

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Growth of 'administrative state'
feature of modern capitalism
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 78/NO. 2 JANUARY 20, 2014

Japan, China militarization spurred by Pacific rivalries

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The governments of China and Japan, the two greatest economic and military powers in Asia, are building up their military muscle in a drive fueled by rivalry over markets, resources and territorial claims in the region. At the same time, Washington is shifting military forces toward Asia and working to put together political and trade alliances in the Pacific to counter Beijing's growing influence.

The three powers are at the center of growing tensions in the Pacific, driven by stiffening competition amid a slowdown in world production and trade, tensions that are at the same time tempered by deep economic ties and shared interests in avoiding any actual military clashes.

These developments register two major shifts from the situation following World War II. First, the ability of Beijing, for the first time, to begin challenging Washington's unbridled

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African refugees in Israel protest indefinite detention



Oren Ziv, Keren Manor/Active Stills

Israeli government passed law in December allowing indefinite detention of African immigrants in "open" jails. Thousands of Eritrean and Sudanese protest Dec. 28 in Tel Aviv. Numbers refer to practice of identifying incarcerated refugees by number, instead of name.

BY LEA SHERMAN

Tens of thousands of Africans, mostly from Sudan and Eritrea, have been demonstrating in Israel against the indefinite imprisonment of African asylum-seekers, denial of visas and other measures designed to force them to leave the country.

The wave of protests began in mid-December. On Jan. 5, in the largest action yet, some 30,000 refugees and their supporters demonstrated in Tel Aviv on the first day of a three-day strike by Sudanese and Eritreans, who work mostly for restaurants, cafes, hotels and janitorial companies. The next day 10,000 protested in front of the U.S. Embassy, United Nations offices and other embassies. They chanted "We are refugees," to bring

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Profit drive of oil, rail bosses behind train wreck in ND

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

MINNEAPOLIS — Shortly after noon on Dec. 30 a mile-long train loaded with highly flammable light crude collided with a derailed grain train outside Casselton, N.D., 25 miles

ONLY WORKERS CAN ENFORCE SAFE OPERATION OF INDUSTRY

— See editorial page 9

west of Fargo. The crash triggered a series of explosions that sent a massive plume of toxic smoke into the air and led to the evacuation of much of the town of 2,400. The train was ferrying 3.5 million gallons of oil from the Bakken shale region of North Dakota to an oil terminal along the Mississippi River in Hayti, Mo.

The explosion was the third in six months involving trains carrying light crude from the Bakken fields, highlighting the disregard for safety of workers and those who live near the tracks by the oil and railroad bosses in their efforts to reap maximum profits.

"We would have easily lost 100 people," Casselton Mayor Ed McCon-

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Garment workers fight for higher wages in Cambodia

Protests subside after government crackdown



Reuters/Samrang Pring

Cambodian garment workers launched protest strike Dec. 25 for minimum wage raise to \$160 per month. Above, thousands march outside government offices in Phnom Penh, Dec. 31.

BY EMMA JOHNSON

Hundreds of thousands of garment workers in Cambodia walked off their jobs and took to the streets for more than a week starting Dec. 25, after a government decision on a new minimum wage fell far short of their demands.

Riot cops and soldiers attacked demonstrators Jan. 3, killing at least four

workers and injuring 27. The following day the government banned all protest actions. Protests have since subsided and many workers have returned to the factories for now.

"We demanded a raise of the minimum wage to \$160 a month and the government only approved \$100,"

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Congress divided over extension of benefits for long-term jobless

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Congress' Happy New Year's greeting to 1.3 million jobless workers was to let their federal unemployment compensation run out.

The Emergency Unemployment Compensation program, which started during the recession in 2008, provides federal benefits of up to 47

weeks after 26-week coverage by most states expire. The program has been extended by Congress more than 10 times amid persistent record-high levels of long-term joblessness. Just one in four workers the government counts as unemployed now receive jobless benefits — the smallest proportion in half a century.

Many previous extensions were passed with little discussion, but the program has become increasingly contentious and divided along party

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Framed-up, jailed lawyer Lynne Stewart wins release

BY DAN FEIN

NEW YORK — Lynne Stewart was welcomed home by dozens of supporters and family members at LaGuardia Airport in New York City New Year's Day, a day after Judge John Koeltl finally accepted her request for "compassionate release" due to terminal cancer.

"Without shackles and without a belly chain and without cuffs on,

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'Militant' held up in Florida jail over 'miscommunication'

BY JOHN STUDER

The *Militant* was withheld from subscribers incarcerated at the Blackwater River Correctional Facility in Milton, Fla., for several weeks on the basis that "the entire publication is viewed as a threat to security." After an inquiry by the American Civil Liberties Union, prison authorities chalked it up to a clerical error and said the paper would be promptly delivered.

The incident followed the *Militant's* victory against prison authorities' effort to censor the paper "in all major institutions, work camps, road prisons, and forestry camps" under the jurisdiction of the Florida Department of Corrections.

On Dec. 24 the *Militant* received multiple sets of impoundment notices from Blackwater, indicating that four subscribers to the paper had each been denied from three to five recent issues and that all issues would be banned in the future.

ACLU lawyer Benjamin Stevenson then contacted Mark Henry, the warden at Blackwater, who referred him to Scott Seagle, a lawyer for Geo Group, Inc., a private company that builds and runs prisons around the world. Henry said his prison was just following the Florida Department of Corrections' earlier decision to impound the paper in September.

"I've contacted Blackwater and determined that the magazine was impounded in error," Seagle wrote to Stevenson Jan. 7. "The error has been corrected; the magazine will be delivered today."

Geo Group describes itself as "the world's leading provider of correctional, detention, and community re-entry services, with 95 facilities, approximately 73,000 beds, and 18,000 employees around the globe," with facilities located in the U.S., United Kingdom, Australia and South Africa. In the U.S. the company runs federal and state prisons, county jails, immigration detention centers and other incarceration facilities.

When the *Militant* appealed the earlier September impoundment, the Florida Department of Corrections' Literature Review Committee initially upheld the censorship. But after the *Militant* continued to press the case and started winning support from journalist organizations and other publications, the committee reversed it.

"There was apparently a miscommunication with the mail room staff on the status of the publication," Seagle wrote, suggesting that the second decision by the Literature Review Committee did not make it to those in charge at Blackwater.

"We intend to follow up whenever we learn about delivery problems or efforts to censor the paper in prisons," said *Militant* editor Doug Nelson. "It's more than a question of free speech and freedom of the press. We think the *Militant* is needed by workers behind bars to help connect them and their everyday fights for dignity with the struggles of working people on the outside. That's why we offer special rates to prisoners without means to pay and more and more have been signing up."

'Militant' moves into new offices



Militant/George Alvarez-Bouse

NEW YORK — On Mon., Jan. 6, *Militant* editorial volunteers set to work on this issue in their new office on the 13th floor of 306 W. 37th St. in Manhattan. After moving its equipment on Saturday, staff volunteers spent the following day setting up the new office — arranging furniture, putting books and files in place and hanging pictures of *Militant* issues going back to the late 1920s, illustrating the decades-long continuity of the socialist newsweekly published in the interests of working people over the past 85 years.

— BRIAN WILLIAMS

'Bonus' amid forced overtime and injuries given to Party

"Enclosed is a \$250 blood money contribution that came by way of a Christmas bonus. Thank you for taking it off my hands. I know you will put it to good use," wrote Amanda Ulman, who works as an assembler in a computer manufacturing plant in Houston, in a note with a check to the Socialist Workers Party Capital Fund.

