

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Anarchist 'black bloc' politics
pose threat to working class
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 81/NO. 7 FEBRUARY 20, 2017

Cuba brigade: Unique chance to learn about the revolution

BY JOHN STUDER

Working people and youth have a unique opportunity to learn firsthand about Cuba's socialist revolution and to offer their solidarity with the Cuban people by joining the 12th May Day International Brigade April 24 to May 8. Last year more than 200 people from 34 countries participated in the brigade, which is sponsored by the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP).

For the first time, a U.S. contingent will be part of the brigade. "It's a fantastic opportunity," Steve Eckardt, co-coordinator of the Chicago Cuba Coalition, which is organizing the U.S. contingent, told the *Militant*. "Participants will visit three provinces besides Havana and meet with members of the Federation of Cuban Women, the Central Organization of Cuban Workers, the Federation of University Students and other mass organizations."

"The low cost of the brigade is ex-
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Calling Trump a 'fascist' disorients the working class

BY SETH GALINSKY

Many liberals, some conservatives and almost the entire middle-class left call President Donald Trump and his administration fascist. Drawing on the rich history of the revolution-

COMMENTARY

ary workers movement, the Socialist Workers Party has a different view.

Is there something fundamentally different about the Trump administration compared to previous Democratic and Republican ones? Is Trump really a new Adolph Hitler or "Mussolini in a blue suit and tie," as Norman Pollack wrote on the *Counterpunch* website Feb. 3?

Or is Trump simply the new chief executive officer of the U.S. ruling class, who won election because of the widespread distrust in his opponent Hillary Clinton and interest in the working class for political change
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Protests continue against gov't attack on immigrants

SWP: Join protests, demand amnesty!



AP Photo/Bebeto Matthews

High school student Yacine Fall, originally from Senegal, speaks at rally of hundreds of students in New York Feb. 7, opposing ban on travel from seven majority-Muslim countries.

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK — Protests continue across the country against President Donald Trump's series of anti-working-class executive orders targeting undocumented workers, refugees and citizens of seven majority-Muslim countries.

Several hundred high school and college students demonstrated here Feb. 7. "Daily life cannot just continue as is, when others are suffering," Beacon High School student Selam Murphy, one of many high school students who walked out of class to join the protest, told the press. Students

carried handmade signs with slogans written on school notebooks, poster board and skateboards.

The day before, some 20 rabbis af-

AMNESTY FOR IMMIGRANTS!

— Editorial, page 9

filiated with T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights were arrested for blocking a street near the Trump International Hotel and Tower in Manhattan. "Some of the language
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Social catastrophe after Georgia storms is product of capitalism



Militant photos by Sam Manuel

Above, remnants of trailer where Betty Lee and Jesse James Newsome were killed when tornado hit. Inset, farmer Willie Head, left, and Fred Swain in front of Swain's home in Albany, Georgia. Outpouring of working-class solidarity since storms hit is sharp contrast to government's bureaucratic runaround.

BY SUSAN LAMONT

ALBANY, Ga. — It's passed off by Democratic and Republican politicians alike as an unavoidable natural disaster. But the catastrophic effect on working people here of the most severe winter storms in the state's history Jan. 21-22 is the result of social relations bred by the capitalist system.

The huge storm system, which passed from Louisiana to South Carolina over several days and pounded eight states, spawned 40 tornadoes in Georgia alone. Hardest hit was Dougherty County, which includes Albany, the largest city in this rural part of the state, with a population of
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NY event celebrates life of Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

NEW YORK — Hundreds of people packed the Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz Cultural Center here in Harlem Feb. 4 to celebrate the life and political contributions of Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro, who died Nov. 25.

"Fidel's unwavering solidarity has benefited countless people across the globe," said Gail Walker, pointing to Cuba's internationalist mission in Angola, which played a key role in defeating armed invasions of that country by the white-supremacist regime in South Africa, hastening the fall of apartheid. Walker, who is executive director of IFCO/Pastors for Peace, co-chaired the meeting with Malcolm Sacks of the Venceremos Brigade.

Walker highlighted Cuba's internationalism, including its treatment of thousands of children from Ukraine at the special Tarará medical facility outside Havana after the nuclear disaster in Chernobyl. She pointed to

Cuba's volunteer medical missions around the world, including its role in defeating the Ebola epidemic in West Africa.

Anayansi Rodríguez, newly ap-
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Locked-out health workers in Alberta fight for care for seniors
 6 years after NZ mine blast miners' families win solidarity

Yemeni bodega owners close shops, rally against travel ban

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

NEW YORK — Over 1,000 Yemenis closed the bodegas and corner stores they own and operate in neighborhoods throughout the city from noon to 8 p.m. Feb. 2 to protest President Donald Trump's executive order banning travel from Yemen to the U.S. for three-months. They rallied along with other supporters in front of Brooklyn's Borough Hall that evening.

"A lot of businesses are shut down," Abdul Salah, 65, told the *Militant*. He runs a wholesale deli in Staten Island and has been living in the U.S. for 50 years. "Our message is Jews, Muslims, Christians, we should live together in harmony and be treated as equals."

He said it was already "hard to get here from Yemen" before the new order. It took five years for Salah to bring his wife over under the Barack Obama administration. Three children from his previous marriage put in for a visa a year ago. These applications "remain in limbo," he said.

Rally organizers said there are several thousand bodegas and grocery stores owned by Yemeni-Americans citywide, many open around the clock. "We are closing our business Feb. 2," said signs posted on many of the bodegas, "in support of our families, friends and loved ones" stranded overseas. The closures won support from many of their regular customers, bodega owners at the rally told the *Militant*.

"I'm here to stand in solidarity with Yemeni students and family members," said Katie Lapham, a teacher at

P.S. 58 in Brooklyn and a member of the United Federation of Teachers. She teaches English as second language and said she has many students from Yemen in her classes.

High school student Yasmeem Humood carried one of the most popular homemade signs in the crowd. It said, "If you don't want refugees, stop creating them," referring to Washington's ongoing wars in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan and elsewhere in the Middle East.

Saris Alkbas, a Yemeni-American born in the U.S., operates a deli in Harlem along with his father. "I voted for Trump because I wanted change," he said. But now he's having second thoughts, noting that Trump "signed off on the recent Navy SEAL commando attack in Yemen."

After just a week in office, the new administration continued in the footsteps of the old, ordering drone airstrikes and the landing of U.S. special operations forces in central Yemen. They attacked the home of Abdul-Raouf al-Dhahab, a leader of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, killing him and 13 others, U.S. military spokespeople said. However, medics on the scene reported that some 30 people, including 10 women and children, were killed. This included the 8-year-old daughter of Anwar al-Awlaki, a U.S.-born supporter of al-Qaeda who the Obama administration assassinated in a 2011 drone strike.

Yemen has been wracked by civil war among contending capitalist forces since the beginning of 2015, with



Militant photos by Brian Williams

Yemeni grocers, supporters rally at Brooklyn Borough Hall Feb. 2 after shutting their shops for eight hours to protest ban on Yemenis entering U.S. Inset, high school student Yasmeem Humood holds sign hitting Washington's wars.

working people suffering the consequences. Former dictator Ali Abdullah Saleh, supported by Houthi militias backed by Tehran, deposed the government of Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi, which is backed by a Saudi-led coalition force and Washington. More than 10,000 civilians have been killed and 40,000 wounded, many in U.S.-supplied airstrikes. Millions are on the brink of famine.

Al-Qaeda stepped into the vacuum

left in much of the country by the civil war, taking control of a number of areas along the country's coast and looting area banks, smuggling and imposing taxes on trade.

Washington closed its embassy in Sanaa, the capital, in 2015. Yemenis seeking visas to get into the U.S. now have to go to other countries such as Djibouti or Egypt. Those resourceful enough to get them have had them revoked under the new executive order.

