

‘Deplorable’ workers are true target of liberals’ fury

BY STEVE CLARK
 AND TERRY EVANS

It is tens of millions of workers in the United States, not President Donald Trump, who are the target of today’s relentless liberal press hysteria and efforts by Democratic Party politicians to invalidate the outcome of the 2016 presi-

COMMENTARY

dential election. Middle class radicals are cheering in the stands.

These liberal-inspired assaults reached a new crescendo following Trump’s dismissal of FBI Director James Comey in early May.

What’s fueling this frenzied crusade? Why can’t the big business media, liberal Democratic Party figures, and even growing numbers of Republican politicians and mouthpieces reconcile themselves to Trump’s election?

The answer is that it’s neither Donald Trump, nor “a Trump presidency,” that

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Spring Campaign to expand the reach of SWP, Militant, books

April 1–May 23 (final chart)

Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold
UNITED STATES				
Albany	60	79	60	68
Atlanta	65	75	65	67
Chicago	80	95	80	80
Denver	25	25	25	20
Lincoln	20	29	20	20
Los Angeles	110	112	110	94
Miami	35	37	35	30
Mullan, Idaho		1		1
New York	135	139	135	148
Oakland*	100	101	140	144
Philadelphia	50	57	50	52
Seattle	70	89	70	76
Twin Cities	50	55	50	51
Washington	50	71	50	54
Total U.S.	850	965	890	905
Prisoners	15	23		
UNITED KINGDOM				
London	50	51	50	66
Manchester	45	51	45	45
Total U.K.	95	102	95	111
CANADA				
Montreal	40	41	40	41
Vancouver	30	36	30	33
Total Canada	70	77	70	74
New Zealand	40	48	40	30
Australia	35	37	35	25
Total	1,105	1,252	1,130	1,145
SHOULD BE	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100
*Raised goal				

‘Fight to end US colonial rule over Puerto Rico!’

Oscar López is free! Begins Puerto Rico, US tour



National Hostosiano Independence Movement/Víctor Birriel

Oscar López during rally in San Juan May 17, day of his release after nearly 36 years in prison, framed by U.S. rulers for activities against Washington’s colonial oppression of Puerto Rico.

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — “Today I can say that my spirit, honor, and dignity remain unbowed, that I am alive and kicking, ready” for the next struggles, declared Oscar López Rivera May 17. He was free after being held nearly 36 years in U.S. prisons for his actions promoting the independence of Puerto Rico from U.S. colonial rule.

SWP communist propaganda drive to reach workers goes over the top!

BY MARY MARTIN

The Socialist Workers Party’s spring party-building campaign to introduce working people and youth to the party, its newspaper the *Militant*, and the writings of central party leaders on the carnage workers face today and a revolutionary road forward has gone over the top.

Spring drive to build Socialist Workers Party

SWP and Communist League members report a wide range of discussions and debates they’ve had as they advance communist propaganda widely in the working class, including at events welcoming Puerto Rican independence fighter Oscar López after his release from prison, and on strike picket lines.

In a number of cases these discussions have led working people to want to learn more about the party and join

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At 7:30 a.m. López Rivera, now 74 years old but looking fit, walked out of his daughter Clarisa’s apartment, where he had been under house arrest for the final three months of confinement. He was greeted by some 50 supporters and serenaded by the student choir of the University of Puerto Rico before being driven to a federal office to have his electronic ankle bracelet removed.

Later he was joined by dozens of jubilant supporters at a news conference held in El Escambrón beach park, in front of the Caribbean waters he had long dreamed about seeing again.

He was accompanied by Clarisa

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Conference in Cuba demands US get out of Guantánamo

BY MAGGIE TROWE
 AND PAUL MAILHOT

CAIMANERA, Cuba — Across the bay from the Guantánamo military base that Washington has occupied for more than a century, participants in the Fifth Seminar for Peace and the Abolition of Foreign Military Bases joined leaders of the Cuban Revolution and workers and youth in this city’s town square May 6 to demand U.S. out!

“We demand the United States return to Cuba and its people illegally occupied territory of the Guantánamo Naval Base, and the lifting of the economic, commercial and financial blockade,” said a statement adopted at the conference that was read at the protest. The statement also condemned U.S. impe-

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‘Speak out against UK rulers’ attack on rights!’

The following statement by Peter Clifford, Communist League candidate for Parliament for Manchester Gorton, was released May 24.

Working people suffered a double blow here May 22.

The reactionary, murderous attack on children and families at the Manchester Arena that killed 22 and injured 120 was totally repugnant to working people.

And the capitalist rulers will use this, as have their counterparts across Europe and in the U.S., to stoke anti-Muslim prejudice and to insist that the need to fight “terrorism” justifies their wars in the Middle East.

Working people and defenders of political rights need to speak out against the rulers’ efforts to use the brutal attack to rationalize assaults on political rights.

The government, with cross party support, is deliberately using this attack to beat the drum of “we British.”

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37,000 AT&T workers strike against bosses’ cutback demands

BY BETSEY STONE

UNION CITY, Calif. — About 37,000 AT&T Inc. workers in 36 states and Washington, D.C., held a three-day strike May 19-21, including thousands of workers in the San Francisco Bay Area.

On the picket line at the AT&T store here, a popular chant was “AT&T rich and rude. We don’t like your attitude.”

Workers told Socialist Workers Party members who joined their picket line in solidarity that AT&T rakes

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Striking long-haul truckers in Russia step up fight

Crimean Tatars protest against Moscow occupation

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Some 1,000 people rallied in Kiev, Ukraine, May 18, commemorating the 73rd anniversary of the mass deportation of the Tatar people from their homeland in Crimea and protesting Moscow’s occupation of the peninsula since 2014.

In the midst of World War II, the Soviet regime headed by Joseph Stalin slandered the Tatars as Nazi collaborators and forcibly removed the entire population — some 200,000 — to settlements in Uzbekistan, Siberia and the Urals. Nearly half perished from starvation, disease and other causes during the trip and over the following two years.

Among those addressing the protest was Mustafa Dzhemilev, a historic leader of the Tatars’ fight and former head of the Mejlis, the Crimean Tatar people’s assembly.

Dzhemilev was banished from Crimea again following the March 2014 Russian armed seizure and annexation of Crimea, along with other leaders of the Mejlis. He was part of the deportations of 1944 when he was one year old.

“The world is different now,” he said. “The occupier will be expelled from our territory; the invader will definitely answer for all crimes against the Ukrainian state and the Crimean Tatar people. And let the souls of the innocently murdered ones inspire us to struggle for the restoration of our rights.”

In Simferopol, the Crimean capital, Russian authorities attempted to block Crimean Tatars from marking the deportation anniversary. They banned a picket against political and religious persecution May 19, arresting people

who attended. “Eight youth were released in the early afternoon after being detained for walking with the Crimean Tatar flag,” wrote Halya Coynash from the Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group. Among others harassed and arrested were elderly people, gathered in prayer, she wrote.

Conditions were much different with the victory of the Bolshevik-led Russian Revolution. After the White Army defenders of the czar’s totalitarian regime were defeated in Crimea, Tatars and other revolutionaries formed the Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in 1921, which encouraged the flowering of Tatar culture. They made the Tatar language an official state language. Tatar cultural institutions grew, including newspapers, journals, museums, schools, libraries and theaters.

But all this was reversed and more with the consolidation of counterrevolutionary bureaucratic rule under Stalin.

On May 11, 1944, Stalin ordered the deportation of all Crimean Tatars. At the time tens of thousands of Tatars were fighting in the Soviet army against Nazi Germany.

