

Defend reproductive justice for women!



Susan Walsh / AP

By CHRISTINE MARIE

"The most significant abortion rights case in a generation." "The greatest threat to reproductive justice in 25 years." These are just a few of the headlines to the many articles providing background to the news that on March 2, 2016, the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in *Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt*. Such claims are absolutely valid and accurately describe at the threat to women's lives that is currently posed by attempts to restrict access to abortion in dozens of states.

In the next few months, the Supreme Court will decide whether or not a 2013 Texas law called HB 2, which would leave only about 10 of the state's 44 clinics open if upheld, is constitutional. HB2 requires clinic doctors to hold admitting privileges at nearby hospitals and requires the clinics themselves to meet the same standards as ambulatory surgical centers.

While the legislators who crafted this bill claim to have women's well-being in mind, the American Medical Association and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists agree with abortion rights advocates that the restrictions would endanger women's health by denying women the benefit of "well-researched, safe, and proven protocols."

The absurdity of the right-wing claim that abortion is a dangerous procedure is highlighted in a re-

port crafted by the Texas Policy Evaluation Project (TexPEP). Project researcher Dr. Daniel Grossman explained to MSNBC that while there has not been an abortion-related death in Texas since 2008, each year about 100 state women die due to complications related to pregnancy and childbirth. According to an authoritative study published by the University of California, San Francisco in 2014, the rate of major complications from abortion is less than ¼ of one percent, or about the same rate as one would expect from complications from a colonoscopy.

Despite the lack of any scientific basis for the Texas legislation, if the Supreme Court rules in favor of Hellerstedt, or ties 4-4 on the case, a lower court ruling upholding the Texas regulations would prevail, nearly identical rules in 10 states would be validated, and the door opened wide for the quick implementation of these onerous attacks nationwide.

On March 4, the Supreme Court temporarily blocked implementation of an "admitting-privileges" law that would close all but one clinic in Louisiana, a state of 4.7 million people. That temporary block has buoyed hopes that the Supreme Court will rule in defense of a woman's right to abortion in the Texas case, discouraging further advances in the legislative onslaught against reproductive justice. While a ruling against the state of Texas would be a huge victory, it would not end the war on women and the growing threats

(Above) Abortion rights protesters in front of U.S. Supreme Court building on March 2.

to reproductive justice. The oral arguments come as women's rights advocates are reflecting on the already dramatic decline in the availability of abortion in the United States.

According to Esmé Deprez, author of "The Vanishing U.S. Abortion Clinic," a quarter of clinics on American soil have closed in the last five years, in great measure due to reactionary legislation. In Mississippi, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming, there is only one clinic left per state. The court is not considering the many other restrictions, including waiting periods, parental notification, and the failure of insurance policies and Medicaid to cover costs that have continued to make unplanned pregnancy a nightmare for the young, the low-waged, and those residing in the South or rural areas.

And if the "well-being of the woman" legal avenue is closed, those determined to control women's fertility will come up with a new legislative angle.

In Texas, according to TexPEP, the implementation of the requirement "or physicians to have admitting privileges at a nearby hospital resulted in a reduction of abortions in the first six months of 13% and an in-

(continued on page 11)



Wisconsin anti-immigrant bills protested

By CARL SACK

MADISON—More than 20,000 Latin@s took off work and marched on the Wisconsin State Capitol on Feb. 18 to demand the state legislature drop a pair of bills designed to make life harder for undocumented workers.

Immigrant rights groups who planned the protest on short notice dubbed it Un Día Sin Latinos (A Day Without Latinos), and called on all Latin@s and immigrants workers to skip work and come to Madison. “Hundreds of workplaces including dairies, farms, factories, cleaning companies, printers, hotels, fast food and restaurants, and... dozens of schools statewide” were affected by the work stoppage,

according to Voces de la Frontera, the state’s largest immigrant rights group and lead protest organizer, based in Milwaukee.

News media reported that many businesses around the state shut down for the day. Hundreds of Madison high school students, many Black or Latin@ themselves, walked out in solidarity with Latin@ protesters. High school students here have mobilized several times since unarmed black teenager Tony Robinson was shot and killed by a white Madison cop a year ago.

Latin@s account for 40% of Wisconsin’s dairy farm workers. The protest received widespread support from dairy farmers and small business owners. A number of

dairy farmers even donated money to charter buses to Madison for the protest. As workers themselves, many farmers undoubtedly sympathize on a personal level with their Latin@ employees. But farms and other businesses would also lose out on underpaid and heavily exploited labor if undocumented workers were to stop coming to the state.

The protest was aimed at defeating two bills currently making their way through the state legislature. One bill would prohibit local communities from issuing their own ID cards to undocumented immigrants, who are legally barred from obtaining drivers licenses in the state. Milwaukee officials are planning to begin issuing such IDs this year, allowing undocumented workers to open bank accounts, file court papers, and receive local services that require a photo ID. The IDs will not be usable for voting, driving, or obtaining safety net benefits like food stamps, even though undocumented workers contribute income taxes that pay for these benefits.

The other bill prohibits so-called “sanctuary city” laws that prevent cops from asking someone about their immigration status and reporting undocumented workers to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Three cities in the state currently have some form of these protections on the books, although city officials in all three have disavowed the “sanctuary city” title, and local law enforcement agencies still cooperate with ICE in criminal cases. The bill could increase racial profiling and prevent immigrants from reporting wage theft or personal crimes, making it easier to exploit and victimize the undocumented.

One of the major slogans of the march was “Wisconsin is Not Arizona,” referring to that state’s notorious SB 1070 or “show me your papers” law. That law made being an undocumented immigrant a crime and requires cops to determine the status of Latin@s they detain. Though some of its provisions were struck down by the Supreme Court, the most egregious part—allowing cops to report the undocumented—was upheld. It has led to rampant racial profiling, increased deportations, and fear in immigrant communities.

The ID bill has passed both houses of the Wisconsin legislature and has yet to be signed by the governor. The sanctuary cities bill passed the State Assembly but has not been taken up by the Senate. After the protest, Senate majority leader Scott Fitzgerald and Gov. Scott Walker both said the anti-sanctuary cities bill was unlikely to pass. Voces de la Frontera is attempting to build on the momentum of the protest by organizing local chapters around the state. ■

Socialist Action: Where we stand

Socialist Action is a national organization of activists committed to the emancipation of workers and the oppressed. We strive to revitalize the antiwar, environmental, labor, anti-racist, feminist, student, and other social movements with a mass-action perspective. In the process we hope to bring activists together from different backgrounds into a revolutionary workers’ party that can successfully challenge the wealthy elite—whose profit-driven system is driving down living standards and threatens all life on this planet.

Our ultimate goal is a truly democratic, environmentally sustainable, and egalitarian society organized to satisfy human needs rather than corporate greed. We invite you to join us in the struggle to make the world a better place!

We are active partisans of the working class and believe in the need for independent working-class politics—not alliances with the bosses’ parties. That is why we call for workers in the U.S. to break from the Democratic and Republican parties to build a Labor Party based on the trade unions.

We support the struggles of those who are specially oppressed under capitalism—women,

queers, national minorities, etc. We support the right of self-determination for oppressed nationalities, including Blacks, Chicanos, and Puerto Ricans. We are internationalists, and hold that workers of one country have more in common with workers of another than with their own nation’s capitalist class. We seek to link struggles across national boundaries, and to build an international revolutionary movement that will facilitate the sharing of experiences and political lessons. That is why we maintain fraternal relations with the Fourth International

Recognizing the divisions that exist on the left and within the workers’ movement, we seek to form united front type organizations around specific issues where various groups have agreement. In this way we seek to maximize our impact and demonstrate the power and effectiveness of mass action.

Socialist Action believes that the capitalist state and its institutions are instruments of the ruling class, and that therefore they cannot be used as tools of the working class but have to be smashed. That is why we fight for revolution, instead of seeking to merely reform or work within the system. When we fight for specific reforms, we do so with the understanding that in the final analysis real social change can only come about with the overthrow of capitalism, the establishment of a workers’ government, and the fight for socialism.

SOCIALIST ACTION Closing news date: March 6, 2015

Editor: Michael Schreiber Canada Editor: Barry Weisleder

Socialist Action (ISSN 0747-4237) is published monthly by Socialist Action Publishing Association, P.O. Box 10328, Oakland, CA 94610. Postmaster: Send address changes to: Socialist Action, P.O. Box 10328, Oakland, CA 94610. RATES: For one year (12 issues, 1st-class mail): U.S., Canada, Mexico — \$20. All other countries — \$30. Money orders and checks should be in U.S. dollars.

Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of Socialist Action. These are expressed in editorials. Socialist Action is edited, designed, and laid out entirely by volunteer labor.



For info about Socialist Action and how to join: Socialist Action National Office, P.O. Box 10328, Oakland, CA 94610, (510) 268-9429, socialistaction@lmi.net

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N.Y. gas pipeline halted

By MARTY GOODMAN

The Algonquin is a “natural” gas pipeline under construction about 45 miles north of New York City and a mere 1500 feet from the accident prone Indian Point nuclear-power plant in Buchanan, N.Y., in the Hudson Valley. Construction may be put on hold temporarily, pending a federal and state safety study urged by New York Governor Mario Cuomo (D) on Feb. 29.