Bribes from bosses intended to convince workers to accept speedup, wage cuts, concession contracts and dangerous working conditions — "blood money" — is a cornerstone of the Capital Fund, which helps finance long-range work of the party. These bribes take various forms: safety, attendance, production and "profit-sharing" bonuses; contract-signing incentives; and holiday "gifts."

Some \$900 in blood money contributions were sent in December.

"This is a \$25 contribution from a blood money holiday gift card the bosses at the popcorn factory gave out at work," wrote Mary Martin from Seattle Dec. 22. "They bragged that exchanging merchandise or gift cards with all their vendors, they didn't actually have to spend a dime on us for these 'gifts.'"

Maggie Trowe in Des Moines, Iowa, sent in \$317.90, a "Christmas bonus" at the plastics factory where she works. It was personally delivered by the company president and vice president along with two plant managers.

"With it they gave us a letter thanking 'team members' for helping the company make large profits," Trowe wrote. "We have been working forced overtime every other weekend and there have been several injuries on the job. It's a pleasure to turn this blood money into something the communist movement can use."

To donate to the fund, contact a *Militant* distributor near you, listed on page 8.

— EMMA JOHNSON

THE MILITANT

The fight for workers' rights in Russia

Pussy Riot members left prison unbroken and defiant Dec. 23, vowing to keep fighting the repressive regime of President Vladimir Putin. The 'Militant' covers these and other struggles that advance the interests of working people in the countries of the former Soviet Union.



Reuters/Sergei Karpukhin

Maria Alyokhina of Pussy Riot speaks to press Dec. 23 after release from prison.

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

North Dakota train wreck

Continued from front page

nell told the Associated Press. “We dodged a bullet by having it out of town, but this is too close for comfort.”

Both trains were run by the BNSF Railway Co., which hauls nearly two-thirds of all crude shipments from North Dakota. The inferno from the derailment was so intense that emergency crews couldn’t get close enough to put out the blaze. Residents from the town reported hearing explosions for hours after the collision.

Trains from the Bakken fields are referred to as “bomb trains” by some engineers and other crew, rail consultant Sheldon Lustig told Associated Press.

The most recent collision follows two others carrying crude from the Bakken fields. In July, a train derailed in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, killing 47 people and destroying most of the town of 5,900. According to the *Globe and Mail*, “It was the worst rail accident in Canadian history.” The railway had been granted special dispensation to run with a one-person crew “in order to save costs.”

Last November, a 90-car oil train from the Bakken fields derailed near Aliceville, Alabama, causing uncontrollable firebombs like those in Casselton. The derailment took place on a rail trestle over a rural swamp and didn’t lead to any fatalities.

Shale oil production soars

There has been a rapid growth of rail transport of light crude from North Dakota since vertical fracking techniques opened the Bakken shale region over the last decade. “Workplace accidents increased so dramati-

cally that North Dakota now has the highest rate of job fatalities in the U.S.,” the *Globe and Mail* reported, four times the national average.

According to Oilprice.com, North Dakota is producing as much oil as Azerbaijan, close to 1 million barrels a day. In 2008 not a single barrel of oil from North Dakota was shipped by rail. Nearly 400,000 tanker carloads were shipped last year. Many of these trains travel through major population centers like Fargo and Minneapolis.

About 85 percent of the 92,000 tanker cars that carry flammable liquids, including those on the derailed train in Casselton, are older DOT-111 models, prone to puncture and corrosion. In 2009, following an ethanol train crash in Illinois, recommendations for additional reinforcement were adopted, but the Association of American Railroads reported in November that only 14,000 cars have been built or retrofitted to include a thicker puncture-resistant shell or jacket, extra protective heat shields on both ends of the tank car and improved pressure release valves.

Three days after the Casselton explosions, the U.S. Department of Transportation issued a “safety alert to notify the general public, emergency responders and shippers and carriers that recent derailments and resulting fires indicate that the type of crude oil being transported from the Bakken region may be more flammable than traditional heavy crude oil.”

As light crude sits in the cars, it tends to stratify, leaving the lightest at the top, where it can vaporize, creating explosive conditions. In addition, the region’s oil tends to be contami-



AP/Bruce Crummy

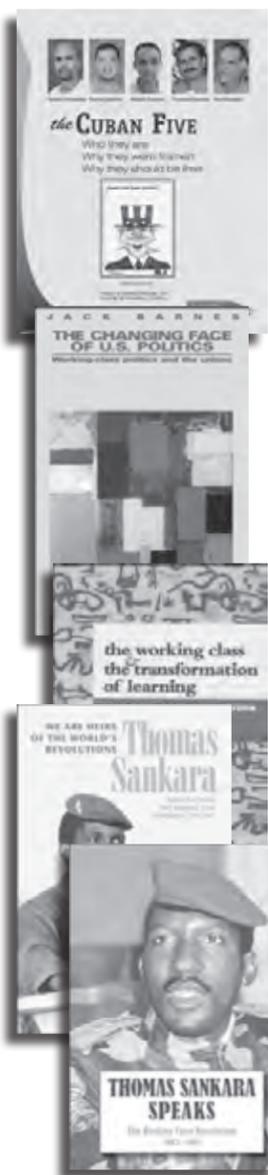
Plumes of toxic smoke billow over Casselton, N.D., Dec. 30 after train carrying crude collided with derailed grain train. Orders issued four years ago to reinforce tanker cars carrying flammable liquids have not been implemented for 85 percent of rail cars.

nated with impurities, some in the oil itself and some introduced by chemicals used in the fracking process that can enhance its flammability and corrosive effects.

In December North Dakota state officials were planning to issue a report highlighting the safety of moving oil by rail — to “dispel the myth” that oil is “somehow an explosive, really dangerous thing.” These same officials quickly dropped that plan Jan. 2 in the aftermath of Casselton.

As we go to press, another train exploded into a massive inferno. A Canadian National Railway train carrying propane and crude oil derailed the evening of Jan. 7 near Plaster Rock, New Brunswick, about 31 miles from the U.S. border with Maine. No one was injured but 45 nearby homes were evacuated.

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Minneapolis
The Pope, the Capitalist Crisis and Workers’ Struggles. Speaker: Becky Ellis, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Jan. 17, 7:30 p.m. 416 E. Hennepin Ave., Room 214. Tel.: (612) 729-1205.

NEW ZEALAND

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Lynne Stewart wins release

Continued from front page

felt pretty good,” Stewart told Amy Goodman of the “Democracy Now” radio show and those gathered in the terminal.

“I won’t forget them,” Stewart said of fellow inmates at the Carswell Federal Medical Center prison in Fort Worth, Texas. “That’s where I’m headed. I’m going to work for women prisoners’ groups and for political prisoners.”

Stewart, 74, was framed up for releasing a statement to the press in 2005 on behalf of her client Omar Abdel-Rahman, an Egyptian cleric convicted of conspiring to blow up the United Nations and other landmarks here. Stewart, the government contends, violated Special Administrative Measures imposed on Abdel-Rahman that were designed to cut him off from contact with the outside world. Stewart was convicted of “providing material support to a terrorist organization” and spent four years and six weeks of a 10-year sentence behind bars.

Stewart was a criminal defense lawyer who often took cases other attorneys shunned for political and career reasons and defended working people who could not afford typical lawyers’ fees.

In June last year the Bureau of Prisons rejected her request for release as did Judge Koeltl in August.