Over three days some 200,000 Crimean Tatars were rounded up and loaded on boxcars similar to those used to transport cattle. Thousands died along the way, many of them children and the elderly.

The Soviet government confiscated all their property, including buildings, furniture, livestock and agricultural produce, with no compensation.

A year later Moscow abolished the Crimean Autonomous region and in-

Ukraine miners strike in Kryvyi Rih, win pay hikes



Independent Trade Union of Miners of Ukraine

After leading a May Day march through the city of Kryvyi Rih in eastern Ukraine, hundreds of miners from three large operations there took part in strikes and underground sit-ins demanding a wage increase of 50 percent. The actions, led by the Independent Trade Union of Miners of Ukraine (NPGU), started at the Kryvyi Rih Iron Ore Combine (KZRK), followed by sit-ins at Evraz Sukha Balka (ESB) and ArcelorMittal mines. A joint strike committee was set up, chaired by Yuri Samoilov, city organizer of the NPGU.

KZRK bosses offered an immediate 20 percent raise, follow by 30 percent in August, but threatened to close one of the mines to pay for it.

When more than 1,000 miners marched to the ArcelorMittal administration building May 11 for negotiations, company representatives fled. The workers occupied four floors, demanding talks begin.

Evraz Sukha Balka — owned by Russian multibillionaire Roman Abramovich — refused to negotiate. Workers from the mine and other ESB steel operations blocked access roads and stopped shipments to the plant May 10 while miners sat in underground. Young workers led the actions. Bosses agreed to a 20 percent raise beginning May 19, signed by both the NPGU and the former state-run Metallurgical and Mining Industry Workers Union of Ukraine.

— PATRICIA MARSHALL

corporated the peninsula into Russia proper. Stalin organized transfers of Russian nationals to replace the Tatars and deepen Russification in Crimea.

The vast majority of exiled Crimean Tatars ended up in special settlements in Uzbekistan, mostly women and children. The majority of adult Crimean Tatar men had not yet been discharged from the Red Army.

Soviet authorities then assigned the Crimean Tatars to work in mines, factories, cotton fields and industrial construction under dangerous, unhealthy conditions. They faced outbreaks of malaria, yellow fever and dysentery.

It was not until 1956 that the Stalinist regime allowed Crimean Tatars to leave

East Asia. But it took another 33 years to win the right to return to their homeland. In the early 1990s nearly 250,000 Tatars went back to Crimea, with no land or homes, facing discrimination and hostility.

The Tatars joined in the mass Maidan mobilizations that overthrew the pro-Moscow rule in Ukraine of Viktor Yanukovich in 2014. They were backed by the majority of Crimeans. But Moscow used the 16,000 troops they had based there on a long-term lease agreement with Kiev and a small gang of local thugs to take power. The Tatars have been in their sunsights ever since.

“We will never give up our struggle,” Dzhemilev told the *Militant* in 2015.

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THE MILITANT

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SWP drive over the top!

Continued from front page
party members in political activity. The party is sponsoring an Active Workers Conference in Oberlin, Ohio, June 15-17 to hear reports from SWP leaders on politics today, the Cuban Revolution and next steps in building the party. The gathering will feature a series of classes and social events.

Many decided to subscribe to the *Militant* and dig into the writings of party leaders on working-class politics — especially three books offered during the campaign at a discount: *The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record* and *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?* both by Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes, and *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?* by SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters.

The seven-week campaign ran concurrently with the Militant Fighting Fund to raise \$112,000 to finance the operating expenses of the *Militant*. As of May 23, \$93,081 had been received. The *Militant* is asking readers to kick in to help cover the cost of sending a reporting team to join in the celebrations in Puerto Rico marking freedom for Oscar López. All contributions to the fund received by May 30 will be counted. The final Militant Fighting Fund chart will appear next week.

Members of the Socialist Workers Party walked the picket lines with AT&T and DirecTV workers during a May 19-21 nationwide strike. Betsy Stone wrote that for many of the strikers in Oakland, California, this was their first time on a picket line. "I signed up to be in the union. Now I need to learn more about what a union is," Jose Ramirez, a line tech worker at DirecTV, told her. Two subscriptions and *The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record* were sold to strikers.

Going door to door the same weekend, SWP members built support for the strike. "Unions are important. I know because I worked at a big glass company, Owens, where we had to go on strike," said Charlotte Harris, at her door in Hayward, south of Oakland. At another door, a young Teamster driver purchased a subscription.

From Albany, New York, Jacob Perasso writes that SWP members attended a rally to support AT&T workers there. A 20-year-old with six months on the

job bought a subscription. Perasso spoke at the rally bringing solidarity from the campaign of Margaret Trowe, SWP candidate for Albany mayor.

Dominick Patrignani, president of International Electrical Workers-Communications Workers of America Local 81359 that struck Momentive near Albany, told the rally his union would back the strike. After the rally Perasso showed him a *Militant* article reporting on the strike by Idaho silver miners for safety and against Hecla Mining's concession demands. Patrignani read the whole article, saying the miners are "just like us" and deserve support. He bought a six-month subscription for the union.

Ruth Robinett writes that she visited Jennell Finley in South Philadelphia May 16 after meeting her two weeks earlier. "I love the *Militant*," Finley told her. "The only problem is it doesn't come out more often." Finley had picked up a subscription, along with a couple of books on revolutionary politics, at a May Day protest against deportations in Center City.

I've got a lot of experience, if not a lot of victories fighting for workers' rights on the job, she said. She worked at a poultry plant and, in Georgia where she



Militant/Linda Joyce

Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New York mayor, talks with high school student in San Juan, Puerto Rico, May 17 at celebration of release of Oscar López. Hart led SWP delegation to join in activities, extend solidarity with fight against U.S. colonial rule.

grew up, at an industrial bakery.

"We have to do something to make a change," Finley said. "Otherwise it will get worse." She got the three books on special and *Cuba and Angola: The War for Freedom* and said she would see party members again at the next Militant Labor Forum on the Cuban Revolution.

While the seven-week drive is over, the Socialist Workers Party and Com-

munist Leagues around the world will continue campaigning in working-class neighborhoods, walking strike picket lines with fellow workers, joining social protests and building the party. To learn more about the party and the Active Workers Conference, and to join with us, contact the party or league branches nearest you. See directory on page 8.

37,000 AT&T workers strike against boss demands

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in nearly a billion dollars a month in profit while cutting workers' paychecks. Rahul Godra, a retail worker, said his commissions were cut by 40 percent in the past year.

The striking AT&T workers belong to the Communications Workers of America, but because they work for separate divisions, they're covered by different contracts.

The majority are in the wireless division, including workers at retail stores and call centers. Many are young and were proud to be on a picket line for the first time in their lives. Their contract ran out in February and they are fighting against outsourcing to non-union contractors and for higher wages to make up for increased health insurance costs. AT&T also has call centers in other countries where it pays workers substantially less than in the U.S.

The strikers were joined on the picket

lines by workers in the AT&T wireline division in California, Nevada and Connecticut, which includes landline phone and internet service. These workers have been without a contract for over a year.

"At first I was not sure we should be out here with the mobile workers," said Gerry San Juan, a worker for four years in the landline division. "We had a meeting about it and I was convinced that we and the mobile workers are one. That when we support each other, we will all be better off."

"Things just get worse and worse," said Johanna Aldrich, a worker for 35 years in the wireline division. "They take one person's job and give different parts of it to others. They take the higher paid jobs and give them to lower paid people. They cut sick days and ask us to pay more for medical."