Cuomo has bowed to pressure and protests from environmental organizations against the pipeline’s route, which cuts straight through pristine woods and wetlands, including public parkland—and even back yards in Peekskill. Many thousands of trees would be clear cut, and the pipeline would continue underneath the Hudson River. The immediate impact of the governor’s decision on pipeline construction is not known.

Gov. Cuomo, whose home is 10 miles from Indian Point, had called for a federal shutdown of the nuclear-power plant. But he had remained silent about the Algonquin pipeline until he received some 30,000 signatures from angry Algonquin opponents and the high profile arrest of protesters at the construction site.

The pipeline is owned by Spectra Energy, a Texas-based Fortune 500 corporation. Spectra plans to pump natural (fracked) gas in 42-inch high-pressure pipes from Pennsylvania, through New York and Connecticut, up to Massachusetts. Spectra currently uses 26-inch pipes. It has permits under “*eminent domain*” from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

Mark Dunlea, the chair of the New York Green Education Legal Fund, said of FERC, “They’re a horrible, horrible agency.” In 2011, FERC was found guilty of underestimating impacts on environmentally affected projects. Activists say that there is a convergence between Obama administration FERC officials and energy corporations, particularly in the case of Spectra and FERC.

Dubbed “The Montrose 9,” nine pipeline protesters were arrested in November at Montrose for blocking Spectra vehicles near Indian Point. Resist AIM (Algonquin Incremental Market Expansion Project) organized the protests. On Feb. 28, some 40 Resist AIM and members of faith-based environmental groups rallied across the street from Gov. Cuomo’s home, calling for the shutting down of Indian Point, stopping Algonquin, and divesting from fossil fuels.

The methane in natural gas is 86 times more toxic than carbon dioxide over a 20-year period. Nationally, the federal Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), recorded serious ruptures of pipelines occurred six times a week in 2015, three times more than in the 1950s and 1960s!

The proximity of the pipeline to Indian Point adds to the high anxiety felt by residents. Paul Blanch, a 45-year former nuclear engineer with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and at Indian Point, says a pipeline rupture could prevent the safe shutdown of the reactor, endangering 20 million New Yorkers. Last May, Indian Point, owned by Entergy, had a transformer knocked out in one of the reactors, spilling oil and fire retardant foam into the Hudson River. In February, Entergy admitted to “*alarming levels of radioactivity*” in water in three of its wells.

Resist AIM (www.resistaim.com) has conducted teach-ins and tours for activists of areas blighted by Spectra. On Feb. 28, some 40 Resist AIM and members of faith based environmental groups rallied across the street from Gov. Cuomo’s home, calling for the shutting down of Indian Point, stopping the Algonquin pipeline and divesting from fossil fuels.

On Feb. 29, eleven people were arrested in Verplanck, where they blocked two entrances to the Algonquin pipeline on the same day that Cuomo called on the Obama administration to halt Algonquin.

Although Cuomo has called for closing Indian Point, he has continued to support three remaining upstate nuclear plants. Citing losses, the Entergy Corp. says it plans to close its Fitzpatrick plant, but the governor has vowed to keep the plant open, using “*every legal and regulatory avenue*.”



(Above) Megan Halleran informs reporters about the seizure and destruction of her family’s maple farm in order to build the pipeline.

Clear-cutting begins in Pennsylvania for Constitution Pipeline

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

Despite protests by residents and environmental groups, clear cutting of trees has begun in north-eastern Pennsylvania for the 128-mile Constitution Pipeline, designed to carry fracked gas from the Marcellus Shale to New York and New England.

Megan Holleran says that the loggers are destroying about 90 percent of her family’s sugar maple trees, devastating their syrup business. Her family maintained in court that the pipeline construction outfit, led by Williams Partners LLC, had no right to seize their land under the rules of eminent domain since the gas is destined to be exported, rather than being used for the “*public good*.” Over a hundred protesters came to the Hollerans’ Susquehanna County farm in February to support the family’s attempt to stop the clear cut.

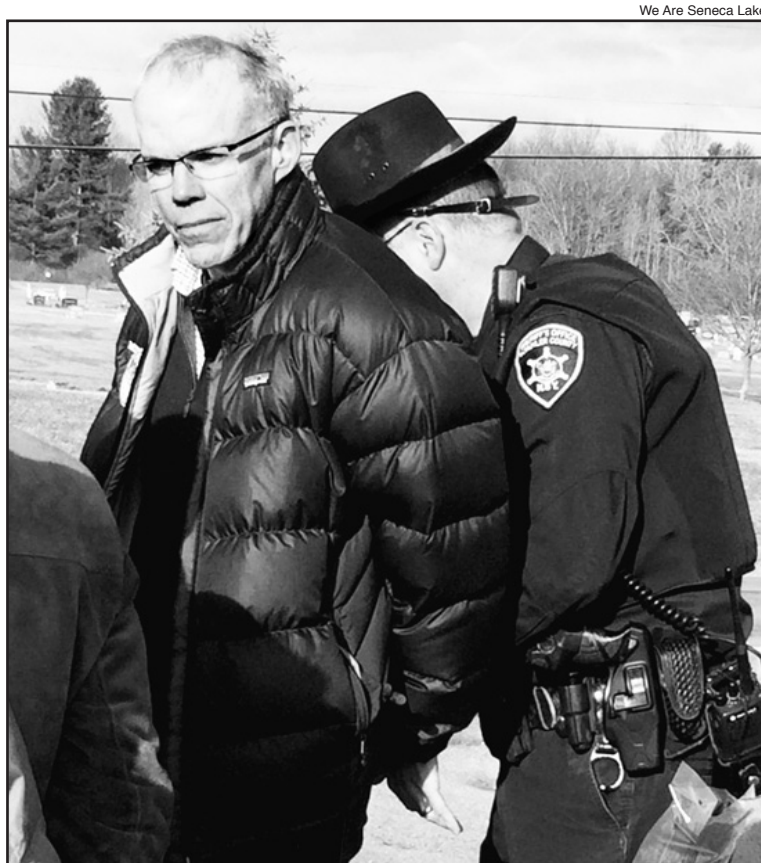
On Feb. 18, U.S. District Court Judge Malachy Mansion in Scranton, Pa., dismissed the Hollerans’ court suit and gave the go-ahead for the loggers to cut down the trees—just as harvest time is about to be-

gin in the maple groves. In fact, the judge expanded the area to be logged, authorizing a 150-foot-wide “*safety barrier*” of cleared land. The government and pipeline construction firm “*refused to see us as people, and brought guns to our home*,” said Megan Holleran, referring to the U.S. marshals and company strong-arms guarding the site.

All together, some 750,000 trees in the path of the pipeline are due to be felled—mainly in New York State. Most of the route goes through rugged mountainous areas, which are already prone to erosion and flooding during rain storms, according to local residents.

Logging has been halted in New York by Attorney General Eric Schneiderman since the state has not yet granted environmental approval. Anti-pipeline activists have called on New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo to refuse permits for the pipeline. Megan Holleran took part in a news conference in Albany on March 2.

The pipeline would be owned and run by a consortium of powerful oil and gas companies. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission approved construction of the Constitution Pipeline in December 2014 as the first unit of a vast network of new pipelines that are planned throughout the region. ■



(Left) 350.org founder Bill McKibben is arrested along with 56 residents of Schuylers County, N.Y., during a March 7 civil disobedience protest against proposed storage of fracked gas in the salt caverns at Seneca Lake.

The protesters, organized by We are Seneca Lake, formed a human blockade in the driveway of the gas storage and transport company, Crestwood Midstream.

McKibben thanked the protesters for “*standing up*,” pointing out that “*people are understanding it’s not just carbon dioxide that we are fighting; it’s also methane*,” and both greenhouse gases are responsible for global warming.

State. These twin pipelines would carry fracked Bakken and possibly heavy crude from Albany, N.Y., to Linden, N.J., and flammable refined products back to Albany. Activists demand that Cuomo stop Pilgrim Pipeline.

A mass movement is needed to stop the pipelines and all fossil-fuel production and to convert to 100% renewable energy now. Socialists say take the profit out of energy and save the planet! ■

In addition, Pilgrim Pipeline is planning to build pipelines to transport volatile fracked Bakken shale oil and possibly tar sands crude through New York

renewable energy now. Socialists say take the profit out of energy and save the planet! ■



(Left) Over 300 janitors rallied in front of Macy's department store in Minneapolis.

Twin Cities janitors walk out

By KAREN and JOHN SCHRAUFNAGEL

MINNEAPOLIS—After months of bargaining, and in response to stalling and delays from employers, janitors with SEIU Local 26 walked off the job on an Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) strike on Feb. 17.

The strike hit some of the largest and most prominent buildings throughout the metro over the course of the day. It was the first strike by sub-contracted

union janitors in the Twin Cities in decades. The janitors held a mass rally at U.S. Bank Plaza in downtown Minneapolis, and picketed at other sites.

They were joined by many unorganized retail cleaners who had just recovered over \$400,000 in stolen wages through a class-action lawsuit.

The janitors' current contract expired on Dec. 31. On Jan. 23, janitors with SEIU Local 26, 90% of whom are people of color, voted to authorize their bargain-

ing committee to call an unfair labor practice strike, as their employers continued to stall and intimidate workers in bargaining over a new contract for the 4000 janitors in the Twin Cities.

Workers have been fighting for a \$15 floor for all workers, a fix to a growing workload crisis, and policies that support healthy families. In response, they have only seen stalling from employers.