“We organized political people and others who were motivated by civility and compassion — anyone who thought she should be free,” Ralph Poynter, Stewart’s husband and leader of the Lynne Stewart Defense Committee, said in a Jan. 3 phone interview. “After we were turned down the second time for compassionate release, we redoubled our efforts.”

“They don’t allow ‘browsing’ in the women’s prison library,” Stewart said when asked about prison conditions and her relations with other inmates. “So I had my own lending library. Friends would come by and ask for a good book. They just loved them.”

A lot of prisoners followed the death of Nelson Mandela, Stewart said. “I read two articles in the *Militant*, the speech by Mandela in Cuba in 1991 on the meaning of the battle of Cuito Cuanavale and another article in the same issue on Cuito Cuanavale’s meaning to the fight in South Africa. I made photocopies of those two articles and distributed them.”

“This is a victory,” Stewart said of her release before turning her attention to the ongoing fights to release other political prisoners. “Leonard Peltier should walk out the gate. The Cuban Five should walk out the gate. I am not the only one.”



Renée Feltz

“I’m going to work for women prisoners’ groups, for political prisoners,” says Lynne Stewart, left, arriving at New York’s LaGuardia Airport Jan. 1. Stewart won compassionate release the day before, after spending more than four years in prison on frame-up conviction.

Cambodia garment workers fight for wage raise

Continued from front page

Say Sokny, secretary-general of the Free Trade Union, said by phone from Phnom Penh Jan. 2. “Workers didn’t agree and immediately went on strike over the whole country. The industry shut down.”

The walkout was touched off by a government announcement that the monthly minimum wage would be raised from \$80 to \$95, with annual increases to reach \$160 by 2018.

On Dec. 27, police fired warning shots and used batons to keep strikers from getting into an industrial park on the outskirts of Phnom Penh where they hoped to encourage fellow workers to join their march. Both cops and strikers were injured in skirmishes.

On Dec. 30 and 31, thousands of workers blocked the streets outside government offices. The government deployed riot police and sealed off buildings with barbed wire.

On Dec. 31 the government raised its minimum wage offer to \$100 and ordered strikers to return to work by Jan. 2. “If they continue striking we will cancel their licenses, and if they still continue we will sue them in court,” the Labor Ministry said in a letter to six garment unions.

“The Royal Government and politicians have a role to protect and create an investment climate that is favorable to the investors in the private sector,” the Garment Manufacturers Association said in a statement the same day calling on the government to act.

“This morning nine unions backing the strike held a press conference and gave the government three days to agree to negotiations,” Kong Athit, vice president of the Coalition of Cambodian Apparel Workers Democratic Union, said by phone from Phnom Penh Jan. 2, the day before the cops opened fire.

The Labor Ministry responded with a statement saying that it would not negotiate or offer more than \$100 a month.

On Jan. 3, workers in the Canadia Industrial Park confronted cops with rocks, sticks and homemade firebombs. The police first withdrew, then came back with reinforcements and fired into the crowd with AK-47 rifles, according to witnesses. At least four garment workers were killed and 27 injured.

The garment strikes and protests took place in the midst of demonstrations by the Cambodia National Rescue Party, the main opposition party, demanding new elections and Prime Minister Hun Sen’s resignation. Rescue Party leader Sam Rainsy has come out in support of a monthly minimum wage of \$160.

In last year’s elections the governing Cambodia People’s Party won 68 seats to the Rescue Party’s 55, a 22-seat loss from 2008. Rainsy accused the government of fraud and boycotted the National Assembly. On Dec. 15 the

party launched a campaign of daily protests. Thousands joined the marches and hundreds set up a tent camp in Freedom Park in central Phnom Penh.

On Dec. 22 and 29, more than 100,000 people marched in Rescue Party actions, including garment workers pressing their own demand for \$160. As workers swelled the protests, the Rescue Party leadership announced Dec. 29 a week-long suspension and gave the government until Jan. 5 to consider a proposal for negotiations on election law reforms.

During the weekend of Jan. 4-5, riot police and army units cracked down both on striking workers and Rescue Party protests. The tent camp in Freedom Park was cleared out and all demonstrations and public protests banned.

According to Ken Loo, secretary-general of the Garment Manufacturers Association, 50 to 60 percent of the workers were back to work by Jan. 6.

“We appeal to workers to return to work and earn their wages first, while we decide our next strategy,” Ken Chheanglang, vice president of the National Independent Federation Textile Union of Cambodia, told the *Wall Street Journal* Jan. 6.

The garment and shoe industry in Cambodia employs 600,000 workers in 800 factories, mostly women from rural areas. The strike wave takes place in the context of rapidly expanding production, a fact not lost to workers who see the opportunity to press for better conditions. During the first 11 months of 2013 garment exports increased 22 percent over the same period in 2012.

‘The Cuban Five’ promoted in French paper

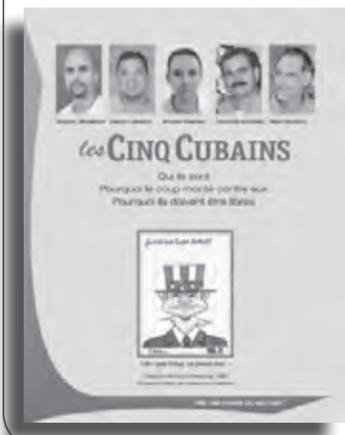
Below is a review of the French edition of the *Pathfinder Press* book *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free* that appeared in the December issue of *Le Monde diplomatique*, a monthly international newspaper published in Paris. The author, Maurice Lemoine, is a former editor-in-chief of the paper and author of *Cinq Cubains à Miami: Le roman de la guerre secrète entre Cuba et les États-Unis (Five Cubans in Miami: The Story of the Secret War between Cuba and the United States)*.

All that drags on too long ends up fading from view as if it no longer exists. So we are grateful to this book for returning to the tragic story of the five Cuban agents — Mr. Gerardo Hernández, Mr. Ramón Labañino, Mr. Antonio Guerrero, Mr. Fernando González, and Mr. René González — who were arrested in September 1998, then tried and convicted in 2001 for having infiltrated the rightist and paramilitary groups carrying out attacks against Cuba from southern Florida.

During their trial held in Miami for “conspiracy to spy on the United States,” which was characterized by numerous basic rights violations, “not a single one of the 1,400 pages presented as evidence showed that the defendants possessed secret information.”

After serving his 15-year sentence, Mr. [René] González was released from prison — he is the only one who has been. Mr. Hernandez was even punished by being sentenced to two life sentences plus 15 years. The articles reprinted here, as well as the photos, were chosen from some 200 articles printed during the last 15 years in the pages of the *Militant*, a socialist weekly published in New York.

— MAURICE LEMOINE



Who are the Cuban Five?

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

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

Hernández was also convicted of conspiracy to commit murder, based on the pretext that he bore responsibility for the Cuban government’s 1996 shoot-down of two Brothers to the Rescue aircraft that had invaded Cuban airspace in disregard of Havana’s repeated warnings. He is serving two life terms plus 15 years. His wife Adriana Pérez is barred from entering the United States.

The frame-up and continued incarceration of the Five is part of Washington’s decades-long campaign to punish the working people of Cuba for making and defending their socialist revolution.

René González returned to Cuba in May 2013, halfway through his parole.

ON THE PICKET LINE

SKorea rail workers end 3-week strike

Thousands of workers on strike against KORAIL, South Korea's state-owned rail company, returned to work Dec. 31 without achieving their central goal of blocking moves to privatize the company, according to a statement from the Korean Rail Workers Union. Union officials ended the strike after the South Korea National Assembly set up a sub-committee to discuss the country's rail industry that will include union participation.