"We've gone for over a year without a contract. I am thinking we need to hit the company harder," said Marco Saha-

gun, a young wireline worker. Because of his four years with the company he is not in the lowest pay tier, he said, but he believes the divide-and-rule practice of paying new hires less was weakening the union.

"They make less, yet the new people have to pay more for medical," Sahagun said. "It's not right."

One of the demands being raised in the strike is to end the two-tier plan so new employees can afford health care with no increase in premiums.

"We have to pay \$300 a month for health care and a deductible of \$4,500," call center worker Dea Polchow said at the Chicago picket line May 21.

Workers in DirecTV in California and Nevada, bought by AT&T in 2015, also joined the strike. They voted to become members of the CWA, but have yet to win a first contract. "I'd like to see us get improvement on scheduling," said Jose Ramirez, who works out of the DirecTV yard in nearby San Leandro. "Only the senior guys get a weekend day off. And we don't know the schedules ahead enough to plan our lives."

In March 17,000 AT&T wireline workers went on a one-day strike in California and Nevada against management's practice of assigning work previously done by more experienced and higher paid employees to workers in lower pay classifications. The company backed down.

Betsy Farley in Chicago contributed to this article.

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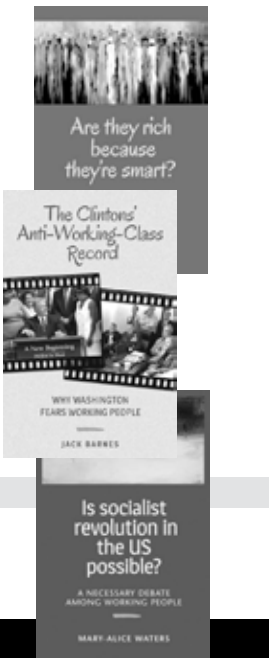
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‘Deplorables’: target of liberals

Continued from front page
sticks in their craw. What these ruling-class voices find irreconcilable are the millions of working people who voted for Trump. As *Washington Post* columnist Charles Lane complained May 4, “There hasn’t been nearly enough blaming of the people most responsible for [Trump’s] rise: his voters.”

The target isn’t simply working people who are victims of capitalism’s spreading carnage. The target is those (whatever their skin color or mother tongue) determined to find some way to say “no” to the never-ending assaults and indignities inflicted by the propertied ruling families on workers and farmers today.

These workers are drawn to the prospect of “draining the swamp” — cleaning out the growing federal bureaucracy of those who’ve found themselves a comfortable berth, as they contrive new ways to “nudge” and “regulate” us.

That’s why Trump won the 2016 election.

That’s shown, among other things, by the fact that in states like Pennsylvania, Ohio, Wisconsin, Iowa and others, Trump won the votes of workers — most of them Caucasian — who had cast ballots for Obama in more than 200 U.S. counties in 2008 and 2012. These workers were looking for a change from government as usual, from capitalism’s mounting blows over the prior eight years and more (as were many workers

who just stayed home on election day).

But Trump is a billionaire capitalist politician. Like those who came before him, he aims to serve the needs of the U.S. rulers abroad (arguably doing better so far than his two predecessors in advancing imperialism’s class interests), and at home (still very much a work in progress, from the standpoint of both exploiters’ parties).

Capitalists fear working people

The capitalists’ fear of working people didn’t begin in 2016. It’s been growing as the capitalist crisis deepens, and as more and more workers are open to the necessity of deep-going change. This includes growing openness by working people to explanations and proposals of Socialist Workers Party members who knock on their doors campaigning for communism, who fight alongside them at work and on picket lines, or who join them in protests against cop brutality or for a woman’s right to choose abortion.

Increasing numbers of workers are beginning to sense there is nothing the bosses can do to respond to the stagnation of capitalist production and trade apart from taking more of it out on us. A broad social crisis is unfolding, as a significant section of the working class has been pushed out of the workforce and working people confront deteriorating access to health care, an epidemic of drug addiction, and, for the first time in decades, falling life expectancy.

Obama’s contempt for working people is ‘colorblind’

Below is an excerpt from the chapter “Growing class stratification and the ‘enlightened meritocracy’” in Are They Rich Because They’re Smart: Class, Privilege and Learning Under Capitalism by Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes. Copyright © 2016 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

In comparison to other Democratic and Republican primary candidates, [Barack] Obama was cautious and disciplined during the [2008] campaign. He was determined not to let carelessness scotch his ambitions. That’s why his slips are revealing.

There were his widely publicized remarks at a fund-raiser in April 2008, for example, where he was speaking to a small group of supporters at a home in San Francisco’s exclusive Pacific Heights neighborhood. The Democratic candidate was so at ease in that company that he let down his guard. His class prejudices poured out for all to hear.

Working people in the small Pennsylvania towns where Obama had just been campaigning, he said, and in “a lot of small towns in the Midwest,” have been seeing job opportunities decline for a long time. “They fell throughout the Clinton administration, and the Bush administration, and each successive administration has said that somehow these communities are going to regenerate, and they have not. And it’s not surprising, then, they get bitter, they cling to guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren’t like them or anti-immigrant sentiment or anti-trade sentiment as a way to explain their frustrations.” ...

But Obama’s words in Pacific Heights registered more than just a momentary “slip.” That’s been confirmed time and again throughout his presidency. For ex-

ample, speaking in 2011 to another exclusive gathering of wealthy backers, this time in Brentwood, California, the Democratic president remarked contemptuously: “When I talk to ordinary folks, they are not always paying attention. If you ask them about Medicare, they’ll say, ‘I love that program but I wish government wouldn’t get involved in it.’”

During Obama’s January 2016 “State of the Union” address, with a thinly veiled observation about those attracted to Republican candidate Donald Trump, he said: “As frustration grows, there will be voices urging us to fall back into our respective tribes, to scapegoat fellow citizens who don’t look like us, or pray like us, or vote like we do, or share the same background.” (What “same background” do most workers, whatever our skin color, “share” with the big majority of those at top levels of the executive, judicial, and legislative branches of the US capitalist government today, and its proliferating “regulatory” agencies and bureaus?) ...



When it comes to workers who are Black, Obama’s attitudes are just as contemptuous, if not more so.

Take, for example, his remarks on Father’s Day in June 2008 at Chicago’s Apostolic Church of God, which has an overwhelmingly African American congregation. Much of the news coverage of that church service focused on the Democratic candidate’s remarks about absent fathers, but he said a lot more than that. He scolded members of the congregation not to “just sit in the house and watch ‘SportsCenter’.... Replace the video game or the remote control with a book once in a while.”

“Don’t get carried away with that eighth-grade graduation,” Obama said



Trump won workers’ votes in more than 200 counties — mostly Caucasian — that voted for Obama in 2008 and 2012. They were looking for change from capitalism’s mounting carnage.

That’s why Democratic and Republican politicians alike are taking steps to curtail the political rights working people use, and will need to use *more* in months and years ahead. The rulers are disenfranchising more and more workers by strengthening and expanding the bureaucratic and “regulatory” apparatuses of the capitalist government and state.

From the outset of Barack Obama’s primary bid in 2007, he and his Democratic administration demonstrated the same anti-working-class attitudes that led Hillary Clinton last year to demean those planning to vote for Trump, not for her, as “deplorables.” They are “offensive, hateful, and mean-spirited,”

Clinton said.

What’s more, those on Obama’s own “deplorables” list aren’t just Caucasian workers who, as he said in 2008, “cling to guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren’t like them.” In his sights are also millions of workers who are Black. African-Americans, Obama said that same year, need to “replace the video game or the remote control with a book once in a while.” And they should stop feeding their children “cold Popeyes” for breakfast. (See box.)