The bargaining committee announced a Feb. 14 deadline to reach a contract that allows for healthy families and addresses income and racial disparities plaguing our state. That deadline came and went without any real progress towards a deal. Janitors have held 11 negotiating sessions since October with their employers. After the walk-out, no more bargaining sessions were immediately scheduled.

"At a time of increasing wealth for a small few, we are fighting for a fair contract that will not only help our families, but start to roll back the racial and economic inequalities facing our state," said Brahim Kone, a St. Paul janitor and leader on the bargaining team. "We are contracted to clean the buildings of some of the most wealthy corporations in the world, yet our calls for a fair contract are being ignored.

"We want \$15 for all workers, a solution to our workload crisis that sees many janitors clean the equivalent of over 20 homes every single night, and policies that allow us to have healthy families.

"We are fighting for our own families, but we also want our fight to show others that you don't have to accept the status quo.

"Our state and economy are not working for everyone, and the people who benefit from the economic and racial disparities they created clearly won't give up without a fight. With employers dismissing all of our proposals, we see no choice but to go on strike to win what is right." ■

Schools

By KEVIN YESSIAN

In 2009, President Obama issued a fact sheet outlining his new education reform plan. Race to the Top, as it is called, has four key areas: rigorous standards and assessments, adoption of better data systems for reporting, support for teachers and school leaders to become more effective, and a plan for rigorous interventions when a school fails to meet standards. In the seven years since this announcement, the results range from somewhat satisfactory to outright disastrous.

Obama wrote a preamble to the fact sheet on July 24, 2009, which stated: "America will not succeed in the 21st century unless we do a far better job of educating our sons and daughters. And the race starts today. I am issuing a challenge to our nation's governors and school boards, principals and teachers, businesses and non-profits, parents and students: if you set and enforce rigorous and challenging standards and assessments; if you put outstanding teachers at the front of the classroom; if you turn around failing schools—your state can win a Race to the Top grant that will not only help students outcompete workers around the world, but let them fulfill their God-given potential."

As stated, Obama's goal for this program was to ensure that students could outcompete workers worldwide. But as a goal for educators, it set an ill-conceived precedent involving winners and losers.

Kevin K. Kumashiro, in his 2012 book "Bad Teacher," outlined the shortcomings of recent federal educational reform plans: "Politicians and pundits today seem to be unable to talk about educational reform in terms other than competitions, such as being the best in the world or racing to the top, in which only some can win while all others must lose. Even reforms that seem to say that everyone can win are nonetheless creating winners and losers, such as No Child Left Behind's (the federal act of 2001) mandate of 100% proficiency in reading and mathematics by 2014—a rate that has never been reached by any nation



in the world—which actually sets many up to lose because of the sanctions that follow when failing to meet that unattainable standard. School reform is making the failures of vast numbers of America's children inevitable."

As Race to the Top's mandate for rigorous standards and assessments became translated into Common Core and high-stakes testing, schools across the nation began to focus their energies into "teaching for the test," in order to acquire much needed funds in a time of seemingly permanent fiscal crises and to prevent punitive measures if their children failed to meet the required benchmark.

In her book "Reign of Error" (2013) education historian Diane Ravitch stated, "So we are left with the short-term strategies. [University of California professor Thomas B.] Timar says that the strategies of 'bureaucratizing the process of school improvement and turning it into a chase for higher test scores' have not worked. They have not made schools more stable, more coherent, and more professional. NCLB [No Child Left Behind] plus the Obama administration's Race to the Top have made schools less stable, encour-

aged staff turnover, promoted policy churn, and undermined professionalism."

A large part of what make these schools unstable is the practice of holding schools accountable when they find themselves at the bottom of the test rankings. For accountability starts with increased pressure to turn the school around quickly and proceeds to firings and school closings when they inevitably fail to improve. This does not address the prevalence of poverty and the ways in which poverty affects the communities that many of these schools are located within.

Ravitch underscored the fact that "poverty matters. Poverty affects children's health and well-being. It affects their emotional lives and their attention spans, their attendance and their academic performance. Poverty affects their motivation and their ability to concentrate on anything other than day-to-day survival. In a society of abundance, poverty is degrading and humiliating."

Furthermore, getting a "quality education," including a college degree, is not necessarily enough to ensure a quality job that would put the student in a position to, "outcompete workers around

the world." Those who are born at the bottom, the "losers," will most likely attend public institutions. Even if they succeed at getting through high school and graduating with a bachelors-degree, they are still competing against those who have gone through the most prestigious schools and universities.

"This stratification of college attendance by social class matters," stressed the late education theorist and activist Jean Anyon in her 2011 book "Marx and Education." She pointed out that "selective institutions spend up to \$92,000 per student, while colleges with low selectivity spend about \$12,000 per student. And per-pupil subsidies at selective universities are eight times greater than at non-selective institutions. Moreover, the prestige and networks one acquires at a selective school are invaluable in future job searches."

Race to the Top might have benefitted a few schools that, with the help of federal funds, have managed to pull themselves away from the brink of being closed. For a great many schools, however, this program has meant devastating interventions that included firings and closings and the opening up of charter schools in their place. The charters are privatized and unregulated institutions where young people can possibly get a quality education but are more likely to find themselves in ramshackle profit-making enterprises where education is the least of concerns.

Going forward, true educational reform would have to start, not from a position of increasing competition but from the idea that we are all of one worldwide community, facing a global climatic crisis, and that we need to address structural issues that have resulted in high levels of poverty, including geographical issues that have arisen due to climate change, policing, and judicial racism. These items have given rise to the school-to-prison pipeline and gender inequalities that are manifested in a myriad of ways, including the persistent wage-gap between men and women. As these issues remain, so do differentiated educational outcomes that favor those who possess the most resources. ■

Teamsters United rallies in Louisville

By BRONSON ROZIER

LOUISVILLE, Ky.—“We will stand by the members, the members are not afraid to fight, we are going to take back our union!” was the welcomed central theme of the rally for the national Teamsters United militant reform slate of nearly 400, held in Louisville on Jan. 31. The slate is being led by Fred Zuckerman, president of Local 89 in Louisville, representing UPS employees, car haulers for Ford, CSX rail engineers, and warehouse workers.

Supporters came from a wide area, representing many locals. Kentucky and Southern Indiana was represented from as far west as Evansville and Paducah. More from the Midwest came from Chicago, Ft Wayne, and Indianapolis. Teamsters came also from Cleveland, Akron, Dayton, and Columbus, Ohio; Philadelphia and Harrisburg, Pa.; and from Chattanooga, Knoxville, Nashville, and Atlanta. Tim Sylvester from Local 804 in New York, a founder of Teamsters United and slate member, flew in from Brooklyn.

Teamsters United is convinced that it can take the union back from leadership headed by James Hoffa Jr. They plan on raising \$1 million to defeat the deeply entrenched sellout leadership.

Zuckerman has been a Teamster for 37 years. He became a Teamster when he helped organize Houston's Chemical Express workers in 1979. Later he joined Local 89 when he worked as a car hauler at Louis-



(Left) Fred Zuckerman, president of Local 89 and head of Teamster United's slate.

ville's Ford Plant. He was a steward for seven years and then a business agent, and was elected Local 89 president in 2000.

This campaign is a result of the total bankruptcy of the Hoffa Jr. regime. Perhaps the most outrageous act and the one most responsible for this rebellion was the leadership's imposing a giveback on the membership after the proposed national contract had been voted down twice—once by 87% and then 94%! Other factors have been the shrinking pension fund, the

IBT's not supporting local fights, and misuse of the union's credit cards. Fred was actively involved in opposing these abuses.

In his speech Zuckerman reviewed these issues and said, "Nobody is doing nothing about it, and it's got to stop and stop right now—and it will stop when we take office this March." He stated the first order of business will be to change the constitution so that the International can no longer impose a contract that a membership has voted down.

He also promised that the Teamsters would go back to the basics. There will be no more raiding other unions, and the Teamsters will be strengthened by organizing their base in freight, warehouse, rail, and construction. He pointed out the need to go on an organizing campaign of

all the small independent freight companies that large companies have created in an attempt to weaken the impact of the union in the upcoming freight contract fight. Tim Sylvester, a slate member mentioned the need to rejoin the AFL-CIO.

All labor needs to look at and support this development, and make it part of the return of a labor movement that will fight in the interests of working people and oppressed. ■



(Left) Striking transit workers in Barcelona.

Auto Workers.

Unique Sit-Down at MU—The *Columbia* [Missouri] *Daily Tribune* reported on an unusual variation of a sit-down by grad students at the main campus of the University of Missouri, "More than 60 graduate students used the first floor of Jesse Hall as their office during a 'grade-in' event Thursday [Feb. 25], which started at 9 a.m. and ended at 4 p.m. The Coalition of Graduate Workers, a student group unaffiliated with the university and working toward forming a union, organized the event as part of its graduate education week activities. Organizers encouraged graduate students to bring folding tables and chairs or find a spot to sit on the floor in Jesse Hall while they did their work. 'A lot of the work that graduate students do tends to go unnoticed,' said Kristofferson Culmer with the Forum on Graduate Rights student group. 'The research hours in the lab, the office hours grading, mentoring—a lot of the functions of a graduate student tend to go unnoticed,' Culmer said."