"Through the strike we made privatization an issue and we built a massive amount of public support," Wolsan Liem, international affairs director of the Korean Federation of Public Services and Transportation Workers' Union, said by phone from Seoul Jan. 1. "Workers were on strike for a historic 23 days despite repression by the government. We went as far as we could at this juncture."

Warrants for the arrest of 25 strike leaders have not been withdrawn and some 490 union members still face possible firings.

On Dec. 28 tens of thousands demonstrated in central Seoul to back the strike. Korean Confederation of Trade Unions spokesperson Jeong Ho-hee told *Hankyoreh* newspaper that about "half of the people attending the rally were not union members, but ordinary people." Among them were hundreds of teachers who are fighting an attempt by the government to dissolve the Korean Teachers and Education Workers Union.

Students organized solidarity actions in five cities that day.

The strike began Dec. 9 after KORAIL refused to back off plans to set up a subsidiary to run a planned high-speed passenger train between Seoul and Busan. The company denied the new entity was a step toward privatization, but admitted its goal was to cut costs — which workers know would be done to their detriment.

The government of President Park Geun-hye declared the strike illegal, issued arrest warrants for strike leaders and raided union headquarters, including the Confederation of Trade Unions. KORAIL hired scabs to keep as many freight and passenger trains running as possible.

At the peak of the strike freight train service was down 45 percent and passenger trains were down by 34 percent.

The Korean Confederation of Trade Unions is calling for demonstrations and one-day strikes on Jan. 4, 9, and 16, de-

manding that President Park resign and for an end to privatization and attacks on unions.

— Seth Galinsky

Stationary Engineers union locked out at Calif. dairy plant

Thirteen stationary engineers, who keep the milk-processing plant operating at Berkeley Farms dairy in Hayward, Calif., have been picketing outside the factory gate since the company locked them out on New Year's eve.

The workers, members of Stationary Engineers, Local 39, said they oppose the company demand that they start paying monthly premiums for their health insurance.

"We voted against their 'last and final' offer and gave them 48-hours strike notice," Jim Butler, who has worked at the dairy for 25 years, said on the picket line Jan. 3. "Thirty-six hours later, they walked the workers out of the plant."

Dean Foods, the company that owns



Militant/Betsy Stone

Stationary engineers picket at Berkeley Farms in Hayward, Calif., Jan. 3. They were locked out Dec. 31 after voting down company's demand to pay premiums on health coverage.

Berkeley Farms, has brought in scabs from its nonunion plants in other parts of the country. Workers who are members of three other unions at Berkeley

Farms continue to work.

Berkeley Farms did not respond to a request for comment.

— Betsy Stone

Boeing Machinists ratify 8-year concession contract

BY EDWIN FRUIT

SEATTLE — Members of International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers District 751 who work for Boeing narrowly approved an eight-year concession contract Jan. 3.

Boeing bosses had threatened to begin production of the new 777X plane in another state if the union did not concede to the company's terms. A first vote held Nov. 13 rejected the contract by a 2-1 majority. Boeing then submitted a second proposal, which District 751 officials said they refused to organize a vote on because there was no significant improvement. But the union's national leadership mandated a vote over the local's objections.

The contract, which lasts until 2024, includes a freeze on pensions for current workers, ends pensions for new hires, increases employee medical insurance expenses, raises wages by only 0.5 percent annually and contains a no-strike clause. Workers will get a \$10,000 contract-signing incentive and another \$5,000 "bonus" in 2020.

"Boeing's proposals on pay and

benefits will mean decreases in your take-home pay," said a letter sent from Machinists District 751 to members.

Speakers at a rally of several hundred Machinists and other unionists Jan. 2 urged a "no" vote.

"Do we have to give corporate America whatever they want whenever they want it?" Shannon Ryker, a mechanic at Boeing's plant in Everett, said at the rally. "A 'yes' vote weakens the collective bargaining process not only for us but for other unions as well. We are fighting for the future of unions."

Company threats to relocate if workers rejected the concessions were taken up by local politicians and media to increase pressure on the Machinists.

After the Nov. 13 vote, the *Seattle Times* ran a series on the possible states where Boeing could build the 777X plane, which included Utah, California, South Carolina and Alabama.

Jay Inslee, the newly elected governor of Washington, and Congressman Rick Larsen, both Democrats, were

among those pressing for a second vote. Local mayors from Renton and Everett, where the main Boeing plants are located, urged unionists to accept the contract.

"This is about corporate greed," Heath Ronning told the *Militant* outside the Jan. 3 vote at the union hall in Renton. "This is a no-win situation."

"I voted yes," said Khoem Preap, who works at a Boeing office near the plant. "At least we'll still have jobs."

Machinists International President Tom Buffenbarger issued a statement welcoming the result: "For decades to come, the entire region will benefit from the economic activity and technological innovations that will accompany the production of the 777X and 737 MAX."

"I am beside myself," said Eugene Riggs, who works at the Everett plant. "Not only with the outcome, but the way it was forced upon us. Boeing did a very good job of instilling fear in a lot of people. But we aren't done yet. District Lodge 751 is defiant in spite of being divided."

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



January 20, 1989

HAVANA, Cuba — "We want peace and we must fight for peace, but peace for all peoples, peace with rights for all the peoples of the world," declared Cuban President Fidel Castro here on January 4 in the international rally celebrating the 30th anniversary of the victory of the Cuban revolution.

"It is the fruit of the Paris Commune," he noted, "and of the October Revolution. It is the fruit of the struggles of all peoples to create a world without slavery, a world without exploitation, a world in which there is real justice."

"The secret of this revolution is that it has been true to its principles from beginning to end, for 30 years. It has not been intimidated by anything. It has not allowed anyone or anything to deflect it from its course."

"That is the most important legacy we can leave to new generations.



January 20, 1964

All over the world, people who have suffered under colonialism or semi-colonialism bitterly oppose any of their national territory being owned or ruled by a foreign power. This is one of the most elementary principles of the great anti-colonial revolutions sweeping the world.

Panamanians, too, have been protesting for years. Their latest protest could not be concealed from the U.S. or world public because it cost a score of Panamanian lives as well as those of three GIs.

Panamanians are sick and tired of being made second-class citizens in their own country; they are sick of the racism the Mississippi minded colonialists try to impose on the country.

It's high time for the U.S. to turn the Panama Canal and the Canal Zone over to the Panamanians.



January 21, 1939

SIKESTON, Mo. — The State police proceeded to break the demonstration of the Southeast Missouri sharecroppers, who have camped along U.S. Highway 60 and 61, by forcing them to return to the farms from which they came.

Charging that the 13 camps established by the 1,500 croppers and their families constitute "a menace to public health," the police took the action in agreement with the landowners but without consulting the croppers.

Evicted from their shacks when they refused to accept a change in status to that of day-laborers, which would eliminate their one-half share of the government cotton reduction parity payment, the croppers are now being compelled to accept the masters' terms.

The trade unions, particularly the C.I.O., must be aroused in support of these downtrodden people.

Teamster Rebellion by Farrell Dobbs

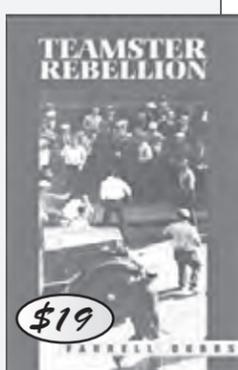
The 1934 strikes that built the industrial union movement in Minneapolis and helped pave the way for the CIO, as recounted by a central leader of that battle.