Both parties of the employing class are in the midst of crises and makeovers. Neither will ever be the same as they were prior to the 2016 elections.

More workers sense the accuracy of a political cartoon run during the election campaign. It depicted two neighbors with signs on their lawns reading, “He’s worse” and “She’s worse.”

Even if liberals now were somehow able to get Trump impeached, as the *Washington Post* recently acknowledged, there is no reason Trump supporters “would suddenly be satisfied again with the old Republican and Democratic parties.”

Saint Mueller

On May 16, Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein appointed former FBI Director Robert Mueller as special prosecutor, tasked with investigating alleged ties between Trump’s 2016 election campaign and Moscow. “My decision is not a finding that crimes have been committed or that any prosecution is warranted,” Rosenstein said.

The liberal press and top figures in both capitalist parties responded with fawning tribute to Mueller, practically elevating him to sainthood. But this former U.S. top cop built his reputation working for the capitalist ruling families to make their federal police agency more effective and virulent in spying and disruption.

The campaign against Trump has relied on classic frame-up techniques,

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—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

UNITED KINGDOM Manchester

Vote Communist League — Join the Communist League Campaign. Speaker: Peter Clifford, Communist League candidate for Manchester, Gorton constituency. Fri., June 2, 7 p.m. Donation: £2.50. Room 301, Hilton House, 26-28 Hilton St. M1 2EH. Tel.: (0161) 478-2496.

Calif. protesters demand ‘Don’t deport Hugo Mejia’

BY BETSEY STONE

SAN RAFAEL, Calif. — “The family of Hugo Mejia has been part of our community for over 15 years,” said Jessica Marker, an organizer of a rally of several hundred people here May 15 demanding the release of Mejia, who was jailed by Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents May 3.

Mejia, a 37-year-old father of three, was detained along with co-worker Rodrigo Nuñez when their IDs were checked at the guard post on the way to a construction job on Travis Air Force Base. Military police then called ICE.

ICE officials placed both men in expedited deportation proceedings without a court hearing, because they each have removal orders issued more than a decade ago for illegally crossing the border. Neither has any criminal record.

The staff and teachers at the Venetia Valley School, where one of the Mejia children is a student, joined with the Venetia Valley Family Center and the Congregation Rodef Sholom, a synagogue that is across the street from the school, to organize the rally. Hugo Mejia volunteered to help homeless families at the synagogue and was active in school programs with his family members.

“Don’t Deport Hugo,” “Hugo’s family, our family,” and “No more families torn apart,” were popular signs at the protest.

“We must remember that Hugo’s story is the same as many other fathers, mothers and families in our community,” Mejia’s wife Yadira Munguia told the crowd. “Let’s let this story of Hugo remind us that there are brothers and sisters in our community whose stories have not been heard. When someone is taken from us, it hurts us all. And there is a bigger political story to this — the unjust laws that don’t allow families to be respected

Rabbi Michael Lezak described the long-standing collaboration between

the synagogue and school across the street. When there was a bomb threat four months ago at the Brandeis Marin School associated with the synagogue, the Venetia Valley School opened its gym to the hundreds of children who were evacuated.

Congressman Jared Huffman told the rally his office has been flooded with calls and letters supporting the Mejia family.

Jessica Marker, who works with the Venetia Valley Family Center, and other supporters of Mejia delivered a petition with 1,500 signatures to the San Francisco ICE office asking he be released and granted a court hearing to challenge his deportation.



Militant/Betsy Stone

Rally in San Rafael, California, May 15 demands Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency release construction worker Hugo Mejia. Photo shows Mejia and wife Yadira Munguia.

Striking long-haul truckers in Russia step up fight

BY JIM BRADLEY

After an almost two-month strike by thousands of long-haul truckers seeking to force the federal government to cancel boosts to an onerous highway tax, the Russian Carriers Union is organizing columns of trucks to converge on Moscow May 20-21 to demand the government make significant concessions.

The mobilization is taking place in advance of a meeting called to discuss their demands between the union and the Presidential Council on Human Rights.

“If we are not listened to at [the] meeting, then the strike will enter a new stage,” truckers’ union President Andrey Bazhutin said at a Moscow press conference May 6.

Since the strike began March 27 more than 30,000 drivers in 60 cities and 80 regions parked their trucks and joined the walkout for periods of time. Despite a press blackout in Russia and harassment by cops and National Guard troops, the strikers stood their ground. Five have been imprisoned

Strikers forced to return to work to feed their families have spread word about their fight along their routes,

worked to build new branches of their union, and have indicated they will park their trucks again if Moscow doesn’t respond.

The Plato fees system, as it is called, was first introduced by the federal government in 2015, over trucker protests. The government claims it is necessary to pay for highway maintenance. It imposes a levy of the ruble equivalent of about 4 cents per mile on trucks weighing more than 12 tons.

In January the government announced plans to double the tax. Truckers said they would strike. Three days before the walkout Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said the tax increase would be lowered.

The drivers went on strike anyway. Their determination to fight is fueled by suspicions of corruption. The government contracted out collecting the tax to a private company owned by the son of one of Russian President Vladimir Putin’s wealthy business cronies.

“We pay and pay everywhere, and that’s it,” owner-operator trucker Magomed Ibragimov told the *Washington Post* April 21. “I no longer see the point of working.” Ibragimov said he

drives 62,000 miles a year, so his taxes would add up to \$3,400. His annual income is \$6,500, so the tax, on top of fuel and maintenance costs, means he would lose money by working.

Farmers, despite the difficulty the strike causes in getting their produce to market, have expressed support for the truckers. Government officials recently suggested that the tax might also be applied to long-distance bus drivers, raising the possibility of these workers joining the strike.

The strike is taking place at the same time thousands of protesters took to the streets of Moscow May 14 demanding an end to city government plans to tear down entire neighborhoods of apartment buildings. While officials say residents will be able to return when new homes are built in their place, many don’t believe it. Property prices in the area are soaring and many workers think the new housing will go to the wealthy.

“We understand that we live in a city where everything is done for profit,” Fyodor Markushevich told the *Guardian*.

Some truckers say they will join the housing protests.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



June 5, 1992

The war between rival bureaucracies in Yugoslavia for control of land and resources has created the largest number of refugees in Europe since World War II. Since the start of the fighting 10 months ago, more than 1.3 million people have fled their homes. At least 700,000 people have become homeless in the last month alone.

Conservatives and liberals alike in the United States are trying to use the deepening conflict in Yugoslavia to push for U.S. economic sanctions and military intervention, while they say nothing about granting asylum to the war’s refugees.

One of the reasons Washington has been unable to act is because of the rivalries between imperialist governments. Forecasts of a “united” Western Europe have instead been replaced by the image of a hopelessly divided European Community.



June 5, 1967

UNITED NATIONS, May 22 — “Some representatives have asked what must be done to safeguard peace,” Alarcon de Quesada, Cuban ambassador to the UN, said.

“We would reply, ask the Vietnamese people. They have tenaciously resisted the ruthlessness of an active aggression.

“We would say, ask the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America who are fighting to conquer their independence. We would say, ask the people who have been fighting tooth and nail to put an end to the final strongholds of colonialism...

“It would try the patience of us to hear the representatives of the imperialist government of the United States who speak so pompously of peace while half a million Yankee aggressors are endeavoring to enslave the South Vietnamese people.”