Homage to Catalonia—Metro transit workers in Barcelona, Catalonia, in the Spanish state carried out a disruptive Feb. 25 strike during a big electronics sales exhibition to protest boss plans to downgrade job openings to temporary. Larry Hanley, president of the Amalgamated Transit Union, the biggest transit union in North America, sent a message of international solidarity: "I want to express the strong support of all of our members with striking Barcelona Metro workers at the Mobile World Congress. ... This attack on public transit and workers is happening across the world. It isn't just about jobs, it's about protecting transit service that commuters, seniors, and people with disabilities rely on each day."

Making Vegas Great Again—The National Labor Relations Board has dismissed all objections from Donald Trump's signature hotel in Las Vegas to a Culinary Union representation election victory for 500+ Trump workers. So far, Trump's property, represented by a notorious union-busting law firm, still refuses to recognize the union, much less to bargain with it. ■

Thanks to Ann Montague for contributing to this Briefing. If you have an appropriate story, please contact billonasch@kclabor.org and mention Labor Briefing in the subject.

LABOR BRIEFING

By BILL ONASCH

Teaching Them a Lesson—The Polar Vortex failed to cool down class struggle in the Twin Cities. On the St. Paul side on Feb. 17, *Workday Minnesota* reported, "Parents, students and community members rallied with members of the St. Paul Federation of Teachers outside school buildings across the city Wednesday morning, demanding progress in contract talks between SPFT and the St. Paul Public Schools. ... Wearing hats and scarves in SPFT's signature red, participants chanted and carried signs expressing support for the teachers' bargaining priorities, including measures to improve school climate, reduce class sizes and beef up staffing among school nurses, librarians, social workers and other support positions."

Engaging Capital at the Capitol—Also on Thursday, 15 Now! brought a lot of folks to Oregon's state capitol building in Salem to protest a bipartisan deal to water down a new state minimum wage while denying cities the right to set a higher one. They also supported relief from soaring housing costs.

They began protests at the governor's office, but she declined to meet them. From there they moved to disrupt a session of the State House, taking up the

issue of S1532, a bill that establishes a phased-in tiered minimum wage, with different rates for Portland and smaller towns. State troopers were called to the scene but made no arrests. After making their point with the lawmakers, the protesters joined others in a public outdoor rally.

Such a convergence of uncoordinated big, lively worker actions would be unusual anytime. They are particularly rare in an election year, when most movement leaders subordinate everything to hustling votes for Democrat "friends." They're another example of the restlessness of workers eager to fight back against attacks by bosses and government. This is good news for our side—but not so much for perfidious "friends."

From Harvard Square—The *Harvard Crimson* reports, "Organizers of a graduate student unionization effort confirmed the campaign has reached a critical point: a majority of graduate students employed by the University have signed authorization cards in support of unionization, which satisfies the threshold to call an election to form a union. 'I know that we're above 60 percent, and that majority is growing,' Chamith Y. Fonseka, a union organizer and PhD student in the Biological and Biomedical Sciences, said." The union involved is the United

The House Socialists and the Field Socialists



By BRUCE LESNICK

I wholeheartedly support the populist programs that Bernie Sanders advocates—from single-payer health care, to free college tuition, to taxing the rich and more. But borrowing from Malcolm X (see the article below), Bernie is a *house* socialist and I'm a *field* socialist.

Bernie doesn't want to replace or overthrow capitalism. Like all house socialists, he thinks capitalism can be fixed or tamed with reforms. By contrast, we field socialists understand that the essence of capitalism—private ownership of major industry, resources, banks, and the exploitation of labor by appropriating surplus value (profit)—is antithetical to democracy.

In fact, for all of Bernie's talk about "democratic socialism," he and other house socialists turn a blind eye to the lack of *economic democracy* that is the very hallmark of the capitalist system. Because Bernie is in favor of tweaking capitalism but opposed to dismantling it, he ignores the systemic lack of democracy in the workplace and the economy—the very aspects that most affects people's lives.

Bernie rightly denounces the unequal distribution of wealth, where the top 1% owns more than the rest combined. But like all house socialists, Bernie fails to identify important institutions as being controlled by and serving the interests of the 1%.

Congress, the Democratic and Republican parties, the national media, the police and the military are all captives of the 1%.



In a class-divided society, all important institutions are wielded as tools of the dominant class. Field socialists understand that these institutions answer only to the needs of the 1%, even though much effort is made by official propagandists to convince us that they serve us all. Bernie and other house socialists aid the 1% in the criminal charade of pretending that government institutions, the police and the military exist and operate independent of the class divisions in our society.

This is why it's no surprise that Bernie and other like-minded house socialists are military hawks. They see the U.S. army as "our" army rather than a weapon of the 1%. This is why Bernie has voted for nearly every war appropriations bill. This is why Bernie supports drones and U.S. military involvement in the Middle East; why he supported military action in Afghanistan, Libya, Yemen and elsewhere.

This is why Bernie supported sanctions against Iraq in the 1990s that caused the deaths of more than half-a-million children and he supported U.S. military action in Kosovo in 1999. This is why Bernie refuses to denounce the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestine but supports billions in military aid for Israel, Saudi

(Photos) Democrat Bernie Sanders states that Eugene V. Debs is one of his heroes. But Debs stressed that working people needed their own party. Debs left the capitalists' Democratic Party and ran for president on the Socialist Party ticket—even from his jail cell in 1920.

Arabia, and other brutal U.S. client states that serve to extend the reach and protect the interests of the 1% overseas.

Field socialists oppose imperial war-making, understanding that the individuals and institutions of the 1% that exploit us here at home cannot be trusted to defend our interests abroad.

In contrast to the hawkish house socialists, field socialists demand: "All US Troops Out Now!" "Dismantle All US Military Bases Abroad!" "Not One Bomb, Not One Bullet for the Wars of the One Percent!" "Money for Jobs, Not for War!"*

Because house socialists like Bernie limit their critique to reforms of the existing system, they are unable to propose concrete, workable solutions for the

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Malcolm X: 'The House Negro and the Field Negro'

Below is an excerpt from Malcolm X's presentation on "The Race Problem." The talk was given on Jan. 23, 1963, to the African Students Association and NAACP campus chapter, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Mich.

So, you have two types of Negro. The sold type and the new type. Most of you know the old type. When you read about him in history during slavery he was called "Uncle Tom." He was the house Negro. And during slavery you had two Negroes. You had the house Negro and the field Negro.

The house Negro usually lived close to his master. He dressed like his master. He wore his master's second-hand clothes. He ate food that his master left on the table. And he lived in his master's house—probably in the basement or the attic—but he still lived in the master's house.

So whenever that house Negro identified himself, he always identified himself in the same sense that his master identified himself. When his master said, "We have good food," the house Negro would say, "Yes, we have plenty of good food." "We" have plenty of



good food. When the master said that "we have a fine home here," the house Negro said, "Yes, we have a fine home here."

When the master would be sick, the house Negro identified himself so much with his master he'd say, "What's the matter boss, we sick?" His master's pain was his pain.

And it hurt him more for his master

to be sick than for him to be sick himself. When the house started burning down, that type of Negro would fight harder to put the master's house out than the master himself would.

But then you had another Negro out in the field. The house Negro was in the minority. The masses—the field Negroes were the masses. They were in the majority. When the master got sick, they prayed that he'd die. [Laughter.] If his house caught on fire, they'd pray for a wind to come along and fan the breeze.

If someone came to the house Negro and said, "Let's go, let's separate," naturally that Uncle Tom would say, "Go where? What could I do without boss? Where would I live? How would I dress? Who would look out for me?" That's the house Negro. But if you went to the field Negro and said, "Let's go, let's separate," he wouldn't even ask you where or how. He'd say, "Yes, let's go." And that one ended right there.

So now you have a twentieth-century-type of house Negro. A twentieth-cen-

tury Uncle Tom. He's just as much an Uncle Tom today as Uncle Tom was 100 and 200 years ago. Only he's a modern Uncle Tom. That Uncle Tom wore a handkerchief around his head. This Uncle Tom wears a top hat. He's sharp. He dresses just like you do. He speaks the same phraseology, the same language. He tries to speak it better than you do. He speaks with the same accents, same diction.

And when you say, "your army," he says, "our army." He hasn't got anybody to defend him, but anytime you say "we" he says "we." "Our president," "our government," "our Senate," "our congressmen," "our this and our that." And he hasn't even got a seat in that "our" even at the end of the line. So this is the twentieth-century Negro. Whenever you say "you," the personal pronoun in the singular or in the plural, he uses it right along with you. When you say you're in trouble, he says, "Yes, we're in trouble."

But there's another kind of Black man on the scene. If you say you're in trouble, he says, "Yes, you're in trouble." [Laughter.] He doesn't identify himself with your plight whatsoever. ■

Indian government cracks down on student dissent



By AHMED KHAN

On Feb. 9, several students at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in New Delhi organized a protest in support of the self-determination of the people of Kashmir and the memory of Afzal Guru, a Kashmiri who was controversially convicted on charges of terrorism and hanged in 2013.

Shortly before the event, students from Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), a student group associated with hard-right nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), currently in control of the Indian government, complained to the university administration. Fearing the implied threat of violent confrontation, the university acquiesced and banned the event.

Subsequently, the university erupted into protest; several campus groups and university faculty and administrators denounced the ban. In response, the Delhi police initiated a brutal crackdown on left-wing students in general; they targeted activists including those not even present at the Afzal Guru event. Karhaiya Kumar, president of the JNU Students' Union, was arrested on Feb. 12 and charged with sedition, criminal conspiracy, and unlawful assembly after giving a speech in support of the student protesters that was deemed "anti-national" (the video "evidence" of this was later revealed to have been doctored).