Assad regime torture, mass murder of workers is documented in Syria

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

A chilling report issued by Amnesty International Feb. 7 documents how the dictatorial regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria has relied on mass jailings, torture and extrajudicial executions of its opponents to enforce its rule.

An explosion of mass protests against the regime and its assaults on political rights in 2011 was met with a murderous response by Assad, leading to the civil war that continues today. More than 400,000 people have been killed and over 11 million forced from their homes by Assad's war.

Between September 2011 and December 2015 as many as 13,000 people were executed at the notorious Saydnaya Military Prison north of Damas-

cus, known to detainees as the "human slaughterhouse," according to the report.

Amnesty also documented in a separate report last year that more than 17,000 people had died of torture and poor treatment in custody across Syria since 2011.

Arbitrary arrests and torture have marked the Syrian regime for decades, going back to the 1971-2000 rule of Hafez al-Assad, the current president's father. Throughout the civil war, Bashar al-Assad's forces have used chemical weapons and conducted barrel bomb airstrikes that target civilians and sieges to starve out neighborhoods. Some 75,000 people arrested by the govern-

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THE MILITANT

Workers demand clean-up of toxic waste

Workers in Los Angeles have been demanding clean-up of deadly contamination from an Exide battery plant. The *'Militant'* covers this and other fights exposing how the bosses' profit drive harms health and safety of workers and surrounding communities.



Militant/Rebecca Williamson
Dennis Richter, SWP candidate for L.A. mayor, at hearing on Exide contamination.

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Disaster product of capitalism

Continued from front page

76,000. People had barely begun to recover from a tornado that passed through the area less than three weeks earlier when another one hit Jan. 22, with wind speeds up to 150 mph.

The storms destroyed or damaged hundreds of homes, as well as farms, businesses and factories. Thousands of trees were uprooted or snapped in half like toothpicks. Thousands lost electricity when power lines were torn down. At least 21 people were killed, most of them in Georgia, and many others injured. A 2-year-old boy, Detrez Green, went missing here and has not been found. Initial estimates of damages by the state insurance commissioner were at least \$100 million, on top of \$30 million from the Jan. 2 tornado.

"Storms this bad are unusual for our area, especially in winter," said Willie Head, a small farmer who lives in Brooks County. Head joined myself and Sam Manuel, Socialist Workers Party members from Atlanta, to visit some of the hardest-hit areas a few days after the storm.

"The only warning we got was an 'amber alert' on our cellphones at 3 a.m.," Head said. "Who's looking at their phones in the middle of the night?"

The two fatalities in Brooks County were Head's friends — Betty Lee and Jessie James Newsome — a retired couple he had known for years. They were in bed when a tornado blew their mobile home onto the highway, shredding it and killing them. We met relatives who were trying to find clothing to bury the Newsomes, among debris where their trailer once stood.

"I didn't expect to meet with so much bureaucracy after just a few days," Aaron Sims, Betty Lee Newsome's son, who lives in Miami, told us. The family also has to deal with a pile of county government forms they have to fill out. "They won't even let us take anything from the garage — tools and other items we need to use," Sims said.

A tornado struck a mobile home park in neighboring Cook County, demolishing half of the 40 homes there. Ten of those killed in the storm in Georgia lived in mobile home courts.

More working people in the South live in mobile homes than in most other parts of the country, and people living in trailer parks are far more likely to be killed in a tornado than those residing in houses. "Laws requiring storm shel-

ters in those vulnerable communities are few and far between," Associated Press reported Jan. 24.

"We are taxed and taxed, but what does the government do when something like this happens?" said Head. "Where is the help? People aren't warned or evacuated, even though government people knew for hours and even a few days that the storm was coming and what its path was. Here, everyone's left on their own to protect themselves.

"We should learn from the example of the Cuban people and their government, the way they are trained and the way they look after each other when they're hit by storms like this," said Head, who has visited revolutionary Cuba several times — where people and resources are mobilized to minimize loss of life and damages. "Why can't we adopt their methods here? Here, the officials treat the loss of life almost nonchalantly."

"Of course, it will take a revolution to do that," he said. "But I plan to bring up these safety questions at whatever local meetings I can, to start the discussion."

We saw an outpouring of working-class solidarity here, as workers and farmers volunteered to help neighbors, friends and fellow workers deal with the aftermath of the storm. Many churches organized volunteers to provide meals, clear debris and give whatever other assistance they could.

"This was the worst tornado in my lifetime," Freddie Swain, a retired auto worker, who lives in one of the hardest hit parts of Albany, told us. "The tornado hit our neighborhood midafternoon. There was no alarm or other warning, except what was on TV." His roof was damaged and a huge tree in his front yard was ripped out of the ground.

"Many others were hit much harder," Swain said. "We were lucky because we have insurance." But the insurance won't pay to remove the tree, he said, because it didn't hit the house. And that can cost \$1,000 or more.

Many workers affected by the storms don't have the resources to handle a social disaster like this. They lack home or health insurance to handle injuries and damage, and can't cover the cost of funerals for those who were killed. Many lost everything, including clothing and medicine.

At least 20 percent or more of the population in storm-struck areas live below the federal poverty level, the

Book review: Read 'Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?'

The brief review below of *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?* appeared in the *Midwest Book Review* in its January 2017 *Wisconsin Book-watch* newsletter.



In the pages of "Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?: A Necessary Debate Among Working People" Mary-Alice Waters (a leader of the American Socialist Workers party) is an unhesitating Yes is the answer to the question that comprises her book's title. Waters maintains that while a socialist revolution in the United States is possible, it is not inevitable. That future depends

on the American people. "Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?" is a definitive contribution to the growing discussion among working people everywhere who are looking for a way forward in the face of sharpening capitalist crisis and spreading wars. Fighting for a society only working people can create, it is our own capacities we will discover, not the rulers' false image of us, an image that reflects their own guilt and fear. A thoughtful and thought-provoking read, "Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?" should be a part of every community, college, and university library Contemporary Political Science collection and supplemental studies reading list.

Actions protest attack on Chicago synagogue



Militant/Dan Fein

CHICAGO — "We will not be driven out or driven away by anyone in any shape or form," Rabbi Gary Rosenberg, at podium, told a Feb. 5 press conference here in front of the Chicago Loop Synagogue a day after it was attacked. "Even though we come from different backgrounds and different places, all of us have the right to practice our religion in the way that we see fit and to be able to do it without fear and anxiety."

Surveillance camera footage shows a man breaking a window in the synagogue and attaching swastika stickers to the door.

"If any good came out of this, it was the outpouring of love we have seen," said Lee Zoldan, at right, president of the 800-member synagogue. "We have received thousands and thousands of emails and text messages of solidarity from around the world."

The synagogue received flowers, food and support from members of the neighborhood and other parts of the city who stopped by.

"Chicago's Muslim community stands in full solidarity with our Jewish brothers and sisters as they deal with the trauma of this vile act of hate," Ahmed Rehab, executive director of the Chicago chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, said in a solidarity message to the members of the congregation.

"Unfortunately, we know the feeling all too well as mosque vandalism and burning has spiked recently in the U.S.," he added.

Zoldan announced an interfaith rally against bigotry and scapegoating for Wednesday, Feb. 8, at noon, at the synagogue at 16 S Clark Street.

— SHIFFA RIZKI AND SAMIR QAISAR

Atlanta Journal Constitution reported. Four of the 16 counties under a state-proclaimed emergency decree — Calhoun, Clay, Crisp and Dougherty — are among the 100 U.S. counties with the highest poverty rate.

Gov. Nathan Deal visited the area a few days after the storm, promising some help would come eventually.

"We were not able to come until local authorities had done their assessment and asked us to come in and provide

state assistance," he told the *Albany Herald* a couple weeks earlier after the first tornado. "Just as the federal government will not come until the state has done its assessment and request they come in."

It's the opposite of how the Cubans do it.

