are four times more frequent in cast iron pipes than pipes made of other material.

According to a March 2014 report issued by the Center for an Urban Future, the cost of replacing the aged leak-prone pipes would be about \$18 billion.

More than half of gas mains in the city are 65 years old or older, the report noted. Con Ed pipes averaged 83 leaks per 100 miles of gas main in 2012, 427 attributable to corrosion.

Con Ed bosses think an acceptable replacement schedule is 30 miles of cast iron pipe per year. At that rate, the pipes won't all be replaced until 2052.

"We will have more fires in these buildings," West told Bloomberg.

Correction

In the article "Rail Workers, Community Members Discuss Safety" in the April 6 issue, Abby Brockway of Rising Tide in Seattle was incorrectly identified as Abby Brockworth.