First in a four-volume series.

The other books are: *Teamster Power*, *Teamster Politics*, and *Teamster Bureaucracy*.

Also available in Spanish, Swedish, Farsi.

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Japan, China militarization

Continued from front page

dominance over the Pacific, including waters off China's coast. The second major development is the Japanese rulers' determined push to rebuild a military they can wield to advance their interests in the world — in close alliance with but independent from Washington.

Inscribed in Japan's constitution since its military defeat and occupation by Washington in 1947 is a prohibition on the establishment of a standing army and its use abroad. Tokyo's armed forces are officially an extension of its police force and solely defensive in posture.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has said that his "life's work" is to revise the constitution to remove limits on development and use of military power. As a symbolic gesture of this mission, Abe on Dec. 26 visited Tokyo's controversial Yasukuni Shrine, which honors the nation's war dead and includes many considered war criminals for their role in leading Japanese imperialism's occupation and plunder of China and Korea during World War II. This act "closes the door to dialogue with Chinese leaders," responded a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Dec. 30.

Last month Abe approved creation of a National Security Council and won passage of a state secrets law in parliament that imposes harsher sentences for leaking of classified military and diplomatic government information.

On Dec. 17 Prime Minister Abe's cabinet approved its first ever "national security strategy." Just weeks earlier Beijing had declared an air defense iden-

tification zone over the East China Sea that includes the uninhabited Diaoyu Islands — called Senkaku by Tokyo — which Japan controls but are claimed by China.

The Japanese government's new security strategy calls for maintaining close military ties with the U.S., but emphasizes that "Japan needs to first and foremost strengthen its own capabilities" to "advance its national interests" given "China's rapid rise." And, for the first time in 11 years, it increases military spending by about 5 percent over the next five years to a total of \$240 billion.

Japan's military ranks 24th in the world in the number of active-duty personnel (247,000) and fifth in the world in total spending. Increased spending is part of plans to add seven destroyers to its navy, including two with Aegis guided-missile systems, bringing its destroyer fleet to 54. Tokyo also plans six new submarines, raising its total to 22, and 20 fighter jets, increasing the total to 280, reported the *Financial Times*. And steps are being taken to put in place a Marine-style amphibious brigade, trained to capture territory in sea-launched operations.

Prime Minister Abe is also seeking to reverse a ban on exporting weapons. His cabinet approved a plan Dec. 23 to provide 10,000 rounds of ammunition without charge to South Korean troops who are part of U.N. forces in South Sudan.

Indicative of the enduring but not static military alliance with Washington, Abe secured a deal to close the unpopular U.S. Marine Corps Futenma military



Reuters/Toru Hanai

Symbolizing his determination to use Japan's military abroad, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, second from left, visits Yasukuni Shrine Dec. 26. Shrine honors Japanese war dead, including those who led Tokyo's occupation and plunder of China and Korea during World War II.

base in Okinawa and build a new one in a less populated area in the southern part of the island over the next decade. Total U.S. troops at the base are to decline from 18,000 to 10,000.

Interlocking trade ties and conflicts underlie these developments. Washington and Tokyo are the two biggest economic forces behind the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a trade pact of 12 nations that comprise 40 percent of the world's gross domestic product. China is excluded from the pact. But with their shared goal of competing with Chinese goods, the rulers of Japan and the U.S. have their own rivalries. Washington, for example, is pressing to open up Japanese markets to imports of U.S. automobiles, beef and rice, a move Tokyo is resisting. And China remains Japan's number one and United States' number two trading partner.

China's growing military capabilities

While Tokyo and Washington's military spending has declined slightly over the last decade, Beijing's expenditures have skyrocketed as part of an ambitious militarization drive — from an estimated annual budget of roughly \$30 billion in 2003 to nearly \$120 billion today, according to Reuters. In a short period, Beijing has begun to develop modern weaponry on a par with the most advanced U.S. technology, including initial steps toward a blue-water navy. While its military capabilities will remain far behind those of Washington into the foreseeable future, the Chinese military stands alone today in the rapidity of its development.

In response, Washington is strengthening its naval presence in the Pacific, with a goal of shifting from having about half its warships there to 60 percent by 2020. And the U.S. rulers are

also actively seeking to develop stronger military alliances in the region, including with India, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines.

According to a 2012 Pentagon assessment, the Chinese navy is now the biggest in Asia, deploying 79 major surface warships and more than 55 submarines. Recent technological achievements include stealth warplanes and combat drones and the world's only ballistic anti-ship missiles, dubbed "carrier killers," which have effectively begun to push U.S. forces a little further from China's coastline.

In naval exercises at the end of October, "Chinese warships and submarines sliced through passages in the Japanese archipelago and out into the Western Pacific," reported Reuters.

The exercises showed that "the United States can no longer contain the Chinese maritime power within the First Island Chain," said Duowei News. Washington's more than six-decade unchallenged supremacy over the East and South China seas, extending from Okinawa to Vietnam, is withering away.

Meanwhile, Washington has continued to assert its dominance of the Pacific, creating the potential of military confrontations. On Dec. 5, for example, the USS Cowpens guided-missile cruiser was forced to take "evasive actions" to avoid collision with Chinese naval vessels while conducting surveillance operations on China's aircraft carrier, the Liaoning, in the South China Sea, reported the *Financial Times*.

Both Washington and Tokyo have conducted unannounced military flights into China's newly declared air defense zone. During the first month, nearly 800 warplanes flew through the zone without clearance, reported China's Defense Ministry.



Beijing has begun to develop modern weaponry on a par with most advanced technology. The DF-21 shown above is world's first and only anti-ship ballistic missile, known as "carrier killer," which has effectively begun pushing U.S. Navy further from China's coastline.

NEW INTERNATIONAL

A MAGAZINE OF MARXIST POLITICS AND THEORY

"Of all capitalism's evils, the most fundamental one is how that system of exploitation reproduces its social relations as a condition of producing its profits. How its workings, its blind methods of functioning, keep grinding toiling humanity into the ground." — Jack Barnes

Imperialism's March Toward Fascism and War

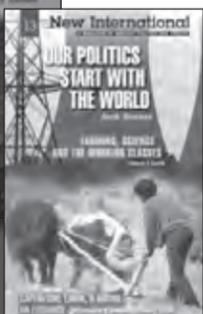
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Growth of 'administrative state' feature of modern US capitalism

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The propertied ruling families in the U.S. and other imperialist countries exercise their state power — the dictatorship of capital — not only through a centralized military and police apparatus but also a large and growing state bureaucracy, with a myriad of agencies, institutions, departments, regulatory boards and enforcement corps, propped up by a second tier of so-called Non-Governmental Organizations and non-profit foundations.

The seeds of what is often termed the modern “administrative state” were planted in Europe and America with the rise of imperialism in the early 1900s and grew at an accelerated pace following the end of World War II.

One measure of this is the growth of federal outlays in the U.S., which were relatively tiny until the early part of the 20th century. They rose during World War I, increased moderately to cover concessions like Social Security won through working-class struggles in the 1930s and soared to cover the costs of World War II. Ever since the late 1940s, they’ve been rapidly rising.

For the first half century or more U.S. government annual expenditures, adjusted for inflation, remained at roughly \$30 per person. In 1910 it was about \$129 per person. By 2004 it was \$7,100. Once state and local expenditures are included this figure comes to more than \$12,000.