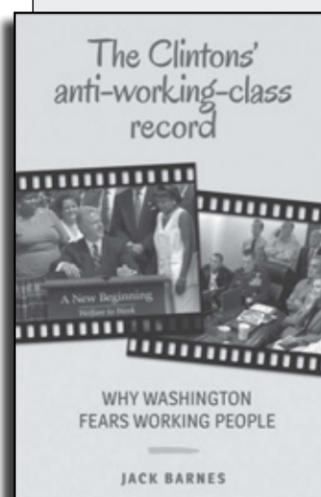
Willie Head in Pavo, Georgia, and Sam Manuel from Atlanta contributed to this article.

For the first time in decades, the US rulers have begun to fear the working class

Books for the deepening debate among workers seeking a way forward in face of capitalism's global economic crisis, social calamity and spreading wars.

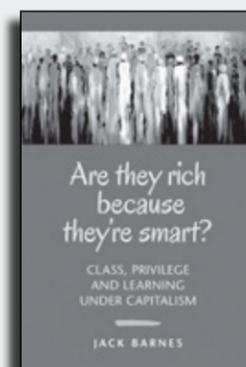
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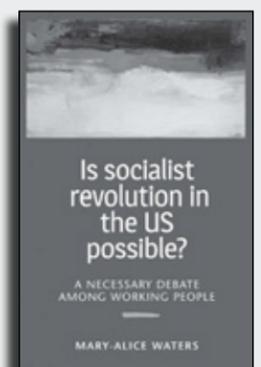


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Also in Spanish

Are They Rich Because They're Smart? and Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible? \$7 each or \$5 each with a subscription to the Militant.

Anarchist 'black bloc' politics pose threat to working class

BY EMMA JOHNSON
AND NAOMI CRAINE

Claiming to be fighting fascism, anarchist groups in the U.S. have carried out numerous actions in recent weeks that pose a deadly danger to the working class — from sucker punching rightist Richard Spencer as he was speaking to a reporter, to assaulting workers who express support for President Donald

COMMENTARY

Trump, to disrupting and shutting down campus speeches by individuals they disagree with.

These thuggish “black bloc” actions flow from the petty-bourgeois view that a minority of adventurers can substitute themselves for mass actions and change society. But the result is their actions close down political space, hand the government and its police agencies a golden opportunity to clamp down on political freedoms, and become a hotbed for provocateurs.

That’s the opposite of what the Socialist Workers Party stands and fights for: mobilizing the working class to organize politically independent of the capitalist rulers and their parties, joining today’s labor and political struggles seeking to build a revolutionary party capable of overthrowing capitalist rule and its dog-eat-dog social relations.

Rich articles about the destructive effects of the anarchists can be found in the works of Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, V.I. Lenin, Leon Trotsky and Farrell Dobbs.

One of the most striking things about the anarchists’ actions — such as the riot they organized in Berkeley, California, (see article below) — is that they reduce workers to bystanders, erasing any possibility of mass protest.

Writing in *The Nation* Jan. 22, Natasha Lennard gives a graphic description glorying in the black bloc she joined in Washington Jan. 20 during Trump’s inauguration. “Disrupt J20 aimed to directly impede, delay and confront the inaugural proceedings,” she writes. “This message was delivered with human blockades, smashed corporate windows, trash-can fires, a burning limousine, ‘Make America Great Again’ caps reduced to ashes, and a blow for Richard Spencer.”

Spencer is a white supremacist and president of the National Policy Institute.

He was speaking to a reporter on the street when a black-clad assailant sucker punched him in the face and ran away. A video of the blow went viral on the internet, accompanied by tweets such as, “We all have to stay strong and survive so that we too can have the chance to punch Richard Spencer in the face.”

‘A righteous mob’

That video shows “anti-fascist bloc tactics par excellence — pure kinetic beauty,” Lennard declares. She waxes lyrical about bottle rockets flying, bricks hurled through bank windows, clashes with cops and “mild altercations with rowdy Trump supporters.” She says, “If that sounds to you like a precondition for mob violence you’re right. But this is only a problem if you think there are no righteous mobs.”

Anarchist black blocs have targeted speaking engagements of Milo Yiannopoulos, an editor for Breitbart News, at many campuses. At the University of Washington in Seattle, they forced their way to the front of a Jan. 20 protest, throwing bricks and paint to try to stop people from attending his talk. A member of the anarchist Industrial Workers of the World was shot and wounded in the confrontation. A man who had come to hear Yiannopoulos later turned himself in to the cops, claiming he fired in self-defense.

Similar groups tried to stop an event organized by the College Republicans at New York University Feb. 2 for comedian Gavin McInnes, who calls himself a “Western chauvinist.” McInnes was pepper sprayed on the way in.

In all these incidents, targets have included individuals wearing pro-Trump hats or signs. The anarchists join the liberals in slandering workers who voted for Trump, fed up with the grinding depression conditions that world capitalism is producing, those Hillary Clinton called “deplorables.”

Neither Trump nor the workers who voted for him are part of a fascist move-



Reuters/Bryan Woolston

“Black bloc” in effort to “Stop Trump’s inauguration” in Washington Jan. 20. For over 150 years Marxist movement has fought political danger of anarchists to workers movement.

ment. (See article on front page.) But as the class struggle deepens and the danger of fascism is posed, the stakes for working people in rejecting anarchism and its methods will only grow.

An anti-working-class course

Attempting through violent attacks to silence those you disagree with from expressing their views is a method that can and will be used against the workers’ movement. Groups that carry out such attacks are fertile ground for provocateurs, and to breed actual fascists. And their provocations allow rightists such as Spencer and Yiannopoulos to appear to stand on the moral high ground as defenders of freedom of speech.

“If you start by attempting to hastily gather together a vanguard force and crush fascism in the egg, you are playing into the hands of the fascists,” said Socialist Workers Party leader Farrell Dobbs in a 1975 discussion titled *Counter-Mobilization: A Strategy to Fight Racist and Fascist Attacks*, published by Pathfinder Press. “You are losing ground in the mobilization of the real class that can do away with fascism.”

The workers movement has a long history of experience with anarchist currents, going back to the political

battles of communist leaders Karl Marx and Frederick Engels against Joseph-Pierre Proudhon and Mikhail Bakunin in the 1800s. (See Marx’s *The Poverty of Philosophy* and an 1873 article “The Bakuninists at Work” by Engels.) The anarchists destroyed the International Workingmen’s Association led by Marx. They bore much of the responsibility for the disastrous defeat of the working class in the Spanish Revolution of the 1930s. Those and many other examples are the political continuity of today’s black blocs.

The anarchist perspective is marked by opposition to political action by the working class. They favor the action of small groups to the mobilization, education and organization of the working class to take power out of the hands of the capitalist rulers and begin to reorganize society in the interests of the toiling majority — as both the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and the 1959 Cuban Revolution showed was possible.

Other recommended reading on anarchism and its deadly record in the working class includes Dobbs’ two-volume series *Revolutionary Continuity: Marxist Leadership in the U.S.* and *The Spanish Revolution (1931-39)* by Leon Trotsky.

Berkeley: Anarchists shut down speaker, attack workers

BY JOEL BRITTON

BERKELEY, Calif. — A protest here Feb. 1 against the self-styled “libertarian, gay, Trump-supporting provocateur” Milo Yiannopoulos became national news after a large contingent of black flag waving anarchists marched into the rally of more than 1,000 University of California students and attacked the Martin Luther King Student Union where he was scheduled to speak.

The anarchists tore down metal police barriers and used them along with clubs and hammers to break plate glass windows. They toppled a portable lighting fixture and set it on fire. Fireworks were aimed at police, who responded with “nonlethal” projectiles. Some of the hundreds of curious onlookers who had gathered nearby were hit by the police fire.

Many protesters cheered when campus officials soon announced that the meeting to hear Yiannopoulos, an editor at the conservative Breitbart News, was cancelled. Many other students who were opposed to the violence left the scene not long after the anarchists appeared.

Claiming that Yiannopoulos is a

“white supremacist” who engages in “hate speech” while touring college campuses, the Berkeley Against Trump Coalition organized to prevent him from speaking at the meeting sponsored by the Berkeley College Republicans.