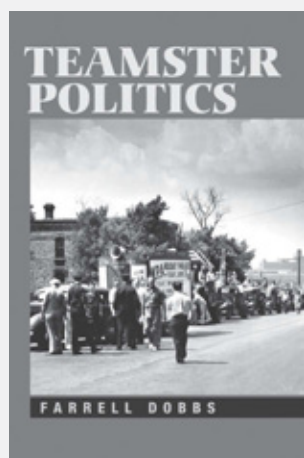


June 6, 1942

War conditions — the speed-up, as well as the lengthened hours of work — have reversed the downward trend of the tuberculosis death rate.

United States Surgeon General Thomas Parran has issued a sharp warning about the seriousness of the workers’ health problems. Shifts should not be rotated more often than once every 2 or 3 months. At least one day in seven should be reserved for rest and recreation; organized rest periods during the work day should be introduced; paid vacations of at least one or two weeks a year should be given to workers; high standards of lighting and ventilation should be maintained.

Profit-hungry monopolists do not guard their workers effectively. Only the militant action of the trade unions can protect the health of industrial workers in this emergency.



“Unionism and politics cannot be separated. Power generated at the trade union level can be shattered by government blows. Workers must enter the political arena as an independent class force, with their own party.”

— Farrell Dobbs

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US out of Guantánamo now!

Continued from front page

rialism's aggressions around the world.

The more than 200 participants in the May 4-6 conference came from 32 countries. It was organized by the Cuban Movement for Peace and Sovereignty of the Peoples (MovPaz), the World Peace Council and the Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP) and took place in Guantánamo, the capital of this eastern Cuban province.

In addition to substantial Cuban participation, there were large delegations from the U.S. and Canada.

Among U.S. participants, many of whom had joined hundreds of thousands of Cubans marching in Havana on May Day, were members of anti-war organizations and political groups, including Veterans for Peace; the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; individuals from Cuba solidarity coalitions in Chicago, Minneapolis, New York City and Albany, New York; Code Pink; and the Socialist Workers Party.

Other international delegates included Samuel Wanitsch, chairman of the Swiss-Cuba Association; Daniel Ortega Reyes, president of the Party of Christian Unity in Nicaragua and Nicaraguan deputy to the Central American parliament; Aleida Centeno Rodríguez, member of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party; and two delegates from Okinawa, Japan, where residents have long protested the U.S. military base there.

Movpaz President Silvio Platero Yrola chaired the sessions, which opened with talks by José Ramón Balaguer, member of the secretariat of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party and head of the party's Department of International Relations; Nancy Acosta Hernández, president of the Assembly of People's Power in Guantánamo province; Maria do Socorro Gomes, president of the World Peace Council, who hails from Brazil; and others.

The U.S. occupation of Cuban territory here "is a blow to the legitimate national interests of Cubans and is a moral affront and aggression against the country and its sovereignty," said Manuel Carbonell Vidal, vice rector of the Raúl Roa García Institute of International Relations in Havana, at the opening session.

"There can be no 'normal' relations between the two countries so long as Washington occupies sovereign territory of the Republic of Cuba," said a statement submitted to the seminar by Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of New York, and Maggie Trowe, SWP mayoral candidate in Albany. Both attended the con-

ference. From the SWP's widespread campaigning door to door in workers' districts, they said, "We can attest to the possibility of winning the political battle to convince the majority of U.S. working people that the U.S. government should get out of Guantánamo now and end its economic, financial, and commercial war against Cuba forthwith."

The Committee for the Defense of the Revolution and residents of the Villa Toa neighborhood of Guantánamo invited delegates for a lively evening of salsa dancing May 4, a spread of tropical fruit and an opportunity to ask residents about life in Cuba.

We told retired cook Adis Martínez the U.S. rulers say most Cubans didn't support socialism or historic Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro, who died last November. "No, we like it here," she replied. "We're very sad that Fidel died. But other generations are ready to defend the revolution."

The visit to Caimanera was a moving experience. As our buses entered the bustling town, people lined the streets to welcome us. From a hill nearby delegates could see the U.S. base's administration buildings, telecommunications domes, and two giant American flags, a daily reminder of Washington's unending campaign against the Cuban people and their socialist revolution.

"I had thought the U.S. base was out in some remote uninhabited place," said Veterans for Peace leader Patrick McCann, who lives in Miami. "It's right in the middle of a populated area!"

While Cubans are now allowed to move some supply ships through the portion of Guantánamo Bay occupied by the U.S. Navy to the ocean, they are denied all other access, including to ex-



Militant/Maggie Trowe

On bus from Guantánamo to Havana, Yania Marrero, left, veteran of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces, discusses with Monisha Rios, at far right, a member of U.S. Veterans for Peace, differences between imperialist army — tasked with advancing Washington's exploitation worldwide — and Cuban forces, organized to defend Cuba's socialist revolution.

cellent fishing grounds.

On a cross-island bus ride delegates got to visit a number of sites memorializing the revolutionary struggle in Cuba. In Santiago de Cuba they went to the cemetery where José Martí, leader of the 19th century struggle against Spanish colonial domination, and Fidel Castro are buried. They visited the Moncada Barracks, where on July 26, 1953, Castro led a group of revolutionaries in the assault that opened the struggle against U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista, an effort that grew into a mass revolutionary movement that triumphed in 1959.

During the journey Veterans for Peace member Monisha Rios and Yania Marrero, an ICAP representative and veteran of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces, exchanged experi-

ences that highlighted the differences between an army structured to defend the revolutionary rule of workers and farmers and one organized to defend Washington's imperialist interests against the people of the world.

"Basic training was physically demanding, crawling through fields and woods, learning how to handle weapons, but it made me stronger," Marrero said. "Here in Cuba we prepare for what we call the War of the Entire People, so that everyone in the country is ready in case of an invasion."

Rios explained why she had joined the U.S. Army. "I was poor and I wanted to get some skills I could use to get a job," she said. "I guess I believed what the government says, that the U.S. Army defends democracy. But I learned that's a lie."

Canada brigade members experience Cuban Revolution

BY JOE YOUNG

VANCOUVER British Columbia — Thirty-four people from Canada joined the 25th Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade to Cuba April 28 to May 12. The Canadian Network on Cuba organized the trip in cooperation with the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP). The aim of the brigade is for participants to learn about the accomplishments of Cuba's socialist revolution and become better prepared to organize opposition to the ongoing U.S. economic war against the Cuban people.

An important part of this year's brigade was participation in a conference against foreign military bases that discussed building activities to demand the U.S. get out of Guantánamo.

Brigade members joined in the May Day march in Holguín in eastern Cuba. Some 200,000 workers organized by their unions took part to demonstrate their support for their revolution.

The brigade also visited the provinces of Santiago and Guantánamo, engaging in a wide range of discussions with students, workers, farmworkers, artists, soldiers, medical workers and others.

They met with leaders of the Central Union of Cuban Workers (CTC), Union of Young Communists, Federation of Cuban Students (FEU), Federation of Cuban Women, Union of Cuban Writers and Artists, delegates to the provincial and national assemblies, and the Com-

batientes Association, whose members are retired combatants of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba.

Brigadistas also did voluntary work, including weeding vegetable gardens.

At a meeting with the FEU at the University of Holguín, one brigade member asked what the organization is doing to protest Washington's campaign against the government of Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela.

"The president of the FEU participated in the recent meeting of ALBA in Havana to defend Venezuela," said Rosalina Gretel Ramírez González, the campus president of FEU. ALBA is an alliance of a number of Latin American governments, including Cuba and Venezuela. "We discuss the situation in class and express our firm support," said Ramírez.

Another question centered on the U.S. occupation of Guantánamo.