This precipitated a frenzy across India; Kumar was beaten twice, once by pro-BJP lawyers and policemen immediately preceding his trial, and once inside the courtroom itself. Two other JNU students, Umar Khalid and Anirban Bhattacharjee were also arrested. The



The university system has become a target of economic liberalization, with massive cuts to education.

BJP took this opportunity to drum up nationalistic fervor surrounding "anti-national speech" being promoted under the guise of academic freedom.

The events at JNU are part of a much broader assault on dissent by Narendra Modi, the BJP, and their associated right-wing nationalist formations. The protests followed the suicide of Rohith Vemula, a PhD student at the University of Hyderabad. Vemula was a member of the Dalit community and an activist for the cause of rights for Dalits, a historically marginalized caste group in India. After participating in several campus protests, the ABVP wrote a letter to the university administration accusing him of "anti-national" and "caste-ist" activities. As a result, he was suspended from the university. He was found dead later, an apparent suicide by hanging.

The BJP embraces the twin doctrines of extreme right-wing Hindu nationalism and neoliberal capitalism; it often uses the former to prop up support for the latter. It is no coincidence that the event that sparked the events at JNU was a protest in solidarity with the Kashmir independence movement. The BJP made its name stoking the fires of communal violence

(Above) Students rally at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) on Feb. 15.

(Left) Karhaiya Kumar, president of the JNU student union, after his release from prison.

and repression; the destruction of the Babri Masjid in 1992, sparking months of rioting was presided over by BJP officials.

Narendra Modi himself was accused of doing nothing to stop the communal riots in Gujarat when he was Chief Minister there in 1992. Islamophobia in India is reaching levels not seen since the 1990s; several states have passed laws restricting the consumption of beef, which is targeted directly at the Muslim minority communities that live there. Caste oppression is on the rise as well, in the name of Hindu nationalism, as seen in tragic relief through the suicide of Rohith Vemula, whose mother was arrested by Delhi police at Vemula's own candlelight vigil.

Neither is it any coincidence that it comes at a time when the liberalization of the economy has reached a fever pitch; despite massive privatization and deregulation, the Indian economy is still suffering from slowing growth and massive wealth inequality.

The university system itself has become a target, with massive cuts to education funding in the name of "competitiveness;" here, as it was in the United States in the 1970s, the first step is crushing the student movements, and the next silencing the voices who are speaking out against the failure of the BJP's neoliberalization of India. ■

By ERNIE GOTTA

In February, the Israeli Supreme Court rejected the appeal of Mohammed al-Qeeq, an imprisoned Palestinian journalist on his 85th day of hunger strike. Al-Qeeq had asked to be transferred to a Palestinian hospital in the West Bank.

Directly following this decision, however, a partial victory was won in the case of Palestinian American activist Rasmea Odeh as a Sixth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals granted her defense the possibility of bringing testimony that had earlier been thrown out.

In Rasmea's case, the goal for those in the Palestinian solidarity movement, remains to completely overturn the bogus conviction handed down by an unjust legal system. Any victory will be due to the tireless work of groups like the Committee to Stop FBI Repression and activists around the country.

This unjust system has jailed outspoken critics of the U.S. government—like Mumia Abu Jamal, Leonard Peltier, and Lynne Stewart—and will stop at nothing to intimidate people and movements that speak out for social change. The defense of all political prisoners is important for the defense of the entire working class.

Palestine has been a central question for working people confronting imperialism for over half a century. Of course, this movement is bolstered when celebrities like musician Brian Eno use their public platform to bring attention to Israeli apartheid.

In *Salon*, Eno said about the Oscars, "The Israeli government has attempted to detract from this harsh reality over the years through its "Brand Israel" campaign, which is aimed at using artists, among others, to obscure its human rights violations—whether by paying performers handsomely to play in Israel or by otherwise associating our "brands" with brand Israel." Eno's comments come at a time when the BDS (Boy-



cotts, Divestment, and Sanctions) movement is being discussed in activist circles around the world. In Britain, legislation is being proposed in an attempt to sideline BDS and Palestine solidarity. Boycotts were an important part of the fight against apartheid in South Africa, and Israel's imperialist allies want to stop any idea that such efforts can be successful today.

A real mass BDS effort could mean the loss of billions of dollars in profit to Israeli-based companies and foreign corporations that profit from apartheid. Popular opinion stands with the Palestinians, but Britain's rulers aim to repress free speech by criminalizing oppo-

(Left) Rasmea Odeh, branded a "terrorist," faces deportation from the U.S.

sition to the occupation and making it illegal to boycott Israel.

Solidarity efforts should get a boost from Palestinians living inside the 1948 borders of Israel. For the first time, major Palestinian groups inside Israel have held a meeting to discuss their relationship to the BDS movement (see the in-depth article about the conference in *Portside*).

The Israeli government is known for its brutality and suppression of grassroots efforts by both Israelis and Palestinians who oppose war and occupation. This conference marks another important moment, when Palestinians again stand up to occupation and apartheid despite relentless racism and daily murders of their people by Israeli security forces.

Central Connecticut State University's Youth for Socialist Action, working with Students for Justice in Palestine and the Muslim Student Association, is helping to organize a campus showing of "My Name is Rachel Corrie," a one-woman show about the murder of a young American activist by the Israeli Defense Forces in the West Bank. The March 13 performance will be part of the work to build a pole of working-class and student opposition to U.S. aid to apartheid Israel. ■

Party time? A review of two political classics



By BARRY WEISLEDER

Is it time to build an international revolutionary workers' party? James P. Cannon consistently said yes. Isaac Deutscher, for most of his adult life, said no. Both were highly esteemed Marxists, selflessly dedicated to workers' self-emancipation. But their difference on this crucial point amplified important political divergences. Some 45 years after their publication, here are two books still worthy of attention.

"The History of American Trotskyism," by James P. Cannon, (Pathfinder Press, New York, 1972, 268 pages), is not just a "what happened back then" book; it is a "how to do it now" book. Cannon (1890-1974), former Wobblie organizer, Socialist Party left winger, and a preeminent founder of American communism, wrote the way he spoke—as a smart and sophisticated, yet down-to-earth, unpretentious, popular agitator for workers' power. Twelve lectures to a Socialist Workers Party audience in 1942 constitute this informal history.

In it, Cannon recounts the rough and tumble early life of the faction-dominated U.S. Communist Party and its predecessors. CP members contended with internal ethnic and foreign-language power blocs, state repression that drove the party underground, comrades who fetishized its illegal status and took refuge in ultra-left sloganeering, and those who successfully united the party as it fought for legality and an orientation to mass political action.

The rise of the Joseph Stalin regime in the Soviet Union, and its bureaucratic mutilation of the strategy of the Communist International, led to a radical written critique by Leon Trotsky. At a meeting of the Comintern in Moscow, this document accidentally fell into the hands of Cannon and Canadian communist leader Maurice Spector. Once they publicized it, they and a handful of co-thinkers, defenders of workers' democracy and permanent revolution, in opposition to Stalin's revival of the reformist "stages" concept of revolution, were summarily expelled. They faced severe social isolation, and physical intimidation.

Trotskyism, as a movement, formed to preserve a Marxist political course. It explained the zig-zags of CP policy, shifting from popular-front reformism to ultra-leftism and back again, and it argued for consistent class-struggle politics. In the face of vilification by a big CP apparatus, backed by thousands of members and several daily newspapers, the Trotskyists under Cannon knew their priority was to launch a newspaper, *The Militant*, which they quickly did. But it took a year to find an affordable office, a ramshackle affair, and another year to obtain a simple mimeograph machine.

Up against CP slander and gangsterism (the Trotskyists had to defend their public meetings from physical attack by Stalinist thugs), the next task was to appeal to the CP ranks. The way to the working class is through its vanguard. Without a correct programme it would have been hopeless. In addition to a reliable policy guide, knowing what to do next was equally indispensable.

Still, the times were very tough. The onset of the Great Depression weighed heavily on the working class. The radical dissidents were not spared. Those were the "dog days" of the Left Opposition, characterized by grinding poverty, a low level of class struggle, and agonizingly slow, one-by-one recruitment to the



movement.

The right-wing opportunist faction led by Jay Lovestone carried through the expulsion of Cannon and his co-thinkers from the CP. Then the Lovestone forces were themselves expelled, just as the Nikolai Bukharin-led group in Russia got the boot, when world Stalinism zigged to the left. Lacking a revolutionary programme, the Lovestone party disintegrated within a decade (most of its leaders joining the bandwagon of the next imperialist war), while Cannon's Communist League of America grew and survived.

The CLA opposed the "insane policy of building 'Red Unions.'" It also resisted pressure from folks who had broken from, or been expelled by the CP, who wanted to abandon the world's first workers' state. Cannon argued that "we should continue to support the Soviet state, the Soviet Union, despite the fact that direction of it had fallen into the hands of a conservative, bureaucratic caste." The Russian Question remained a cornerstone for the left (much like the Cuban Question today); those who renounced it ended up in the embrace of imperialism before long.