The coalition — formerly called the J20 Coalition for the date of President Donald Trump’s inauguration — was involved in earlier actions protesting the results of the November election.

Some of the demonstrators carried “Punch a Nazi” posters, encouraging thuggery. One woman wearing a Trump hat was pepper sprayed in the face as she was interviewed by a TV reporter. Others who had lined up to hear Yiannopoulos were assaulted.

More windows were broken and fireworks shot at police after the meeting was called off. After repeated orders to disperse, campus and Berkeley police, joined by cops from Oakland and elsewhere, cleared everyone out of the plaza by the student center. U.C. officials imposed a “shelter in place” lockdown on the entire campus.

Some of the protesters joined anarchists in rampaging through nearby streets, trashing banks and other busi-

nesses.

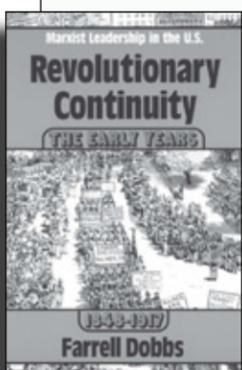
Two days later, students were discussing what lessons should be drawn.

“I supported the protest but don’t agree with what the anarchists did,” said Landon Sorci, an economics major who left when the action turned violent. Yiannopoulos got what he wanted, Sorci said, becoming “a free speech martyr.” Referring to Yiannopoulos’ campaign against the liberals’ “political correctness,” Sorci said, “You do have a kind of forced liberalism here at Cal.”

Rudra Reddy, whose family is from India, was one of those gathered at the campus Republicans table. He said he disagrees with Yiannopoulos but wanted to hear him speak. Reddy said he was most upset when he saw some of the student protesters egging on the anarchists.

Jordan, a political science major who asked not to have his last name used, told the *Militant*, “I don’t agree with demeaning people,” citing Yiannopoulos’ crudities and reactionary insults aimed at Muslims and others. But, he added, “Silence one person and anyone can be silenced.”

Revolutionary Continuity The Early Years 1848-1917 by Farrell Dobbs



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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

MAGGIE TROWE, EDITOR

Locked-out health workers in Alberta fight for care for seniors

COLD LAKE, Alberta — Some 40 members of the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees, locked out since Dec. 16, have been fighting for quality health care for seniors at the Points West Living center here.

The recent death of 85-year-old resident Olga Penner was from “pure neglect,” Lianne Dumais, one of the locked-out workers, told the *Militant* at a Feb. 3 solidarity rally at the company’s corporate office in Edmonton. Her condition deteriorated after the workers were locked out and the company brought in scabs.

When Katy LeRougetel, Communist League candidate for mayor of Calgary, and Abdurahman Ali, her co-worker at a warehouse in Calgary, visited the picket line Jan. 30, workers described conditions at the residence.

Health care aides said they spend much of their time both cleaning and cooking. “When I did my practicum in Edmonton, health care aides weren’t even allowed into the kitchen because of cross-contamination,” said Julie Grant. “Here, we cook for residents, too.”

Health care aides, nurses and other support staff — the overwhelming majority women — have been trying to negotiate a first contract with this privately owned facility since they unionized in March 2015.

“The unions make you really strong,” said nurse Kaitlyn Jubinville. “We’ve gotten to know each other on the picket line like we never did at work.”

The union is demanding adequate staffing and training. Only four or five workers are full time. The others are either part-time or temporary workers. Workers want transparent scheduling procedures and the replacement of absent staff.

Over 160 employees at four Points West Living facilities in Alberta are currently fighting for a contract.

Unionists employed at the Cold Lake military base, city employees and others have visited the picket line in solidarity. Community members drop off food and other refreshments and frequent honks from passersby show support.

— Michel Dugré

6 years after NZ mine blast miners’ families win solidarity

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand — A meeting here Jan. 25 discussed organizing ongoing actions in support of the families of the 29 miners killed in methane gas explosions in November 2010 at the Pike River Coal company, located on the West Coast of the South Island.

In response to company moves to seal the mine, family members began picketing the mine’s access road last Nov. 12. They’re demanding the bodies of their loved ones be recovered. It is believed that some miners were in the mines’ entrance tunnel when the explosion occurred. There may also be evidence that could be used to prosecute

the mine’s owners and management.

A 2012 royal commission into the disaster found Pike River Coal guilty of numerous safety violations, including inadequate ventilation and failing to heed warnings from the miners.

“No one has been held to account,” Sonya Rockhouse, who lost her son in the explosion, told the meeting. “This is a huge injustice and if we don’t stand up for what is right, what is to stop them from doing it again.” She said she was overwhelmed with the support family members have received at the picket line. So far contractors have refused to seal the mine.

— Ruth Gray



Militant/Abdurahman Ali

Health care workers locked out by Points West Living senior residence in Cold Lake, Alberta, picket outside in fight for their first union contract and quality health care for seniors.

Gov’t prepares trial of framed-up Quebec rail workers

BY JOHN STEELE

SHERBROOKE, Quebec — At a Jan. 26-27 hearing here, Superior Court judge Gaétan Dumas began to set the stage for the September trials of framed-up union locomotive engineer Tom Harding and dispatcher Richard Labrie, along with Jean Demaitre, a Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway manager.

The rail workers are being framed by the government for the July 2013 derailment and explosion of a runaway Montreal, Maine and Atlantic crude oil train in downtown Lac-Mégantic, a city of 6,000 near the Quebec-Maine border. The disaster killed 47 people and leveled the town center. All three are charged with 47 counts of criminal negligence and could face life in prison if convicted. Harding and Labrie are members of United Steelworkers Local 1976.

The judge ruled that the bankrupt and dissolved railroad, which has no assets or legal counsel, will be tried separately.

“The prosecution has absolutely no intention of going after the MMA,” Thomas Walsh, one of Harding’s lawyers, told the *Militant* Jan. 30. “They want to go after Tom Harding. The charges against the MMA are window dressing.”

An exposé in the Toronto *Globe and Mail* and the official report of the Transportation Safety Board have made it

crystal clear that it was the railway bosses’ profit-driven disregard for safety, and complicity of the federal government agency Transport Canada, that were responsible for the disaster.

Under a strict Montreal, Maine and Atlantic policy to save time and money, the *Globe* showed, Harding was forbidden from activating the train’s automatic air brakes, which would have prevented the parked train from rolling into Lac-Mégantic that night. And Transport Canada gave the MMA approval to run their dangerous oil trains with a bare bones “crew” of one.

Separating the railroad out for its own trial is reasonable, Charles Shearson, who spoke for Harding at the hearing, told the *Militant*. “The jury will have more focus on the trial of Harding and the others.”

“We believe the judge should call the prosecutors’ bluff and hold the trial of the MMA before the trial of Harding, Labrie and Demaitre,” Walsh said.

Shearson said another pretrial hearing set for April will address a motion by Walsh to enter the Transportation Safety Board report and supporting documents as evidence, and to let the defense call board officials to question them.

Robert Bellefleur, spokesperson for the Citizens’ and Groups Coalition for Rail Safety in Lac-Mégantic, which is

campaigning for the government to build a rail bypass around the town, attended the hearing to show the widespread support for Harding in Lac-Mégantic.

Anne-Marie Saint-Cerny, a writer who is working on a book about the disaster, also came. “One cannot but wonder how justice can be totally served in such a tragedy, when only low-ranking employees are on the stand for the death of 47 people,” she told the *Militant*. “Those who gave the orders, set the rules and ran the training — those who own the company — are all off limits, holed up in United States.”

“The fight against the frame-up of Harding and Labrie is important for working people across the country and elsewhere,” said Philippe Tessier, Communist League candidate for mayor of Montreal, who attended the hearing in solidarity. “Defeating this frame-up will strengthen the ongoing fight by rail workers everywhere who are struggling for rail safety, for themselves and all those who live and work along the tracks.”