"It is illegally occupied. They are taking a part of us," Isney Fonseca Mendoza, a student at the Alcibiades Blanco Mejías High School at San Benito de Mayari in Guantánamo province, answered. "There is a U.S. prison there where people are killed and tortured."

The brigade met with a dozen members of the Combatientes Association, all of whom had been workers or peasants before the revolution from the Second Front Municipality — a large area in Santiago province that was liberated from the dictatorship and where

a revolutionary government was established before the seizure of power in Havana. The retired military representatives told us they meet every week with area youth to discuss the politics and history of the revolution.

On May 7, brigadistas met with Cuban border guards who defend their country's frontier around the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo. Half were women, reflecting the composition of the border guards as a whole. A soldier named Isley said their purpose was "defending our sovereignty and the conquests of the revolution, and we request the support of the rest of the world."

Mishan Pastitshi, 16, the youngest participant in the brigade, is an Innu, one of Canada's indigenous nations. "I like it way better than our country," he told the *Militant*. "Here people are united together. The houses might not look too great, but they have each other. And they don't have to pay tuition and health care."

Vera Oriava said she heard about the trip from some friends who had been on previous brigades. "Cuba is everything I wish Canada was. Health and education is the primary focus, she said. Asked what she will do after getting back to Canada, Oriava said, "I will tell people how amazing Cuba is and work to dispel the propaganda against the revolution that permeates our society."

All the brigade participants intend to do the same.

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution

By Jack Barnes, National Secretary, Socialist Workers Party



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‘Fight to end colonial rule’

Continued from front page

López, other independence fighters who had spent time in U.S. prisons, a lively contingent of the group “35 Women for Oscar” — both from here and from New York — and students on strike at the University of Puerto Rico. Also bringing solidarity was a delegation from the Socialist Workers Party headed by Osborne Hart, SWP candidate for mayor of New York.

“There are two things I know how to do — fight and work,” López replied when asked about his plans.

He said he will visit all 78 towns and cities across the island to listen to what people have to say, both about the catastrophic conditions Puerto Ricans face today under U.S. colonial rule and how best to free themselves from it.

That afternoon more than 2,000 people turned out for a celebration of his release.

Thanks supporters worldwide

In face of a growing international campaign for López’s release, President Barack Obama commuted his sentence May 17 just before leaving office.

López thanked the Human Rights Committee in Puerto Rico and the U.S.-based National Boricua Human Rights Network for their years of persistent work, as well as “35 Women for Oscar,” which held monthly rallies in San Juan, New York and Chicago to demand the U.S. government free him.

He expressed gratitude for the support of unions, community organizations, and others around the world, including the governments of Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua and “very especially Cuba.” He made special mention of the five Cuban revolutionaries who also spent years in U.S. prisons on frame-up charges.

López received congratulations by phone from Fernando González, one of the Cuban Five and now president of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP). González had shared a cell with him for more than four years in Terre Haute, Indiana.

Cuban President Raúl Castro sent him a message saying, “History will not forget your steadfastness and loyalty to the cause of independence of Puerto Rico, which is essential for Our America.” López will visit Cuba in November.

Oscar López was born in Puerto Rico and moved to Chicago when he was 14. Drafted into the U.S. Army, he was sent to fight in Washington’s war against Vietnam, an experience that he said “transformed me.” After returning to Chicago he joined protests against cop brutality, job discrimination, and poor housing, and for bilingual education. He became committed to the fight to free Puerto Rico from U.S. colonial rule.

López was among a group of inde-

pendence fighters who in 1980–81 were arrested and accused of being members of the Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN), which took credit for bombings of U.S. businesses with ties to Puerto Rico. He was sentenced to 55 years of prison on trumped-up charges, including “seditious conspiracy.” Subsequently a court increased his sentence to 70 years.

Resistance to growing colonial crisis

At the press conference the independence fighter condemned “the criminal junta” — the U.S. government-imposed Fiscal Oversight and Management Board — that has dictatorial powers over Puerto Rico’s budget. Its job is to maximize payment on the \$74 billion debt owed to wealthy bondholders.

Over the past decade the Puerto Rican government has laid off 30,000 public employees, hiked sales taxes, frozen public workers’ wages and closed schools. The health care system is on the verge of collapse, with brutal cuts in Medicaid funding and an exodus of doctors and nurses to the United States.

López denounced “the local elite that has helped Washington and Wall Street run the colony since 1898, when the U.S. government militarily invaded and occupied Puerto Rico, to the present day.”

“What quality of life do the colonialists offer the people?” he asked. “All they know how to do is to squeeze the last dollar from the pockets of every Puerto Rican who works and sweats for our country.”

He saluted the students at the University of Puerto Rico who have been on strike since the end of March to oppose projected cuts of \$450 million — a third of the university’s budget.

The independence fighter called for the unity of all those working for the decolonization of Puerto Rico, both on the island and among the growing numbers of Puerto Ricans living in the United States.

Oscar López in Chicago: US colonialism is a crime

BY NAOMI CRAINE

CHICAGO — “I have struggled against colonialism because it is a crime against humanity,” Oscar López Rivera told more than 500 people who gathered in Humboldt Park here to welcome him back to Chicago May 18. “The Puerto Rican people have a right to struggle for their freedom.”

The celebration included a parade, renaming a street to honor López and the Humboldt Park rally.

The Puerto Rican independence fighter was released from 36 years of imprisonment the day before. López lived here before his arrest, fighting to improve conditions in the Puerto Rican

Socialist Workers Party brings solidarity to Puerto Rico



Militant/Linda Joyce

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of New York, headed a party delegation to Puerto Rico, including Martín Koppel and Linda Joyce, to join the celebrations of Oscar López’s release.

“This is a victory not only for the people of Puerto Rico but for working people in the U.S. and worldwide,” Hart told Venezuela-based TeleSur. “I am also here to express our solidarity with the protests against the junta, the striking university students, and

the broader struggle to free Puerto Rico from the U.S. colonial boot.”

Hart said he would tell workers in the U.S. what he had learned about “our common interests with fellow working people in Puerto Rico.”

During his four-day visit, Hart spoke at a campus meeting with protesting students at the University of Puerto Rico. The socialists met with longtime independence fighter Rafael Cancel Miranda and with leaders of the Puerto Rican Workers Union (SPT). They went door to door in Buen Consejo, meeting workers in San Juan. Above, Hart talks with pharmacy worker María Rodríguez in Buen Consejo.

— MARTÍN KOPPEL

The afternoon “Welcome Home Oscar” rally filled the Río Piedras square. It was a festive event, with performances by Andy Montañez, Roy Brown and other musicians. It closed with brief remarks by López and longtime independentista Rafael Cancel Miranda, who read a poem entitled “*No me arrepiento*” (I have no regrets).

The following day López flew to Chicago to take part in celebrations there, and then back to Puerto Rico, where he was welcomed in San Sebastián, the rural town where he was born. The town hall meeting drew veteran Nationalists, younger independence fighters and activists in the fight to stop coal ash contamination in the town of Peñuelas.

Accompanied by his brother and sisters, López was welcomed by the town’s mayor, Javier Jiménez, of the pro-statehood New Progressive Party. The mayor’s presence underscored the breadth of support won in the fight for López’s freedom.

López told the crowd that Puerto Ricans are told the island is too small and lacking in natural resources to become a sovereign nation. “But our principal resource is the human beings” of Puerto Rico, who have demonstrated their ability to create and to fight, he said.

The fight for Puerto Rico’s independence is strengthened by international struggles, he noted. “It’s part of the fight for a better world.”