As the CLA turned to mass work, it re-engaged with agitation. It plunged into active solidarity with struggles of Patterson silk workers and New York hotel workers, and it caught the huge strike wave of 1934. But exemplary teamwork, which earned the CLA a leading role in the Minneapolis general strike, required severing from its cadres one B.J. Field in Manhattan. He thought he was too big and important to work under the direction of his own party—and he ended up short-selling the hotel workers.

Gains achieved by the Trotskyists through the momentous union victory in the Twin Cities paved the way to fusion with the American Workers Party, led by former preacher A.J. Muste. The left-moving AWP played a leading role in the Auto-Lite strike in Toledo, Ohio. But it lacked international connections, and was

(Left) Leon Trotsky holds banner, "Workers of the World Unite!" in Diego Rivera's mural.

(Below) James P. Cannon in 1922 as a delegate to the Communist International in Moscow.

less homogenous politically than the CLA.

The AWP had a right-wing that did not want to clash with the labour bureaucracy, and feared fusion with the Trotskyists (who were not adverse to a clash with anything that stood in the way of working-class aspirations).

With firmness and clarity the Trotskyists prevailed. They soon faced another test. Newly radicalized workers flowed into the larger organizations—the old Socialist Party, as well as the CP. The Workers' Party (WP), led by Cannon and Muste, voted to link up with those radical workers in the SP—similar to what the section of the Fourth International did in France, hence called the "French Turn"—but it wasn't easy.

It required dissolving the public face of the WP. It also necessitated an internal battle against sectarianism, in this case a struggle against those who had difficulty distinguishing between tactics and strategy. Muste himself opposed the decision to enter the SP, "not on principled grounds, but on grounds of organizational fetishism, perhaps personal pride. Such sentiments are fatal in politics. Pride, anger, spite—any kind of subjectivity which influences a political course leads only to the defeat—and destruction of those who give way to it," said Cannon. The sectarians, led by Hugo Oehler, were defeated politically. When they violated party rules, they were expelled.

The Trotskyists belonged to the SP for barely a year, during which they formed a militant Left Wing and vigorously educated the ranks on the nature of fascism, the Spanish civil war, the Moscow trials, and the need for democracy in the party. Before they were gagged and expelled, they gained scores of worker activists, especially among maritime and automobile workers, and won a majority of the Socialist youth organization.

Optimism and pride marked the launch of the Socialist Workers' Party on New Year's Day 1938. In the battle of ideas it was vindicated. More battles loomed. The biggest one centred on the Russian Question, the defence of the first workers' state against imperialism, combined with opposition to the treacherous, despotic Stalinist ruling caste.

The History of American Trotskyism is full of faction fights waged out of necessity. That is what faces any serious revolutionary party. Cannon put it this way, "It is hard fighting all the time, there is never any assurance of smooth sailing. How can that be expected? The whole weight of bourgeois society presses down upon a few hundred or a few thousand people. ... The influence of bourgeois society finds an expression at times even in sections of a revolutionary workers' party. Therein is the real source of serious factional fights."

The same is true for the socialist movement on an international level. It is all about meeting the test of "what is to be done next." The only alternative to the principled battle of ideas is submission to prevailing ideologies, capitulation to the powers that hold the world hostage, or to flail away at injustice as an individual, perhaps in a loose association with disparate others.

Isaac Deutscher (1907-1967) was a Jewish-Polish writer, journalist, and political activist who moved to the United Kingdom at the outbreak of World War II. Best known as a biographer of Leon Trotsky, and Joseph Stalin, he was also a commentator on Soviet affairs. His three-volume biography of Trotsky, in particular, was highly influential.

Around 1927, he joined the illegal Communist Party of Poland (KPP) and became the editor of the party's underground press. In 1931, he toured the Soviet Union during the first Five Year Plan, and then returned to his underground work in Poland.

Deutscher co-founded the first anti-Stalinist group in the Polish Communist Party, protesting the party line that Nazism and Social Democracy were twin evils. Like Trotsky, he urged the formation of a united front against Nazism. Deutscher was expelled from the party for "exaggerat[ing] the danger of Nazism and ... spreading panic in the Communist ranks."

In London in 1939 he taught himself English and wrote for *The Economist* and *The Observer*. After 1946 he left journalism to write books.

"Ironies of History: Essays on Contemporary Communism" (Ramparts Press, Berkeley, Calif., 1971, 278 pages) is a collection of articles from the 1950s and

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... Classics

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early 1960s, including speeches he made to American teach-ins on the war in Vietnam. The writings invariably demonstrate the elegant prose and erudition of Deutscher. Sensitive character studies, lively metaphors, and sweeping analysis attracted a huge readership to his rigorous application of historical materialism. In the repressive, Cold War atmosphere that then permeated academia, he upheld the scientific method against the ideologies of the “great man” and the “greed is human nature” theories of history.

Still, Isaac Deutscher embodied a big contradiction: he was a Leninist-Trotskyist without a party. Not only did he refrain from joining a revolutionary organization after 1939, he advised others against it, and declared as counterproductive the construction of the Fourth International, to which Trotsky devoted his life in exile. This contradiction, his separation from collective political practice and debate, disconnected from class-struggle comrades in arms, cut Deutscher off from potential antidotes to errors that crept into his analysis.

While he explained scientifically the degeneration of the Russian Revolution, and defended the workers’ state from its capitalist enemies, he ascribed to Stalin’s bureaucratic heirs the capacity to radically reform the state and restore workers’ control. This conflicted with his own vivid and ongoing account of Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev’s superficial “Revelations,” his betrayal of Algeria’s struggle for independence, his undermining of Cuban and Vietnamese freedom aspirations, and more. “Has Khrushchev not sought to impose a standstill on revolution in the Middle East, in Africa, and in Latin America, backing Nasser, Kassem, and, of course, Nehru, and confounding the Communist Parties on the spot?” Deutscher asked.

In “Trotsky at his Nadir,” Deutscher castigates the co-leader of the Russian Revolution for “undoubtedly underrat(ing) the vitality of the new Soviet society, its inherent capacity for self-reform and regeneration, its inherent ability to overcome Stalinism eventually, and to go beyond Stalinism.

Post-Gorbachev, present-day-Putin Russia delivered definitive judgement on that score. Generations of bureaucratic terror and mis-education depoliticized the Soviet working class. Clearly, that was decisive. But fostering political illusions in the bureaucracy



(Left) Isaac Deutscher and his wife, Tamara Deutscher.

certainly didn’t help anyone.

The state of Israel furnished another signal for retreat. As a convinced atheist of Jewish origin, Deutscher was a militant opponent of Zionism—until World War II. The horrors of the Holocaust, for which the Palestinians and Arabs as a whole bore no responsibility, changed his mind.

He later qualified his support for the Zionist state, which initially he saw as a refuge for desperate Jews. He longed for “cooperation” between the occupiers and the occupied. But that is little more than a liberal sentiment marginalized by the demands of Western elites for control of Middle East resources. Their Zionist attack dog, thinly disguised as a safe haven, is heavily subsidized by Wall Street to keep Arab anti-imperialism in check.

Despite contradictions, the essays in this collection are a treat aesthetically and politically. “Maoism: its Origins and Outlook,” “Twenty Years of Cold War: Vietnam in Perspective,” plus the piece titled “The Mensheviks” make it worth a search to find this book. In the latter article Deutscher shows what happened to the party that thought a socialist revolution in Russia was premature, and in any case opposed Lenin’s concept of a centralized party with an accountable leadership. The disparate elements of Menshevism

aligned themselves with extremely regressive forces.

Deutscher summarized the outcome as follows: “Thus Menshevism has ended its long career, driven into two ideological impasses: in one we saw the conscience-stricken Dan humbling himself before Stalinism; in the other we heard Abramovitch praying for the world’s salvation by the Pentagon [which he urged to use nuclear arms to destroy the “Bolshevik evil once and for all”]. What an epilogue this is to the story of Martov’s party; and how Martov’s ghost must be weeping over it.”

What a searing indictment of reformism. Does that not underscore the objective need, indeed the moral imperative, to fight for a revolutionary alternative, no matter its popularity at any moment in time?

Though he is long gone, the debate with Deutscher over the building of a revolutionary International continues, so the issue should be addressed.

The Fourth International began, and continues today, as a relatively small political movement. Doubts within its leadership may cloud its policy.

Self-described Trotskyist parties around the world, with a few exceptions (France, Argentina, Pakistan and Philippines come to mind) count their members in the dozens or hundreds, not thousands. But the power of revolutionary ideas and collective organization continue. They are what enable revolutionary Marxists to play a disproportionate, even a leading role in major class and social struggles. When Stalinist and social democratic forces refused, Trotskyist parties led massive unionization battles. They furnished material support for Algerian independence fighters, defended the Cuban revolution, mobilized millions against the U.S. imperialist war in Vietnam, won choice for women on abortion, and today resist military intervention aimed at Arab and Muslim peoples while contesting the capitalist austerity agenda that aims to dismantle a century of working class gains.

Without a party, each of us is but a grain of sand on the grand beach of life. But as Trotsky famously said, “The party is a lever, and with this lever we can move the world.” Even a very small, but principled revolutionary party, can have a greater positive political impact on the world than any one person can, no matter how brilliant she or he may be. ■

Argentine workers strike against Macri government

This article first appeared on the Left Voice website. It is an adaptation of a report by Josefin L. Martínez in La Izquierda Diario, a publication that reflects the views of the Argentine Partido de los Trabajadores Socialistas (PTS).