Messages in support of Harding and Labrie can be sent to USW Local 1976 / Section locale 1976, 2360 De Lasalle, Suite 202, Montreal, QC H1V 2L1. Copies should be sent to Thomas Walsh, 165 Rue Wellington N., Suite 310, Sherbrooke, QC Canada J1H 5B9.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

THE MILITANT
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

February 21, 1992

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — Public attention here remains focused on the current Puerto Rico Senate hearings that are investigating the 1978 police murder of two young pro-independence activists. The hearings have put a spotlight on the role of U.S. and Puerto Rican government officials in planning, carrying out, and covering up the murders.

The Puerto Rico Senate Judiciary Committee has questioned former police superintendent Roberto Torres González and former deputy police superintendent Desiderio Cartagena about their involvement in the case. The two have contradicted their own and each other’s testimony.

Carlos Soto Arriví, 18, and Arnaldo Darío Rosado, 24, were ambushed and killed after surrendering to as many as 20 cops at a remote mountaintop called Cerro Maravilla on July 25, 1978.

THE MILITANT
PUBLISHED WEEKLY IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE
NEW YORK, N. Y., 1934-1942

February 20, 1967

Feb. 13 — This afternoon, Lyndon B. Johnson ended the less-than-48-hour extension of the “Tet truce” with orders for resumption of U.S. bombing of north Vietnam.

Washington used the so-called truce period to build up forces for launching the biggest military operation of the war, the 15,000-man “Operation Gadsen,” which was launched at the minute the truce ended. At the same time, Washington prepared to launch a massive invasion of the Mekong Delta region with another 15,000 troops of the Ninth Infantry Division.

Further, giant U.S. B-52 bombers rained death on the south Vietnamese countryside up to the moment the truce began, and resumed as soon as it ended. And while doing this, Pentagon propagandists worked overtime to cook up Johnson’s excuse for breaking the truce period off.

THE MILITANT
Official Weekly Organ of the Socialist Workers Party

February 21, 1942

An all-out employers’ offensive to block federal aid to millions of jobless victims of priorities and delayed war plant conversions, is receiving strong support in Congress.

A majority of the House Ways and Means Committee last week expressed their intentions of knifing an Administration proposal for a skimpy \$300,000,000 appropriation to provide supplemental federal unemployment compensation to the war-made unemployed. Present state unemployment compensation allowances average \$10 a week.

Behind this vicious campaign is the determination of the boss class to keep unemployment relief down to starvation levels, in the belief that this will make the workers willing to take jobs at any wage, and to forestall any measure that smacks even “in principle” of what is termed “federalization.”

New International

A magazine of Marxist politics and theory, 1934-present

Intercontinental Press

International news magazine
1963-86

Online at themilitant.com
pathfinderpress.com

Is Trump really a fascist?

Continued from front page

at a time when they're being battered by the effects of a deepening worldwide capitalist economic crisis?

The answer to this question has serious political consequences for anyone who is interested in defending the interests of the working class in the United States and around the world.

Because of the decline in Marxist political culture in the world today, "fascist" is an epithet used by many on the left to mean any demagogic politician. They care little for seeking to learn the rich history of the revolutionary working-class movement's writings on fascism from Germany and Italy to the U.S.

Fascism is the name given to reactionary mass movements that arose leading up to World War II — like those led by Benito Mussolini in Italy and Hitler in Germany and with echoes in the U.S. and other imperialist countries — that were backed by the capitalist classes in those countries when the existing dictatorship of capital could no longer survive by normal "democratic" means.

Leon Trotsky, a leader of the Russian Revolution, who was expelled from the Soviet Union in 1929 by Joseph Stalin as part of a broader counterrevolution against the program of V.I. Lenin that led the workers and farmers of Russia to power in 1917, wrote extensively about fascism. His goal was to lay bare the class dynamics that led to its rise and to politically prepare revolutionary-minded workers to fight against it.

Through the fascist movement "capitalism sets in motion the masses of the crazed petty bourgeoisie and the bands of declassed and demoralized lumpenproletariat — all the countless human beings whom finance capital itself has brought to desperation and frenzy," Trotsky explained, and then uses them as thugs to smash the labor movement and its vanguard communist organizations.

The fascists "initially rail against 'high finance' and the bankers, lacing their nationalist demagogy with anti-capitalist demagogy," notes Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes in *Capitalism's World Disorder*. In order to divert ruined petty-bourgeois elements and demoralized workers from seeing capitalism as the problem, the Nazis scapegoated the Jews as responsible for the growing economic and political crisis and whipped up calls for a "final" solution to the "Jewish question." At the same time, the fascists "ape much of the language of currents in the workers movement. 'Nazi' was short for National Socialist German Workers Party."

"Fascism is not a form of capitalist rule, but a way of maintaining capitalist

rule," Barnes said.

Fascist groups, which exist on the fringes at first, only get financial and political backing from a significant section of the bourgeoisie when the working class "puts up an increasingly serious challenge to capitalist rule itself," Barnes said.

In Germany and Italy the working class was unable to unify and mobilize its allies to overthrow capitalism and take power because of the betrayal by the Stalinist Communist Party and the reformist Social Democrats.

In 1930 the Social Democratic Party received 8,577,700 votes and the Communist Party 4,592,100 votes compared to 6,409,600 for the Nazis. If the Social Democrats and Communist Party had formed a united front, if the trade unions they led had built workers defense guards, if they were on a political course to lead the working class to overthrow capitalist rule, they could have stopped fascism on the road to power. Instead, they did nothing to stand up to the fascist gangs and Hitler came to power without a fight.

Workers paid the price of the Stalinist and Social Democratic betrayal in blood. Millions of Jews and gypsies were sent to their deaths in concentration camps. The unions were destroyed. The working class was driven off the political stage.

Counterpunch's Pollack says the election of Trump is "a forward space in what I term a pre-fascist configuration, i.e., analogous to Germany in 1938." Hardly.

Trump surprised bourgeois politicians and pundits across the political spectrum. He convinced a layer of workers that he was the lesser evil compared to Clinton; not so hard to do given the anti-working-class record of Bill and Hillary Clinton when they occupied the White House. Hillary Clinton helped Trump win by calling workers who were considering a vote for him "deplorable" and "irredeemable."

That's the same language many on the left still use today. Andrew Levine, says



Many liberals, some conservatives and most of the middle-class left claim Trump is a fascist, like Hitler or Mussolini. Acting on this belief would lead the workers movement to disaster.

in *Counterpunch* Feb. 3, that "Trump's supporters fall into three broad categories: dupes, deplorables, and opportunists."

Levine says it's "the lowlives whose cages he [Trump] had rattled and whose passions he had inflamed" that are the problem, showing his scorn and fear of the working class.

In fact, Trump's policies are a mix of steps designed to attract working-class support, like his disdain for the government's fake unemployment figures and his call for infrastructure building and a repair program to provide jobs, with demagogic nationalist rhetoric that divides the working class. Like other bourgeois politicians he seeks to shore up capitalism.

Facts don't matter to the 'left'

To those crying "fascist," however, the facts don't matter.

Workers World Party leader Larry Holmes, to take just one example, said in a Jan. 29 speech, "Building the 'Wall' and this ban on Muslims are fascist acts."

Holmes leaves out that about 650 miles of the "wall" along the U.S.-Mexico border has already been built, mostly by the administrations of Bill Clinton

and Barack Obama. Does Holmes think Clinton and Obama are fascists?

Labeling Trump a fascist, helps pave the way for resuscitating the Democrats, the rulers' other party, as the answer.

There is another danger in mislabeling Trump and his administration as fascist. It disarms the working class politically for when fascism really does raise its ugly head once again — as it inevitably will when the ruling families see no other way to maintain capitalism.

Communist workers don't care which bourgeois candidate any individual workers voted for — or didn't — in the presidential election. What working people need is to organize *independently* of both capitalist parties.