Another measure is the number of U.S. government employees, which has increased from about 4 million in 1939 to nearly 22 million today, a more than five-fold rise, during a period when the population increased less than two and a half times. While this includes postal, transportation, hospital and other workers who produce goods and services of some value to working people, most are employed by government administrative, regulatory, police and military departments, whose function is to maintain and defend social relations of exploitation and oppression.

According to the official USA.gov website, there are 510 federal departments and agencies, 50 of which were created over the past 15 years. Among those with the largest number of civilian employees: 718,000 at the Department of Defense; 302,000 at the Department of Veteran Affairs; 240,000 at the Department of Homeland Security;

114,000 at the Department of Justice; 100,000 at the Department of Treasury; and 98,000 Internal Revenue Service agents.

Another aspect of the capitalists’ administrative state is the increasing numbers of federal regulations and bigger staffs to enforce them. From 1949 to 2005 the listings of federal regulations grew by 600 percent to 134,000 pages, six years later it was nearly 170,000. While expanding under the George W. Bush administration, they’ve shot up further under the Obama administration. The 144 new major regulations pending in the second half of 2011 is double the figure from the same period in 2006.

The growth in government agencies has been accompanied by a rapid growth in Non-Governmental Organizations, “think tanks” and foundations. Approximately 1.5 million U.S. and foreign-based NGOs operate in the U.S., according to the State Department, most formed in the past 30 years. Of the more than 75,000 foundations in the U.S., about two-thirds of the largest were established after 1989.

NGOs tied to gov’t bureaucracy

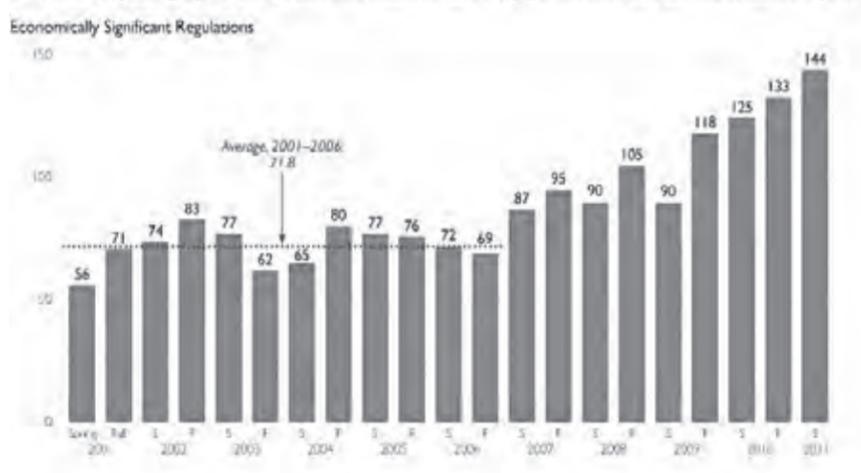
Non-Governmental Organizations, despite their name, are anything but. The overwhelming majority are linked in one way or another to government policy or the maintenance of social relations of capitalist exploitation, often under the rubric of charity. Many operate as government contractors and are used to advance U.S. rulers’ foreign policy goals that are more effectively carried out in an indirect manner. As tax-exempt organizations, they’re financed by individual capitalists, ruling families, corporations and their government.

Since World War II, the function of NGOs and the U.S. government have grown closer. In 1961 the U.S. Agency for International Development, which now operates in more than 150 countries, was created within the State Department. In 2000, “USAID directed about \$4 billion of its \$7.2 billion assistance funding to nongovernmental organizations,” according to the Government Accounting Office.

Hand in hand with the growth of the administrative state bureaucracy and particularly its various appendages has been a social layer of self-styled “meritocrats” to run them.

More Regulations in the Pipeline

The number of pending regulations that cost \$100 million or more every year has more than doubled in under five years.



Aspect of growing government apparatus is increasing numbers of federal regulations.

“This expanding layer of the comfortable middle classes,” writes Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, in *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, “is composed of the handsomely remunerated staffs of so-called non-profit foundations, charities, ‘community organizations,’ and ‘nongovernmental organizations’ (NGOs) — in the United States and worldwide; of well-placed professors and top university administrative personnel; of attorneys, lobbyists, and others. The lives and livelihoods of these growing foundation- and university-centered strata in capitalist society — who, along with bankers and businessmen, cycle back and forth into and out of government positions — are themselves largely unconnected to the production, reproduction, or circulation of social wealth. Their existence is more and more alien to the conditions of life of working people of any racial or national background. ...

“Its members truly believe that their ‘brightness,’ their ‘quickness,’ their ‘contributions to public life,’ ... give them the right to make decisions, to administer society on behalf of the bourgeoisie — what they claim to be on behalf of the interests of ‘the people.’”

Growing executive powers

One political trend connected to the growth of the administrative state is a shift of power from the legislative branch of government toward the executive office of the president, an erosion in the “checks and balances” of bourgeois “democracy.” One apparent contradiction is that the very administrative agencies Congress itself has created and delegated powers to have in effect undermined its power relative to the executive branch.

The growing use of executive power — by both Democratic and Republican administrations alike — can be seen in the increase in presidential decrees and decisions made and implemented by non-elected regulatory agencies that answer to the executive office alone.

During his first four years in office President Barack Obama issued 170 executive orders. They include putting into effect a wide variety of policies, from prohibiting certain imports of Burmese Jadeite and Rubies to authorizing implementation of stiffening sanctions against Iran to establishing the White House Homeland Security Partnership Council. During his eight years, from

2001 to 2009, George W. Bush issued 287 executive orders. William Clinton issued 308 in his two terms from 1993 and 2001.

To pay for its expanding state apparatus the U.S. rulers have imposed steeper and steeper taxation on the population. Federal income tax was first set up by constitutional amendment in 1913. But it was not until World War II that workers had to pay them. The number of those paying into government coffers jumped from 4 million in 1939 to 43 million by 1945 — more than 10-fold in six years. And it has been rising ever since, together with regressive Social Security payroll taxes and other additions.

Big government bad for workers

Contrary to popular misconception, the revolutionary communist movement is not for “big government,” whether it’s a government representing the state power of the capitalist exploiters or a revolutionary government of workers and farmers.

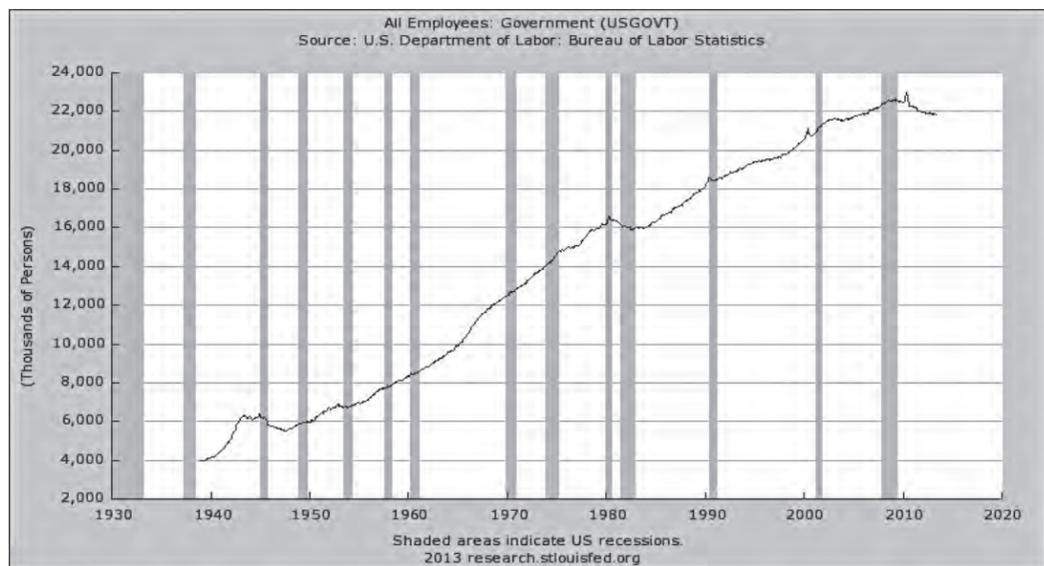
The false view has developed as a result of the massive, repressive state that was put in place in the Soviet Union following the counterrevolutionary usurpation of power by a privileged bureaucratic layer led by Josef Stalin in the 1920s.