The Public Workers’ Association (in Spanish, the Asociación de Trabajadores del Estado, ATE) called the first public sector strike, protesting against thousands of layoffs of public administration and precarious workers in government agencies. Both wings of the public employees’ union federation (Central de Trabajadores Argentinos, CTA) joined the protest.

Mauricio Macri took office last December. Since then, his administration has issued austerity measures, layoffs of public employees, and currency devaluation. According to the ATE, a total of 25,000 public workers were dismissed. Layoffs are affecting workers all over the country. The Macri administration has announced its new policy of “public administration modernization,” which will include further austerity measures, the closure of public offices, and privatization.

The major unions in the private sector (industry, transport, banks, etc.), divided into different federations, have made a truce with the Macri government and have not joined the strike. Meanwhile, left groups and rank-and-file union organizations are demanding a plan of action, calling to “set up a massive protest with workers, women, and young people.”

The strike confronts massive layoffs and rejects a new anti-protest law pushed by Security Minister Patricia Bullrich. This “anti-protest protocol” will criminalize social protest; it sets up restrictions to civil liberties such as freedom of the press and the right to protest. This new protocol echoes other new laws and heavy-handed repression of journalists



around the world, including Spain’s “Ley Mordaza” (“Gag Law”) and the detention and harassment of journalists covering the Ferguson protests in August 2014.

The strike began Wednesday morning, Feb. 24, with several roadblocks (or “piquetes” in Argentina) and demonstrations countrywide. The public employees’ union has called for a demonstration at the Plaza de Mayo, which is at the center of the capital of Buenos Aires and a significant place of protest in Argentina. Teachers of Buenos Aires Province from rank-and-file and “fighting” unions will join the protest, together with press workers and left trade unionists.

Also, several protests have taken place in different cities, including Rosario, Cordoba, and Buenos Aires.

At the crossing of Corrientes and Callao, one of the main intersections in the capital, a massive “piquete” of approximately 1000 people blocked the streets for an hour in a great show of force, preventing police from applying the “anti-protest protocol.” In fact, the police had to leave the place, while the demonstrators remained blocking the street and walked up to the Congress, a few blocks away.

Left and Workers’ Front (FIT) deputies Myriam Bregman, Nicolás del Caño and Christian Castillo—all PTS (Partido de los Trabajadores Socialistas) members—have unanimously called to “organize the resistance of workers, women, and young people” against the austerity plan and the criminalization of protest. ■



Northern Lights

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No to Trudeau's Middle East military mission creep

By JOHN WILSON

There seems to be no end to the corporate media's barrage of propaganda in favour of the "war against ISIS." It is accompanied by relentless attempts to rationalize Western imperialist interventions in the Middle East and elsewhere. This presents a serious challenge to the antiwar movement—how to mobilize public opinion in a situation made to look so much more muddy than during the initial invasion of Iraq.

That was clearly the violation of a country's sovereignty, an invasion the vast majority in the Canadian state opposed.

People are horrified by the atrocities of ISIS and those of similar reactionary gangster operations. Popular revulsion is expertly manipulated by the warmongers. Still, the "war on ISIS" is a transparent *fraud*. The U.S. and its accomplices could quickly stop ISIS in its tracks simply by getting their "allies" in the region to stop funding and facilitating this monstrosity.

The venal Erdogan regime in Turkey has pretended to fight ISIS while allowing many would-be "jihadists" to pass through its territory to areas controlled by ISIS. Ankara's main concern is its war against the Kurdish people, which is used domestically to repress freedom of expression, trade unions, student groups and the left. Social patriotism in Turkey is used to try to whip the majority into accepting the attack on what little "democracy" is present there, in the name of fighting "terrorism," in much the same way as it is employed in Canada.

The crimes of ISIS are outrageous, but minor compared to the loss of millions of lives due to the reckless "interventions" of the imperialist powers in support of their perceived geopolitical interests and resource greed. Who or what is the real "terrorist threat"? The question answers itself.

Despite all the "sunny ways" propaganda, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's refusal to stop the \$15 billion military contract with the murderous Saudi regime may prove to be his Achilles' heel. Polls show majority opposition to the

deal. And as public awareness grows, the same will be the case with regard to Trudeau's decision to triple the number of Canadian troops on the ground in Iraq and Syria, and consideration now being given to renewed Canadian military intervention in Libya—a country wrecked in 2011 by NATO bombing under the command of a Canadian Forces general.

It's time for the antiwar movement, unions, and the labour-based New Democratic Party to step up efforts to educate and mobilize public opinion against the deceitful policies of the Liberal federal government. The halo of humanitarian aid provider and refugee host cultivated by Justin Trudeau should be exposed as cover for a devil's pitchfork that's pushing profitable arms sales, domestic repression, and foreign military intervention. Self-determination for the oppressed peoples of the Middle East and Africa! Canada out of NATO! ■

(Photo) Canadian servicemen carry coffin of a soldier killed in Iraq by "friendly fire" in March 2015.

Tom Mulcair's plea for redemption

By BARRY WEISLEDER

His Feb. 10 open letter has an air of desperation about it. And a touch of remorse. But it is severely lacking in political transparency and the identification of damaged principles. For New Democrats who consider electoral prospects paramount, it is enough to know that Tom Mulcair will not lead the party to victory in the next federal election in order to conclude that he must be replaced as Leader a.s.a.p.

But there are other, better reasons that lead inexorably to the same conclusion. The first is the status of the much-vaunted Interim Report of the Campaign Review Working Group, chaired by party president Rebecca Blaikie. The document remains in the shadows. It is bad enough that the hand-picked Review group included no one to the left of the establishment. Worse is that its findings are not intended for release.

Why were they not attached to Mulcair's Feb. 10 plaintive written plea for redemption? How can the party ranks properly appreciate the "insights" of the review if it is not unveiled well before the April convention? According to Blaikie, the Report summary will go only to the incoming federal executive and council. So much for transparency and the promises from on-high to improve communication and decision making.

Core social democratic values? It might be good to make a list of these, if only just to see how close they come to meeting human needs. Sadly, the letter does not.

"We fell short." That admission puts Mulcair in the global derby for understatement of the decade. Yet the "short"comings evidenced were not primarily due to what he cites as faults of "preparation and execution." The campaign content was dead wrong, and the super-centralized enforcement of its pro-capitalist message was decisively fatal.

Lapses? Cautiousness? Were those really the problems that impeded the vision—or was it the vision



itself? In his public missive, Mulcair asserts that "our commitment to balancing the budget overshadowed our social democratic economic vision which saw new government revenues generated through higher taxes for corporations, closing CEO tax loopholes and a crackdown on tax havens."

No, it was not a matter of overshadowing. It was a case of contradiction. Any attempt to balance the budget with such tiny moves on the revenue side was a prescription for soft austerity—not unlike what social democratic parties have offered or have implemented in Europe for years—and which is why many of them have been superseded by populist forces of the left and right.

And what about new pipelines? Is an NDP that condones, much less favours, the Energy East line compatible with a vision of a rapid shift to green, sustainable, public energy—the last hope of a civilization now at the brink?

While socialism is increasingly the watchword in Britain, even in the USA, why does Mulcair try to re-warm the leftover soup of the 2015 campaign, regurgitating the vague "goal of a fairer, more progressive Canada"?

"Respect between the Party and Caucus, and specifically respectful dialogue, will make us stronger." Now this looks like an opportunity for frankness. Exactly how was this respect lacking? Do tell us, Tom. And what about respect owed by the Leader for adopted policy, and for the right of members to seek to be nominated as a candidate without being censored, blocked, or removed for such crimes as quoting Amnesty International on the plight of Palestinians in Gaza or the West Bank?

We're told, "The campaign lacked an over-arching narrative that could easily communicate our progressive proposals." The truth is that a campaign theme was not lacking. It was clearly present and plainly reactionary. A balanced budget. No major new taxes. Incentives to big business, and a foreign policy to match. Mulcair's brain trust offered the Trudeau Liberals a bar so low that it was easy for the latter to hurdle it, however disingenuously. Canadians wanted a sharp break with the hated Harper regime. Instead of a LEAP forward, the NDP brass offered a cautious, awkward stagger towards a hazy horizon.

Newly appointed officials in the Leader's suite, however super-enthusiastic they may be, won't make a dime's worth of difference if they are cut from the same cloth as their predecessors.

What's really needed is policy decided from the bottom up, with plenty of time for debate at convention, and enforced adherence to the policy priorities decided by the mass membership. Really required is a Workers' Agenda, socialist policies, and new leadership. A so-called "strong role for government" just won't do, up against a violent, wasteful, and irrational system dominated by gargantuan greedy corporations and banks. The problem is capitalism, not mismanagement of the deck chairs on the Titanic.

The importance of the Leader should not be exaggerated to the detriment of other factors. Let's keep in mind that big change almost always comes from the bottom up. But in order to open the doors and windows to a more democratic and socialist process, there is no choice now other than to vote for Leader-ship Review at Edmonton in April. ■

... Socialists

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big problems we face. Take climate change, for example. Sure, house socialists say *we must do more*. But they emphasize tweaking economic incentives in the hope of persuading energy monopolies to change their behavior.

House socialists support keeping the energy industry in the hands of private, profit-mad corporations. But gentle persuasion hasn't changed corporate behavior up to now and we shouldn't expect it to succeed in the future.