Far from the political space for workers to discuss, debate and fight having been smashed by fascist gangs, the field is wide open. The Socialist Workers Party's candidates take its revolutionary program and win support on workers' doorsteps in cities, towns and the countryside, as well as on strike picket lines and social protest actions.

We say the Socialist Workers Party is your party. What we do now in building a revolutionary workers party will be decisive in the years ahead.

Fascism rises when capital must crush working class

This excerpt from the article "Whither France?" written by Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky in October 1934 offers a concise explanation of fascism. The full article is published in Leon Trotsky on France. Copyright © 1979 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY LEON TROTSKY

In all countries the same historical laws operate, the laws of capitalist de-

cline. If the means of production remain in the hands of a small number of capitalists, there is no way out for society. It is condemned to go from crisis to crisis, from need to misery, from bad to worse. In the various countries the decrepitude and disintegration of capitalism are expressed in diverse forms and at unequal rhythms. But the basic features of the process are the same everywhere. *The bourgeoisie is leading its society to complete bankruptcy.* It is capable of assuring the people neither bread nor peace. *This is precisely why it cannot any longer tolerate the democratic order.* It is forced to smash the workers by the use of physical violence. The discontent of the workers and peasants, however, cannot be brought to an end by the police alone. Moreover, it is often impossible to make the army march against the people.

It begins by disintegrating and ends with the passage of a large section of the soldiers over to the people's side. That is why finance capital is obliged to create special armed bands trained to

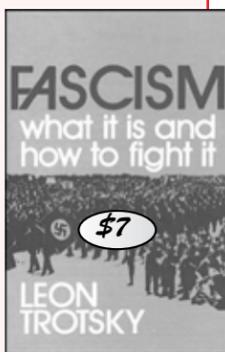
fight the workers, just as certain breeds of dogs are trained to hunt game. The historic function of fascism is to smash the working class, destroy its organizations, and stifle political liberties when the capitalists find themselves unable to govern and dominate with the help of democratic machinery.

The fascists find their human material mainly in the petty bourgeoisie. The latter has been entirely ruined by big capital. There is no way out for it in the present social order, but it knows of no other. Its dissatisfaction, indignation, and despair are diverted by the fascists away from big capital and against the workers. It may be said that fascism is the act of placing the petty bourgeoisie at the disposal of its most bitter enemies. In this way big capital ruins the middle classes and then with the help of hired fascist demagogues incites the despairing petty bourgeois against the worker. The bourgeois regime can be preserved only by such murderous means as these. For how long? Until it is overthrown by proletarian revolution.

"Fascism is nowhere close to conquering anywhere in the world right now ... [Never] has a fascist movement conquered and taken the reins of government except ... after the working-class movement has first had a chance at victory and been defeated.

— Jack Barnes in *Capitalism's World Disorder*

"The historic function of fascism is to smash the working class ... when the capitalists find themselves unable to govern and dominate with the help of democratic machinery" — Leon Trotsky in *Fascism: What It Is and How to Fight It*



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NY tribute to Fidel Castro

Continued from front page

pointed Cuban ambassador to the United Nations, was the featured speaker. She noted that the meeting location was formerly the Audubon Ballroom where Malcolm X was assassinated in February 1965. Malcolm greeted Fidel when he came to address the U.N. in September 1960 as the representative of Cuba's new workers and farmers government.

Castro used his speech at the U.N. General Assembly "to spread all over the world the truth about the young Cuban Revolution and his views on the international questions of the time."

"The Cuban delegation was received by U.S. authorities with deep hostility," she said. They were evicted from the downtown hotel where they were staying and no other hotel would take them in. Malcolm X and other Black leaders formed a committee to welcome the Cubans and arranged for the Hotel Theresa in Harlem to offer them accommodations. All of a sudden, hotels downtown made offers to give the delegation free rooms, but, to the chagrin of the U.S. State Department, the Cubans decided to accept the invitation to stay in Harlem in a show of solidarity with the fight for Black rights. Thousands of African-Americans and other workers gathered

outside the hotel to welcome Castro and the delegation.

Castro's first visit to New York was in October 1955, Rodríguez said, when he came to win support for the July 26 Movement and the fight against the Fulgencio Batista dictatorship. She described how Castro spoke to 800 Cubans and supporters of the fight for Cuban sovereignty at the Palm Garden Hotel, explaining the revolutionary movement's goals.

Rodríguez quoted from a speech Castro made in Cuba on July 26, 1970, where he explained that the Cuban Revolution is not the enemy of the American people, but of its imperialist rulers.

"We are the pioneers of this revolutionary path, the first, but not the only ones," Castro said, looking forward to the day when the workers and farmers of Latin America and the U.S. would make their own revolutions. "One day, sooner or later, we will become the people of Latin America. One day we will be part of hundreds of thousands; not to confront a powerful imperialism, but to live in peace and unity with a great people who have managed to shake themselves free from the imperialist yoke, who have been able to bring about a revolution in their own country."

"For a socialist revolution to be true

Cuba brigade: Learn about the revolution

Continued from front page

traordinary," Eckardt said, just \$512 for the entire two weeks, including food, housing and transportation. And flights to Havana from the U.S. are quite inexpensive today, he said.

The brigade will start at the Julio Antonio Mella International Camp, in Artemisa province. Mella was a leader of student protests at the University of Havana and founder of the Cuban Communist Party. After being expelled from school and arrested by the dictatorship of Gerardo Machado, Mella escaped Cuba, ending up in Mexico. Organizing there to overthrow the Machado regime, he was assassinated in 1929.

Along with meetings with people from Cuba's mass organizations, brigadistas will take part in talks and discussions on topics such as "Socialism in Cuba Today: Relations with the U.S." and "The Cuban Economy." Participants will work in the fields on area farms for four hours a morning for five days.

Other activities are planned each day, including films, visits to museums in Havana and Santa Clara, free time to explore these cities, visits to farms and production cooperatives, and opportunities to talk with brigade members from around the world.

On May Day, the brigade will join the annual mass demonstration in Havana for International Workers Day, the celebration of revolutionary labor struggles worldwide. And the next day they will participate with other political activists in an International Meeting in Solidarity with Cuba at the Convention Palace in Havana.

This year's brigade is "a special tribute to the Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro and Ernesto Che Guevara," ICAP's call says. Castro, the central leader of the revolution that

overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in January 1959, died in November. This is the 50th anniversary of the death in combat of Guevara, killed by Bolivian government troops and CIA agents while leading a guerrilla column against the dictatorship there. Guevara is a symbol of the Cuban Revolution's solidarity with the struggles of working people around the world.

For the last six days of the trip, participants have two options.

After May Day, brigade members will travel to the provinces of Villa Clara and Cienfuegos where they will visit health centers, the Benny Moré School of Arts, meet with members of area Committees for the Defense of the Revolution and with students from the University of Medicine, and tour historical sites.

For an additional cost, participants can instead attend the Fifth Seminar for Peace and for the Abolition of Foreign Military Bases, in Guantánamo May 4-6. The seminar will take place in Guantánamo, the invitation says, because "117 square kilometers of [Cuba's] territory has been illegally occupied by a US naval base that was turned into a center of torture."

The meeting is organized by the World Peace Council, the Cuban Movement for Peace and Sovereignty of the Peoples, and ICAP, and co-sponsored by the Organization of Solidarity with the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America (OSPAAAL), the Martin Luther King Jr. Center and the Oscar Arnulfo Romero Center for Reflection.

The seminar takes place as the Cuban and U.S. governments have re-established diplomatic relations, unilaterally broken by Washington in 1961 as one of the opening guns of its 50-year-long military, economic, and



Militant photos by Seth Galinsky

Anayansi Rodríguez, right, Cuban ambassador to United Nations, speaks at Feb. 4 meeting celebrating life and political contributions of revolutionary leader Fidel Castro. She recalled Malcolm X's warm welcome of Castro to Harlem in 1960, in face of Washington's hostility.

it must maintain firmness of principle," Rodríguez said to applause. "We will continue to uphold those principles today and in the future, be sure of that."