Writing on the lessons of the 72-day Paris Commune where the working-class in 1871 held political power for the first time, communist leader Karl Marx said, “The Commune made that catchword of bourgeois revolutions, cheap government, a reality by destroying the two greatest sources of expenditure — the standing army and the state functionalism.”

The goal of the revolutionary workers movement is to overthrow and dismantle the rulers’ repressive apparatus and administrative bureaucracy. The political power of the working class and its allies that will replace this state will have no need for some big central government to administer society.

Through the revolutionary struggle for power and without the fetters and stifling conditions of capitalist rule, working people will transform themselves into self-confident men and women capable of organizing to meet the material and cultural needs of humanity and solve what had been insurmountable social problems. And they will do this starting at the most basic local level, not through top-down administration.

In this sense the communist view is also the opposite of that put forward by the liberal meritocracy, which seeks to promote greater dependency among working people on a supposed benevolent government and its administrative agencies.



Number of U.S. government employees has grown from about 4 million in 1939 to nearly 22 million today. Most of them are employed in government’s administrative, regulatory, police and military departments, whose function is to maintain capitalist order and social relations of exploitation and oppression.

New patterns of struggle developed in partial recovery of '30s

Below is an excerpt from *Teamster Politics*, one of *Pathfinder's Books of the Month* for January and the third of a four-part series by Farrell Dobbs on strikes, organizing drives and political campaigns of the 1930s that transformed the Teamsters into a fighting industrial union movement. Dobbs emerged from the ranks as a leader of these struggles and became a central leader of the Socialist Workers Party until his death in 1983. Copyright © 1975 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY FARRELL DOBBS

Capitalists are notoriously loath to do anything that cuts significantly into their profits. Concessions may be coaxed from them on minor points, but it takes a fight to force their compliance with serious demands. As a result, strikes occur because of pressure from the workers, who don't have it as easy as the bureaucrats.

Still another vicious side of capitalist policy comes to the fore when a walk-out takes place. Efforts are made to continue operating the struck facility with scabs. Whatever employees can be sucked in — due to the uneven development of class consciousness — are used as scabs, along with imported strike-breakers and hired thugs. These private actions are backed up by the repressive arms of government — police, courts,



Inset, Library of Congress
Above, Minneapolis truck drivers fight off attacks by police and goons during strike, May 1934. Inset, textile workers picket mill in Greensboro, Georgia, during 1934 strike of 400,000 mill workers throughout East Coast.

military — while at the same time the strikers are being subjected to the trickery of government mediators.

All this deceit and pressure is accompanied by a barrage of lying propaganda laid down by the capitalist news media. ...

In this manner all sections of the ruling class gang up on the embattled workers. Their primary aim is to crush the strike. Failing that, they concentrate on forcing a settlement favorable to the specific employers involved. Under such circumstances the union ranks, stuck with class collaborationist leaders, usually come out holding the short end of the stick. ...

In this overall situation the workers find themselves frustrated by multiple obstacles — employer resistance, governmental opposition, and misleadership in their own organizations. Not knowing how to cope with such a complex of problems, many simply decide to let matters take their course, hoping for a break here and there. Their attention thus begins to center more and more exclusively on making the most of personal life under existing conditions. This, in turn, creates the superficial impression that virtually the entire working class has voluntarily become immersed in peaceful collaboration with the employers, and that what the capitalists call "normalcy" has been made a permanent condition within industry.

At given intervals, however, an entirely different situation arises. The change results from contradictions inherent in a system devised to enrich a small capitalist minority at the expense of a big worker majority. Due to these contradictions, economic dislocations accumulate. Problems related to housing, education, health care, and other social needs grow worse. Conditions in general become less and less tolerable, until a stage is finally reached when all the ingredients for a major explosion come together.

Mounting discontent leads the workers into a search for some way to defend themselves effectively as a class. Divisive walls — built of self-centeredness, prejudice, special interests, class collaboration, and lying capitalist propaganda — begin to crumble. New potential develops for strengthening labor solidarity, elevating class consciousness, and raising the anticapitalist struggle to a higher plane.

A dramatic change of that nature took place in the aftermath of the 1929 stock market crash, which heralded the onset of severe economic depression. As the slump deepened, millions lost their jobs. Earnings were slashed for those who still had employment. Working conditions went from bad to worse, as did living standards in general.

At first the workers accepted these blows in a more or less passive manner. They had been stunned by the economic

debacle and it took time to recover from the shock effect. Then, when they did begin a quest for ways to defend themselves, only scant means were at hand. Less than three million were organized into the AFL, mainly workers in skilled trades. The great bulk of the working class, especially in basic industry, was not unionized at all. On top of that, the AFL bureaucrats showed no real concern about the plight of the unorganized, whether employed or unemployed. In short, labor was caught in a crisis of organization and leadership.

But limited patterns of struggle gradually began to emerge, characterized by ups and downs in scope and tempo. In the initial stage the actions centered mainly on protest demonstrations by the unemployed. Then, during 1933, strikes broke out here and there in industry, the biggest one being conducted by textile workers. These walkouts resulted from the interaction of two basic factors: the workers' determination to regain ground they had lost in the depression and their rising confidence — stimulated by partial economic recovery under the New Deal — that their objective could be attained.

Developments of this kind were viewed by the AFL business unionists as a threat to their class-collaborationist line rather than as an opportunity to strengthen organized labor. So those worthies helped government mediators snooker rebellious workers into formal agreements with the bosses that brought precious few gains to the union rank and file.

But sellouts engineered in that way could not be made to stick very long. Combative moods among the workers continued to grow in intensity, and within the unions radicals were able to increase their leadership authority. As a result, miniature civil wars were fought in 1934 by Minneapolis truck drivers, San Francisco longshoremen, and Toledo auto workers. In each case, labor emerged victorious. Inspired by proof that strikes conducted militantly could be won, the main detachments of the working class in basic industry began to move toward action against the monopoly corporations.

Before the end of 1934 struggles erupted in auto, rubber, and steel.

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Only workers can enforce safety

The recent Bakken shale crude oil train derailments and resulting explosions and deaths are just one example of how capitalism's drive for profit puts workers on the job and those who live near industrial operations in danger.

Nearly 4,500 workers in the U.S. were killed on the job in 2012, the last set of official figures released by the Labor Department. That's a dozen workers every day. And we're being killed in record numbers in the oil and gas, construction and coal mining industries.

Hundreds of people — rail workers, passengers and those living near the tracks — died as a result of catastrophic train derailments, from the Bakken crude loaded explosions in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, in July to the Metro-North commuter crash in Bronx, N.Y., last month.