Welcome Puerto Rico Freedom Fighter Oscar López! End U.S. Colonial Rule!

Upcoming events

Sun., May 28 — 4 p.m. Mujeres de la Puente, **San Juan, Puerto Rico**

Wed., May 31 — 7 p.m. program, St. John’s Presbyterian Church, **Berkeley, Calif.**

Thurs., June 8 — 7 p.m. Hostos Community College, **Bronx, New York City**

June 8 to 11— other events in NYC include June 11 Puerto Rican Day Parade

Sat., June 17 — **Chicago** Grand Marshal Puerto Rican Day Parade

Mon., June 19 — Oscar speaks at **UN Hearing on Decolonization in NY**

Mon., Sept. 18 — 7 p.m. Taller Puertorriqueño **Philadelphia**

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movement for independence — both in Puerto Rico and the United States — dating back to the 1930s. They have released some of the more than 1.5 million pages of spy files they gathered with information on some 75,000 people dubbed “political subversives.”

Speakers at the events included Rep. Luis Gutierrez; Alderman Roberto Maldonado; José López, executive director of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center and Oscar’s brother; and Danette Sokacich, principal of the Pedro Albizu Campos High School, named in honor of the historic leader of the fight against U.S. colonial rule. Dozens of students from the school, which López helped found in the 1970s, attended the event.

Local participants in the May Day International Brigade to Cuba joined the parade, carrying a banner reading “End the U.S. economic war against Cuba now! U.S. out of Guantánamo now!”

“Oscar never broke and kept his humanity,” Edwin López, who came from Milwaukee, told the *Militant*. “He’s an inspiration to many.” Some people came from as far as Orlando, Florida.

Laura Anderson from Chicago contributed to this article.

Class solidarity built on fight against national oppression

Lenin's Final Fight, Speeches and Writings, 1922-23, is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for May. In what was to be his last political battle, Vladimir Lenin — central leader of the world's first socialist revolution — fought to keep the Bolshevik Party on the revolutionary course that had brought workers and peasants to power in October 1917 against growing attacks by an increasingly entrenched bureaucratic layer led by Joseph Stalin.

Lenin fought to maintain the voluntary character of any union of proletarian Russia and the oppressed peoples of the former czarist empire.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

In December 1922 Lenin dictated notes on key questions before the 12th Congress of the Russian Communist Party, then planned for March 1923. The excerpt below, from Dec. 31, 1922, focused on the debate on the national question. Copyright © 1995 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY V. I. LENIN

In my writings on the national question I have already said that an abstract presentation of the question of nationalism in general is of no use at all. A distinction must necessarily be made between the nationalism of an oppressor



V. I. Lenin, central leader of the Bolshevik Party, led fight in defense of oppressed nationalities.

nation and that of an oppressed nation, the nationalism of a big nation and that of a small nation.

In respect of the second kind of nationalism we, nationals of a big nation, have nearly always been guilty, in historic practice, of an infinite number of cases of violence; furthermore, we commit violence and insult an infinite number of times without noticing it. It is sufficient to recall my Volga reminiscences of how non-Russians are treated; how the Poles are not called by any other name than Polyachishka, how the Tatar is nicknamed Prince, how the Ukrainians are always Khokhols and the Georgians and other Caucasian nationals always Kapkasians.

That is why internationalism on the part of oppressors or "great" nations, as they are called (though they are great only in their violence, only great as Derzhimordas)* must consist not only in the observance of the formal equality of nations but even in an inequality, through which the oppressor nation, the great nation, would compensate for the inequality which obtains in real life. Anybody who does not understand this has not grasped the real proletarian attitude to the national question; he is still

* Derzhimorda, a policeman in the play *The Government Inspector* by Russian writer Nikolay Gogol, came to personify the rude, arrogant state functionary.

essentially petty bourgeois in his point of view and is, therefore, sure to descend to the bourgeois point of view.

What is important for the proletarian? For the proletarian it is not only important, it is absolutely essential that he should be assured that the non-Russians place the greatest possible trust in the proletarian class struggle. What is needed to ensure this? Not merely formal equality. In one way or another, by one's attitude or by concessions, it is necessary to compensate the non-Russians for the lack of trust, for the suspicion and the insults to which the government of the "dominant" nation subjected them in the past.

I think it is unnecessary to explain this to Bolsheviks, to Communists, in greater detail. And I think that in the present instance, as far as the Georgian nation is concerned, we have a typical case in which a genuinely proletarian attitude makes profound caution, thoughtfulness, and a readiness to compromise a matter of necessity for us. The Georgian who is disdainful of this aspect of the question, or who carelessly flings about accusations of "nationalist socialism" (whereas he himself is a real and true "nationalist socialist" and even a vulgar Great Russian Derzhimorda), violates, in substance, the interests of proletarian class solidarity, for nothing holds up the development and strengthening of proletarian class solidarity so much as national injustice. "Offended" nationals

are not sensitive to anything so much as to the feeling of equality and the violation of this equality, if only through negligence or jest to the violation of that equality by their proletarian comrades. That is why in this case it is better to overdo rather than underdo the concessions and leniency towards the national minorities. That is why, in this case, the fundamental interest of proletarian solidarity and consequently of the proletarian class struggle requires that we never adopt a formal attitude to the national question, but always take into account the specific attitude of the proletarian of the oppressed (or small) nation towards the oppressor (or great) nation. ...

The harm that can result to our state from a lack of unification between the national apparatuses and the Russian apparatus is infinitely less than that which will be done not only to us but to the whole International and to the hundreds of millions of the peoples of Asia, which are destined to follow us onto the stage of history in the near future.

It would be unpardonable opportunism if, on the eve of the debut of the East, just as it is awakening, we undermined our prestige with its peoples, even if only by the slightest crudity or injustice towards our own non-Russian nationalities. The need to rally against the imperialists of the West, who are defending the capitalist world, is one thing. There can be no doubt about that and it would be superfluous for me to speak about my unconditional approval of it. It is another thing when we ourselves lapse, even if only in trifles, into imperialist attitudes towards oppressed nationalities, thus undermining all our principled sincerity, all our principled defense of the struggle against imperialism. But the morrow of world history will be a day when the awakening peoples oppressed by imperialism are finally aroused and the decisive long and hard struggle for their liberation begins.

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COMMUNIST LEAGUE STATEMENT

Oppose UK rulers' assault on rights

Continued from front page

Conservative, Labour and other bourgeois candidates contesting for Parliament suspended partisan campaigning. Theresa May stated that “our values, our country, and our way of life will always prevail.” But the working class shares no common values and no way of life with the rulers — we face social devastation at home, attacks on rights, scapegoating of Muslims and wars abroad.

The rulers have deployed troops and armed cops on the streets. In France President Emmanuel Macron says he will once again extend the 18-month-long state of emergency, under which demonstrations have been banned and police raids against immigrants have been stepped up. Washington has moved to impose travel restrictions on people from predominantly Muslim countries.

The government has announced plans to strengthen its Prevent strategy. Set up in 2005, this requires local councils, schools and health services to report anyone they think voices “extremist views.” Labour’s Jeremy Corbyn complained this is focused on Muslims, but instead of calling for it to be shut down, he calls for Prevent to target everyone. La-

bour and Tories are vying in the election campaign for who will build up the police the most.

The rulers in London — and in Washington — have rained terror on working people worldwide: in Ireland, in Hiroshima, in Vietnam, in the Middle East and much more.