Other speakers spoke about the impact Castro and the Cuban Revolution have had around the world.

"Fidel has a special place in the heart of the Haitian people," said Ninaj Raoul, director of Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees. "Haiti ousted the French in 1803 and Thomas Jefferson and the U.S.



imposed sanctions on Haiti that lasted 60 years."

"To this day Haiti is still paying for that revolution," she said. Haiti today is one of the poorest countries in the world, exploited by U.S. imperialism. The Cuban Revolution on the other hand, she said, "ousted the ruling class, the United States and their mafia."

"Every Friday at forums in the Haitian community we talk about the situation in Haiti," she said. "Haitian people always bring up Cuba and the example of Cuba."

Among other speakers were Joaquín Morante, a U.S. graduate of the Latin America School of Medicine in Cuba, who was born in Harlem; Frank Velgara, an activist in solidarity with Cuba and Puerto Rico, who read a poem to Castro; Jaime Mendieta, president of Casa de las Américas in New York; Larry Hamm, chair of the People's Organization for Progress in New Jersey; and Leslie Cagan, former organizer of United for Peace and Justice and a recipient of Cuba's Medal of Friendship.

Many of those attending the meeting were thirsty for information on the history and lessons of the Cuban Revolution and revolutionary politics. A Socialist Workers Party table, staffed by SWP candidate for New York mayor Osborne Hart and other party supporters, sold more than \$400 of books by Pathfinder Press. Half the books were on the Cuban Revolution. The others were on a wide variety of political questions.

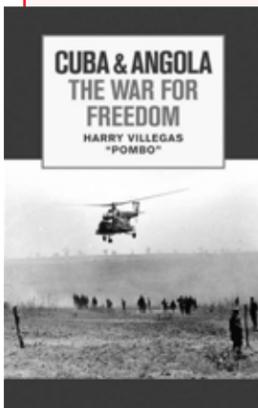
political efforts to crush the revolution and the example it sets for working people in the United States, across the Americas, and the world over. The U.S. rulers maintain their brutal economic embargo and continue to occupy Guantánamo "against the legitimate will of the Cuban people for more than half a century," the invitation says.

There's a lot of interest in Chicago in joining the brigade. "A dozen people attended our first meeting on the brigade here," Eckardt said. It shows the "opportunity for us to reach young people around the country."

"I encourage people to get in touch with us as soon as possible," he said. "The spaces should fill up quickly, and we need to make sure everyone has all the travel documents they need. What's more, we also plan a little course of study on Cuba, because the more you know before you go there, the more you'll appreciate and learn from the trip."

To find out more about participating in the May Day brigade, contact the Chicago Cuba Solidarity Committee at (646) 301-9037 or email: ICanGoToCuba@gmail.com.

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Dobbs: 'Our task is to chart a revolutionary course'

One of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for February is *Teamster Rebellion* by Farrell Dobbs. Excerpted below is the concluding portion of a 1966 speech given by Dobbs, which is quoted by Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes in his introduction. Dobbs, a long-time leader of the SWP and central leader of the victorious battles in the 1930s that built the Teamsters union in the Midwest, was speaking to an audience substantially composed of Young Socialists. "Dobbs summed up the world historical view that best describes his lifetime political course; the class characteristics indispensable for any proletarian revolutionist; and what the working class demands of its leaders, above all," Barnes says. Copyright © 1972 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Above, "Battle of Deputy's Run," where Teamster pickets in Minneapolis beat off attacks by cops and goons sent by the bosses in 1934. Farrell Dobbs, inset, was a central leader of the victorious organizing drive. "In the last analysis, the fate of humanity rests on the socialist revolution in the United States," said Dobbs.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY FARRELL DOBBS

We must be constantly aware of the key role of the United States in the world. United States imperialism is today the powerhouse of world reaction, as the war in Vietnam is abundantly demonstrating.

It is an iron fact that until capitalism is overturned here in the United States of America, the gang of imperialist mad dogs that rule this country are going

to remain a mortal threat to all humanity. We must never forget that.

That means the showdown battle for world socialism is going to be fought right here in the United States of America. And when the revolutionary victory is won, outlived, decadent capitalism is going to disappear literally overnight from the face of our planet. Humanity is going to march forward to the building of an enlightened socialist society where people for the first time can really live together on this planet in peace and in security and with freedom. Humanity will finally realize the type of rewarding life that human intelligence is so abundantly capable of making, even at the present level of technological development. Once humanity learns how to conduct itself politically, organizationally, and socially, it can take advantage of these wonders.

That's what we dedicate our lives to. We of the party, we revolutionaries in the United States — acting as best we can in solidarity with revolutionary fighters across the world — must always keep in mind that in the last analysis the fate of humanity rests on the socialist revolution in the United States. Our task is to build a party capable of leading that revolution, going up against the most heinous of the reactionary, monstrous ruling class regimes that exist on the face of this planet: the imperialist ruling

class of the United States.

The road ahead in that struggle is going to be strewn with obstacles, and there are going to be many pitfalls. There's no roadmap, no way you can find some kind of a detailed handbook that's going to tell you what to do at each juncture. Our task is to chart a revolutionary course, based on a fundamental understanding of our program — a basic feel of our revolutionary strategy — and to hammer out the tactics in that direction as we go along.

There's no timetable. Nobody can say how long it's going to take or when it's going to happen. I personally feel that those of you sitting in this room today, who have got all your youth going for you, have got at least Damon Runyon's six-to-five chance of seeing that explosion.

But in saying so I want to add immediately: *don't make that a condition. Don't adopt the criterion that the revolutionary change must happen in your time.* Don't take as a guide to your active life that narrow, provincial, self-centered notion that if it doesn't happen during the time of your own subjective existence on this planet, it's not important.

Always remember that history is magnificently indifferent to the problems of the individual. History doesn't

care whether you die at six or live to be seven hundred, if that were possible, or what happens during your particular lifetime. As the German poet Goethe once said, "History marches like a drunken beggar on horseback."

A lot can happen during your limited lifespan, or you can live a dull existence. Some people have had the good fortune to live more in a year than others at a different historical juncture could live in their whole lifetime. Or, as Plekhanov once put it, "If it hadn't been for the French Revolution, Napoleon would probably have ended up as a corporal in the French artillery."

Don't make it a condition that the socialist revolution must come in your lifetime. Be not only a citizen of the planet; be a citizen of time. Recognize that what's fundamental is to be in rapport with the human race from the dawn of history, on to heights we can only vaguely begin to dream of.

And what's the alternative? The alternative is to make a compromise with this rotten capitalist system. Do you know what people who do that are like? You remember the movie, *The Devil and Daniel Webster*? Jabez Stone, you know, sold his soul to Scratch, the devil. He did so on the promise that his personal ambitions would thus be served. Later he regretted the action and asked to have his soul returned. Scratch, who was played by Walter Huston, that magnificent actor, finally said all right, he'd give it back.

So Scratch took a small matchbox from his pocket. He opened the box and began poking around in it with his stubby finger trying, and trying, to find the mean little soul of Jabez Stone so he could give it back.

That's symbolic of what you do to your own soul if you make a compromise with this rotten system.

Our job is to build a movement of men and women who emulate the seasoned fighters of the Continental line in the first American Revolution. Learn to be professional revolutionary fighters. Don't be summer soldiers. Don't dabble; don't vacillate. Put nothing above the considerations of the movement. Maintain your place in the front ranks of the revolutionary fighters, and stand in that place for the duration.

There is no other way in which you can find so rich, so rewarding, so fruitful, and so purposeful a life.

February BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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Join the protests! Demand amnesty!

The *Militant* urges our readers to join the ongoing protests against President Donald Trump's executive orders barring entry to the U.S. from seven majority-Muslim countries and preparing to increase the criminalization and deportation of workers without acceptable papers who are already here.