The number of workers killed in North Dakota, where exploitation of Bakken shale oil and gas deposits has mushroomed, jumped 45 percent — to the highest fatality rate in the country.

Amid cutthroat capitalist competition, bosses are pushing workers to toil longer and harder, with less and less training and no regard for safety. One worker in the industry is killed every three days.

Workers around the world face the same thing. In one building collapse in Bangladesh last year, 1,127 garment workers were killed. Some 15,000 workers are killed every year in India by freight and commuter trains, 6,000 by the suburban tran-

sit system of Mumbai alone. A panel appointed in 2012 by the rail bosses themselves found the companies responsible for what they called "massacre on their railway system." The Chinese government reported safety improvements that reduced mining fatality "accidents" to 1,049 miners last year.

The same thing is happening in industries that are expanding production as well as those that are contracting. In the North Dakota oil boom, bosses are driven to maximize total production and profits at the expense of life and limb. Miners in the dwindling coalfields of West Virginia face the highest death rate in the industry as bosses lay off miners and drive to squeeze maximum profit from those who remain by going after their unions and safety protections.

Government "regulators" are kept toothless by the bosses and politicians to which they are beholden. Since 1970, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration has only filed charges against 84 companies for workers' deaths. Over that period, 390,000 workers were killed on the job, OSHA reports.

Only the working class and its allies have an interest in organizing production to protect life and limb, not maximizing profits. The only way to gain more control over safety and health is to employ the collective power of working people. We need to organize unions and to use union power to fight for control over working conditions and the safety of others.

Congress divided over benefits extension

Continued from front page

lines in Congress. A Senate vote Jan. 7 to open debate on whether to restart the program for three months — which the Barack Obama administration is pushing for — received just enough votes to pass.

Meanwhile, state jobless benefits are slated to expire for another 1.9 million workers over the next six months.

In one example of how useless government jobless figures are for providing any feel for what working people face, Labor Department statisticians have pointed out that cutting federal jobless payments to 1.3 million workers would result in a lower official unemployment figure.

"Economists expect that the end of the emergency jobless benefits will, surprisingly, lead to a sharp drop in the unemployment rate, by as much as 0.5 percentage points," reported the *New York Times*, as workers "drop out of the labor force. Those receiving unemployment benefits are required to demonstrate that they are actively looking and applying for jobs. Without those benefits, and requirements, economists said, many might give up."

Millions of workers have already dropped out

of the workforce, lowering official unemployment figures to 7 percent in November. Meanwhile, the percentage of the population with a job has remained around 58.5 percent for the last four and a half years — about 5 percentage points lower than it was prior to the 2008-2009 recession.

Here is another angle of how the jobs crisis devastating workers lives is looked at from the capitalist point of view: "Jobless rates could drop, but analysts say the economy may suffer with less money for consumers to spend on everything from clothes to cars."

We are inputs, either on the factory floor or as "consumers" who hopefully don't cut back our spending, despite declining living standards.

For the capitalists, the impact of high unemployment on the lives of working people is not a concern. They would much prefer a situation of expanding production and trade, which allows them to turn greater profits by hiring more workers. But when the opposite is the case, they have no reason to hire. And the increased competition for jobs during such periods tends to make workers less confident and combative, providing the bosses greater leverage in their drive to maximize profits at our expense.

Israeli immigrants

Continued from front page

international attention to their fight.

"Feeling insecure most of the time, not knowing if the government will deport or imprison, one cannot make any decisions in life," Sudanese refugee Mohamed Adam Salih said in a phone interview from Arad, Israel, Dec. 29. "Before the demonstrations the media only focused on crime by Africans, now Israelis learn about the civil war and other conditions that we face, and when they see these actions they start to listen."

In September the Israeli Supreme Court ruled that a law allowing the detention of Africans or asylum-seekers for up to three years without a trial was unconstitutional and that 2,000 Africans held in Saharonim prison must be freed within 90 days. Fewer than half have been released.

On Dec. 10 Israel's parliament passed a new law allowing refugees to be held indefinitely in a prison that is "open" during the day and, if they violate the rules there, to be jailed for up to a year in a closed prison.

The Holot prison opened in December in the Negev Desert next to two "closed" prisons — Saharonim for African immigrants and Ketziot for Palestinians. Because Holot is not locked during the day it is called "open," but it is surrounded by barbed wire, fences and guards. Detainees must be present at roll call three times a day, cannot work and are forbidden to leave from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. The nearest city is Beersheba, 40 miles away.

On Dec. 12 some 500 of those detained in Saharonim were moved just a few hundred yards away to the Holot prison.

Even after the Supreme Court ruling, when Eritreans and Sudanese try to renew their visas they are being ordered to report to Holot.

On Dec. 15 some 150 left Holot to protest outside government offices in Jerusalem. Traveling over the next couple days, they walked more than 60 miles, in freezing temperatures. Their number grew to 220.

"They decided to take action to confront the government when they got word that they might have to stay indefinitely," Moran Mekamel, 29, a Jewish citizen of Israel and organizer of Students for Refugees, told the *Militant* from Beersheba Dec. 29.

Mekamel said she joined the Africans at Beersheba's bus station where they gathered on their way to Jerusalem.

"Many of the marchers did not have winter clothes, some came in flip flops," Mekamel said. "They had already been on a three-day hunger strike. They discussed and debated whether to continue on to Jerusalem in the frigid weather. They decided to walk the additional 45 miles."

Supporters, including Israeli Jews, brought warm clothes, food and other necessities to the bus station in solidarity with the protesters or joined the march, she said.

"Five buses with 250 Africans drove the last leg to the government offices," said Mekamel. "We were met at the prime minister's office by supporters with signs, including 'We're a nation of refugees.'"

The 53,000 African refugees in Israel entered through the Sinai desert in Egypt between 2005 and 2012. They were granted conditional visas that have to be renewed at least once every three months, but are not allowed to work legally or receive government welfare benefits. A steel fence was built around the border in 2012 and only a handful of asylum-seekers got to Israel in 2013. While the Israeli government has so far honored international conventions that prevent their forcible deportation, it has tried to force them to go "voluntarily," demonizing them by calling them "infiltrators" and criminals, and offering \$3,500 to leave.

LETTERS

Backs censorship fight

Enclosed is a check for \$50. I have been sending the occasional postcard to the Cuban Five from my breaks in Europe. In my recent card from Paris to Gerardo Hernández, I mentioned that I would be sending a contribution to the defense efforts to get the *Militant* into Florida prisons where it was blocked. Hence, here is my contribution.
Sent from Army Post Office

Prisoners' access to 'Militant'

I am a grain farmer from Wisconsin. I listen to public radio a lot when I am in the combine harvesting corn and beans. This fall NPR was having their fund drive and I normally send \$100 to

them.

Their fall fund drive was taking place at the same time that the *Militant* was fighting to have prisoners' access to the paper restored. I think my \$100 would be better spent sending the *Militant* to prisoners. A check is enclosed.

I think many of the people in prison don't belong there and I think it would be good for them

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.

to have a newspaper written from a workers' perspective.

*Randy Jasper
Muscodia, Wisc.*

Reporting on Korean War

Some months back, your three articles on the Korean War were some of the finest reporting I've ever seen. [See issues no. 33-35 in 2013.] In spite of years of study (and teaching) history and politics, I never knew that Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill conspired to carve up the world — starting with the virtual genocide of the Korean people. I'm sharing these three copies with friends of mine. Thanks.

*Michael Smith
Cincinnati, Ohio*

'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.