They are driven to attack our political rights today because they fear that the carnage the crisis of their capitalist system is bringing down on working people is leading us toward struggle — class struggle. Islamic State is a reactionary anti-working-class outfit. It falsely claims to act in the name of Muslims, instilling fear and divisions among working people. It fills the vacuum created by the disasters for working people wrought by the seemingly endless imperialist “regime change” wars in the Middle East — wars that are an extension of the capitalist rulers’ assault on working people at home.

Working people need an independent road forward, rejecting any idea that we have common class interests with the capitalist rulers. We need to build solidarity and unity. Join the Communist League to build a revolutionary party to lead the fight for workers power.

‘Deplorable’ workers target of liberals’ fury

Continued from page 4

slapping together lurid allegations and innuendos, in hopes some will stick.

Workers, including those targeted by the bosses for union or political activity, are all too familiar with this kind of witch-hunting. Vanguard working-class fighters, including members and leaders of the Socialist Workers Party, have been railroaded to prison, beaten up, or threatened with deportation when such inquisitions pick up speed.

All this is reinforced by endless lewd and vulgar “comedy” on late-night talk shows slurring Trump, including demeaning, anti-women comments about his daughter Ivanka and wife Melania. Morning “news” shows pick right up where the foul-mouthed “comics” left off.

Disenfranchising working class

Political servants of the U.S. propertied families — especially the liberal think tank, university, foundation, nongovernment organizations and other middle-class and professional meritocrats who buttress bourgeois rule — are finding more ways for the government to dilute workers’ use of the franchise.

There is no better example right now than the U.S. rulers’ new special prosecutor.

In Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein’s memo on Comey’s conduct, Rosenstein recounts how the former FBI director baldly usurped the authority of the Justice Department and refused to acknowledge it.

“At most,” Rosenstein says, Comey “should have said the FBI had completed its investigation and presented its findings. ... The Director now defends his decision by asserting that he believed Attorney General Loretta Lynch had a conflict. But the FBI Director is never empowered to supplant federal prosecutors and assume command of the Justice Department.”

Republicans had urged Lynch to step aside from the investigation, after former President Bill Clinton flagrantly maneuvered to compromise her by walking onto her plane as it waited on the tarmac at Phoenix’s Sky Harbor International Airport in June 2016. Rather than telling Clinton to take a hike, Lynch proceeded to talk for 30 minutes with the husband of a candidate under investigation by the “Justice Department” that she herself was in charge of.

The working class has no stake in who heads up the cop agencies and other government bodies that serve the interests of the capitalist class. These are *their* tools to defend the rule of the propertied ruling families. But workers have plenty of experience with FBI frame-ups and disruption of struggles against exploitation, racism and imperialist war.

In his investigation into the Trump campaign, former FBI head Mueller has the power to compel wit-

nesses to testify, and to impanel a grand jury, which meets behind closed doors interrogating individuals with no right to counsel alongside them. He won’t be responsible to any elected body.

Nothing new

Liberals have always been the first to move against workers’ rights, and then, when the employing class finds it necessary, capitalist rulers turn to the thugs of the ultra-right to carry their assault on workers to the end.

The McCarthyite witch-hunt in the 1950s was set up under the administration of Democrat Harry Truman.

It was the Democratic administration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt that initiated the FBI’s assault on class-struggle-minded union militants and opponents of Washington’s entry into the Second World War, leading to the frame-up and imprisonment of 18 leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and the Midwest Teamsters union under the notorious Smith “Gag” act.

Today the middle-class left and liberal groups increasingly blame workers — most of whom they consider ignorant, racist, xenophobic, and dangerous — for derailing what they consider “progressive politics.”

Many are circulating posters and bumper stickers saying “Impeach Trump,” while some furtively post flyers reading “Kill Trump.” Many celebrate the breaking up of meetings in Berkeley, California, and Middlebury, Vermont, closing down political space so necessary for workers and workers’ organizations to organize and act under conditions of capitalist rule.

And when a witch-hunt against working people opens up in bourgeois politics, it rapidly bumps into the communist vanguard.

It is the two Democrats on the Federal Election Commission, for example, who dealt a blow to workers’ rights when they defeated the extension of the Socialist Workers Party’s exemption from campaign disclosure laws last month.

That action by these liberal federal “regulators” gave a freer hand to government and right-wing spying and harassment of the SWP and other workers’ organizations.

Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun

by Jack Barnes

In *New International* no. 12

“One of capitalism’s infrequent long winters has begun. Accompanied by imperialism’s accelerating drive toward war, it’s going to be a long, hot winter.” \$16. Also in Spanish, French, Swedish, Greek, Farsi, Arabic.

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Ankara’s thugs attack DC Kurdish protesters

BY ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s hostility to the rising national struggle of the Kurdish people spilled over into the streets here May 16. His security thugs and armed backers of the Turkish regime brutally attacked a peaceful demonstration of 15 Kurds and others near the Turkish ambassador’s Washington residence, injuring nine, some severely.

Earlier in the day, some 75 protested Erdogan’s state visit outside the White House, where he was meeting with President Donald Trump. They carried signs demanding freedom for Selahattin Demirtas and Figen Yuksekdag — jailed leaders of the Kurdish-based Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) — called for an end to Ankara’s repression of the Kurds in Turkey, and protested his regime’s recent bombing of Kurdish liberation fighters in Syria and Iraq.

Lucy Usoyan of the Ezidi Relief Fund, who was beaten in the head and back and suffered a concussion, told the *Militant* that 40 to 50 supporters of Erdogan’s ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) were outside the ambassador’s residence when the protesters arrived from the White House.

The attack began when Erdogan’s motorcade arrived at the residence. A video widely posted on the media shows Erdogan speaking to an aide. “He says attack,” someone says in Turkish. Seconds later the assault began.

“The AKP supporters began cursing and screaming, so we moved to the grass to put some distance between us,” Usoyan said. “Erdogan’s thugs in black suits and others in khaki pants, who were armed, charged and beat us. This cannot go unanswered.”

The Turkish Embassy responded by trying to turn the victims into the criminals, claiming Erdogan’s security detail acted in self-defense and terrorist-baiting the protesters. Its statement falsely said the violence was caused by “groups affiliated with the PKK [Kurdistan Workers Party], which the U.S. and Turkey have designated as a terrorist organization.”

Ankara threatens Kurds in Syria

Before the attack Erdogan met with Trump, who praised the Turkish ruler as a strong ally in the fight against Islamic State and PKK “terrorism.”

On his return to Turkey, Erdogan announced he was extending Ankara’s state of emergency indefinitely. The clampdown is aimed at silencing his domestic opponents, above all the 15 million nationally oppressed Kurds who make up 20 percent of the population of Turkey.

The state of emergency was declared in July 2016 following a failed coup led by a section of the Turkish military. Since then Erdogan won an April constitutional referendum by a thin majority, giving him presidential powers to rule virtually by decree. Tens of thousands have been jailed in the purge.

HDP elected officials and others have been targeted with frame-up “terrorism” charges. Erdogan says he is considering bringing back the death penalty.

Ankara has denounced the U.S. military’s alliance with the Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG), which leads the Syrian Democratic Forces in the offensive to capture the Syrian city of Raqqa from Islamic State. He claims the YPG like IS is a terrorist organization and has threatened to bomb YPG fighters again.

Ankara fears that YPG advances will inspire the Kurdish struggle in Turkey. Washington has tried to allay Erdogan’s fears. The U.S.-YPG alliance is “temporary, transactional and tactical,” State Department official Jonathan Cohen said May 17. “We have not promised the YPG anything. We have the YPG because they are the only force on the ground ready to act in the short term. That is where it stops,” he said.

‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

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