Bring signs demanding, "Amnesty for all undocumented workers in the U.S.!" Join Socialist Workers Party candidates and members at these actions explaining why fighting for amnesty is necessary to unite the working class and to chart a course to take political power. Join the SWP in speaking out against any sort of religious test for entry into the U.S. or discrimination based on country of origin.

The ruling class, aided by their government in Washington, depends on the superexploited status of workers they criminalize and call "illegal." This is key to their ability to maintain sharp divisions in the working class — to drive down wages and deepen the exploitation of millions. They try to pit us against one another in competition for jobs and to take our focus off our common enemy — the propertied capitalist class.

The rulers count on workers without legal status to stay in the shadows, accept their lot and refrain from fighting to join unions to raise wages and defend their conditions on the job. The constant fear of deportation is a powerful weapon in the rulers'

arsenal.

The fight for amnesty is a life-and-death question for the labor movement. It's essential to build the unity, self-confidence and class-consciousness working people need to overthrow the dog-eat-dog capitalist system and take political power.

This, unfortunately, is not the aim of those organizing the demonstrations today. Their intent is to try to delegitimize and take down the Trump administration, and rebuild a more "progressive" Democratic Party, the other party of U.S. imperialist rule. They cry crocodile tears over Trump's decrees, while avoiding any mention of the anti-working-class record of the Bill Clinton and Barack Obama administrations. Many call Trump a "fascist" and disdain those who voted for him as racist, xenophobic "deplorables."

But workers — Caucasian, Black or foreign-born — who voted for Trump, or who voted for Sanders or Clinton or none-of-the-above, are searching for a break from the economic carnage and endless imperialist wars we all face. The Socialist Workers Party gets a hearing from all of them today.

To the young people, workers and others who are outraged at the White House's attacks on immigrants and refugees, the Socialist Workers Party says, "Let's fight together for amnesty, to organize unions. Most important, join us to build a party that can make a revolution."

Assad regime torture, murders documented

Continued from page 2

ment have been "disappeared," according to the Syrian Network for Human Rights.

The reign of terror aims to keep workers and farmers from fighting the regime.

Many detainees at the Saydnaya prison, the majority of whom are civilians, have been sentenced to death in military court trials that last between one and three minutes, the report documents. Those condemned are told that they are being transferred to a civilian prison, but instead they're severely beaten for hours. Then, in the middle of the night, they are blindfolded and hanged.

Amnesty said its report is based on dozens of interviews with former detainees, prison guards, judges and family members of those still incarcerated there.

"At midnight we heard the sound of torture," Omar, a high school student when he was arrested, told Amnesty, "and we thought they were dying because the sound of the torture was so strong. They were beating them in a monstrous way."

Sameer, who was arrested when he was a student at a military academy, said his beating "just kept going. I was wishing they would just cut off my legs instead of beating them any more."

Since the Assad regime seized control of eastern Aleppo from opposition forces — with assistance by Russian airstrikes, Iranian troops and Tehran-backed militia units — they've stepped up arrests of anyone considered a government opponent. "The regime went from house to house with militiamen from the same neighborhoods with lists of those wanted," Mahmoud Ahmad, who left the city in December, told the *Wall Street Journal*. "They arrested men because they had demonstrated against the regime or had repaired a car for the rebels."

Some who moved to western Aleppo to escape the regime's bombings and ground attacks in the eastern part of the city met similar treatment. "Whoever worked in charity or used to distribute bread or was in any organization is wanted," Ghadeer, a former Aleppo resident, told the *Journal*. She said four of her co-workers "went to the regime areas believing that they would be OK because they had never carried a weapon," but they were arrested.

At last month's talks in Kazakhstan seeking a political settlement on Syria — sponsored by the governments of Russia, Turkey and Iran — opposition leaders said Moscow had guaranteed that the Assad regime would free 13,000 women prisoners, but none have been released.

Protests continue

Continued from front page

that's being used now to stop Muslims from coming in is the same language that was used to stop Jewish refugees from coming" under Franklin Delano Roosevelt prior to World War II, Rabbi Jill Jacobs, told the *New York Times*.

At the same time, a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit in California heard arguments Feb. 7 on whether an injunction issued by a federal district court in Washington state against the travel ban should be lifted.

The first immigration-related executive order signed by Trump Jan. 25 mandated the extension of the wall at the U.S.-Mexico border, hiring 5,000 more immigration cops, and promising to step up deportations. This hasn't been challenged in court.

"Working people need to take to the streets to protest the administration's moves against undocumented workers," Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of New York, told the *Militant*. "The propertied rulers and both their two parties — the Democrats and Republicans — seek to keep workers without papers in a pariah status, to divide and weaken the labor movement. We demand amnesty for all those in the U.S."

The Jan. 27 decree imposed a three-month ban on travelers from seven mostly Muslim countries — Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen — a four-month moratorium on admitting refugees from any country, and an indefinite ban on Syrian refugees.

Some 60,000 visas of all types were revoked after Trump signed these executive orders. At the same time immigration officials detained more than 100 permanent U.S. residents at airports inside the country. After widespread protests, and a number of court injunctions, the visas were reinstated and many of those detained were admitted into the country.

The Trump administration asked the Court of Appeals to lift or limit the injunction. There should be no "second guessing" of presidential decisions on national security, U.S. Justice Department lawyer August Flentje told the judges.

Washington state Solicitor General Noah Purcell argued for maintaining the injunction until courts rule on the legality of the order as a whole, saying the state's challenge will likely prevail.

Trump order follows Obama

In a White House statement Feb. 5, Trump said, "My policy is similar to what President Barack Obama did in 2011 when he banned visas for refugees from Iraq for six months." The Obama administration did stop processing Iraqi refugees at that time, allowing only those already processed to enter. Former President Jimmy Carter barred all Iranians from entering the U.S. after the revolution there in 1979.

"This is not about religion," Trump claimed, referring to the seven countries singled out in the order. "There are over 40 different countries worldwide that are majority Muslim that are not affected by this order." But his advisers have said if the ban is upheld, more countries could be added to the list.

Despite a lot of demagoguery from both the administration and its liberal opponents, the Jan. 25 order targeting undocumented workers does not represent any significant departure from the policies of previous presidents. The goal of the U.S. rulers is not to eliminate undocumented workers, but to regulate their numbers as the economy expands or contracts and to maintain their status as a superexploited layer of the working class the bosses can use to push down all wages.

Since the passage of the Secure Fence Act of 2006 during the George W. Bush administration, more than 650 miles of fencing at the border has been built. In a May 10, 2011, speech in El Paso, Texas, Obama bragged, "We have gone above and beyond what was requested," saying the border fence is "now basically complete."

The highest number of deportations in U.S. history took place during President Bill Clinton's last year in office, when more than 1,800,000 immigrants were deported. The Obama administration holds the record for the criminalization of immigrants — putting more workers charged with immigration "crimes" behind bars than any other president in U.S. history.

LETTERS

Is Trump a fascist?

I have thought a great deal about this. I do not think that most who voted for him were necessarily motivated by racism and bigotry, though some were. In reality, it is capitalism, the pauperization of many workers, the sell-out labor bureaucracy and the Democratic Party leadership that paved the way for Trump's victory and not racist and ignorant workers.

Concerning the massive anti-Trump protests, though the leadership attempted to herd people back into the Democratic Party fold, many more were motivated by anti-racism, anti-fascism and their disgust with conditions in this capitalist system.

Camillo Santo
Western Pennsylvania

Cubans want socialism

The day that [Fidel] Castro's death was announced in the U.S. media, Good Morning America had a special segment... saying he was starving the people. I was outraged at this show and lies. If Castro's regime was so horrific, then why are Cubans still memorializing him and genuinely mourning? They are passionate about the

revolution and want socialism to continue.

A prisoner
Pennsylvania

'Militant' help to prisoners

Please know that your paper has been and still is a great help to me and others. Thank you all. The will of the people is my goal. Revolutionary greetings to all.

A prisoner
Florida

'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

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

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