As long as there are profits to be made by disregarding rules and incentives, corporations will do so. No incentives and no amount of persuasion can induce a leopard to change its spots; you have to replace the leopard.*

Few Americans realize that there are different kinds of socialists. Since house socialists are less of a threat to the powers-that-be, they tend to get a wider hearing than field socialists. In many European countries, house socialist parties have mass followings. House socialists have served as prime ministers in France, Sweden, Portugal, Norway, Luxemburg and elsewhere. Yet, capitalism hums merrily along in Europe as in most of the rest of the world.

If electing house socialists to high office made a crucial

difference to addressing global injustice, climate change or endless war, we would have seen it by now.

Unfortunately, there's no field socialist to vote for in the upcoming presidential election. Nor do we in the U.S. yet have a mass labor party rooted in the working class and linked to militant, fighting trade unions—which could serve as a real alternative to the parties of the 1%. Given this void,

It's not surprising that those fed up with the status quo might put their hopes in Bernie Sanders, a house socialist seeking to be the leader of a big-business party. But beware: while a vote for the house socialist candidate of a capitalist party might make some people feel good, no one should expect it to change much. ■

... Women

(continued from page 1)

crease in wait times to schedule appointments to 20-23 days in some cities. The increased wait times mean that more women will be forced to seek late-term abortions, a much more complicated and even less widely available medical procedure.

In addition, there is already evidence that Texas women are increasingly turning to self-induced procedures without medical assistance. The days of death by hidden efforts to terminate pregnancy are once again upon us. Women in Texas are reporting being forced by lack of travel funds, the inability to take days off work for such travel, necessary due to the closure of local clinics, to attempt to self-induce with herbs, teas, and medicines obtained in Mexico without a prescription. Many report failure to induce a complete abortion and having to seek emergency medical help despite their fears of prosecution.

Prosecution for self-induced abortion has also reappeared, most notably in Indiana in the case of Parvi Patel. Patel, 35 years of age, is currently serving 20 years of a 46-year sentence after being convicted of two incompatible crimes, “feticide” and child neglect. After Patel showed up in an emergency room after an incomplete miscarriage or self-induced abortion, the prosecution used ideologically tainted “medical” testimony against her, suggesting that somehow this fetus could have been saved by medical intervention.

They also argued that Patel, an immigrant disconnected from the U.S. health-care system, had attempted to terminate her own pregnancy with abortifacients (pills legal with a prescription in other states) ordered online. She has one more possible attempt at appeal.

National Advocates for Pregnant Women (NAPW) point out “the expansion of Indiana law to prosecute women in relation to their own pregnancies endangers public health and the civil rights of all people who are or may become pregnant.” Patel’s conviction, it almost goes without saying, stands in ironic counter-position to the treatment of thousands of immigrant children currently being held in private and abusive detention centers around the country.

The prosecution of pregnant women is continuing apace with the attempts to restrict the termination of an unwanted pregnancy. In Wisconsin, Tamara Loertscher, an unemployed woman who had lost her health insurance and was self-medicating for depression and pain, discovered she had become pregnant by her long-term boyfriend. She immediately ceased using drugs but admitted to past drug use when seeking prenatal care. She was convicted and spent time in jail based on a law that has resulted, according to NAPW, in the surveillance and investigation of more than 3000 women in the state. Federal courts have refused all efforts to have the law reviewed.

In Arkansas, thankfully, the Supreme Court reversed the conviction of Melissa McCann Arms for “introducing a controlled substance into the body of another person,” but the state attorney general is requesting that the legislature strengthen the law to specifically include pregnant women in a way that circumvents the Supreme Court ruling. In Tennessee, activists are fighting a 2014 law that permits the punishment of pregnant women whose babies were “harmful” by the mother’s use of narcotics. In Alabama, NAPW have documented the arrest of over 100 women.

The states that have begun punishing poor women in this manner are, in general, the states least likely to provide drug treatment for poor and pregnant women. These arrests have made it increasingly likely that a woman may be afraid to go to a hospital to deliver.



BERTA CACERES, an environmental activist and indigenous leader, was murdered at her home in Esperanza, Honduras, on March 3. When she received the 2015 Goldman Environmental Prize, Cáceres said: “We’re out of time. We must shake our conscience free of the rapacious capitalism, racism and patriarchy that will only assure our own self-destruction. Our mother earth, militarized, fenced in, poisoned, a place where basic rights are systematically violated, demands that we take action. ... I dedicate this award to all the rebels out there, and to my mother, and to the river, and to the martyrs who gave their lives in the struggle to defend our natural resources.”

Increasingly, low-wage women and women of color, especially in the South, are trapped in a Catch-22, in which both pregnancy and termination can entrap one in the intertwined tentacles of the racist social justice/criminal justice system.

One of the campaigns for the restriction of abortion rights that is most revealing about the class and racial agenda of the anti’s has to be the increasing use of the slogan “Babies Lives Matter” by clinic protesters. This slogan is designed to purge the public mind of sympathy with the real horror faced by African American mothers who begin each day praying that their children will not suffer the fate of Cleveland’s 12-year-old Tamir Rice at the hands of the police, and redirect that sympathy to reactionary aims.

It echoes the 2010 billboard campaign that plastered “Black Children are an Endangered Species” across the South, claiming “the most dangerous place for a Black child is in the womb,” and charging women of color with genocide for exercising their right to control their own body.

In response, groups like Sistersong, the Black Women’s Health Imperative, and other organizations found the Trust Black Women Partnership to educate and insist that from enslavement forward, the cutting edge of the civil rights movement has included the right of African American women to resist attempts to violate their bodily integrity. The slogan, and its appearance at the exact moment when the nation is reminded that due to deliberate governmental neglect up to a fifth of the nation’s urban children may still be exposed to debilitating lead exposures and other toxins, must set the parameters of the type of movement necessary to defend reproductive justice today.

The demonstration of a few thousand demonstrators for women’s choice held at the Supreme Court

on March 2, although relatively modest in size, helped signal that a lot is at stake. But what is needed in terms of protest is of an entirely different order and magnitude.

Since the legalization of abortion in 1972, both Republican and Democratic Party legislators have been whittling away at this victory. In the last five years, the tool they have begun wielding is more like an ax than a penknife. While there are differences among different strata of the ruling elite about just how far to go in terms of gutting abortion availability, the overall impulse is in the wrong direction.

The attempt to roll back many of the gains won by the women’s movement of the 1970s in the U.S. is echoed in Europe, where the economic crisis and the corresponding popularity of rightist solutions, is contributing to similar legislative initiatives. The roots of this offensive lie deep in the current crisis of capitalism and efforts to manage economic unrest and to maintain elite rule. Thus, it cannot be adequately taken on through bourgeois elections, lobbying, or crafting arguments to appeal to the judicial theories of this or that judge. Instead, we must return to struggle in the streets, to protests that unite the right to a safe abortion with the right to raise a healthy child of color; to marches that demonstrate that millions of women and their allies are truly ready to fight for reproductive justice.

Marches and protests and all the meetings and conferences that it will take to mount them are the key to consolidating majority opinion and public support on our side. The Supreme Court that legalized abortion in 1972 was as unlikely as any to hand down such a ruling; the decision was a reaction to women’s power in the streets. We must begin showing that political power again. ■

... Muslims

(continued from page 12)

last May, charged with supporting terrorism for allegedly trying to buy false passports (presumably so they could leave the country and join ISIS) and threatened with 15-plus-year jail terms if convicted.

The assembled crowd heard as well from Karen Schraufnagel of Socialist Action, the panel’s moderator, who pointed out that: “Muslim youth are not the threat. Black youth are not the threat. Immigrants and refugees are here escaping U.S. imperialist wars or fleeing the desperate poverty that capitalist global trade policies inflict on their home countries.

“The forces of capitalism and imperialism are the real

threat. But their crimes are not even called crime, they go by the name of “profit maximization.” Make no mistake, profit maximization is ecocidal, genocidal violence. Hands off the Muslim community! Prosecute the *real* criminals!”

During the same week an action took place in Wisconsin that truly highlighted the integral role immigrants (in this case Latin@s) play in keeping the capitalist system afloat. The STARI coalition was not involved in organizing “Un Dia Sin Latinos” (see article on page 2) but were deeply gratified to see more than 20,000 people gather in the capitol city to protest two pieces of ignorant anti-immigrant legislation.

Another deeply gratifying rally occurred days after the official week of action ended. At the State House in Providence, Rhode Island, a rally against Syrian refugees was completely overwhelmed by refugee supporters. The

anti-Syrian Refugee rally was sponsored by the Boston-based Americans for Peace and Tolerance (an Orwellian name if ever there was one). Their speakers were visibly flustered facing hundreds and hundreds opposed to their message, who repeatedly interrupted and challenged them.

When the racist rally finally ended, the pro-Refugee forces took to the stage with speaker after speaker sharing messages of love and solidarity with the immigrant and refugee communities. Perhaps as many as 200 students from various organizations at Brown University worked with CAIR-MA, Rhode Island State Council of Churches, several Unitarian Universalist churches, the Refugee Dream Center and others to pull off the counter protest at the anti-Syrian Refugee event and pro-refugee rally that followed.

Stop Islamophobia! Defend the Muslim Community! ■

Stop the persecution of Muslims and immigrants!



By KAREN SCHRAUFNAGEL

Beginning in early January, Socialist Action joined with many other organizations for a series of conference calls on the need for united action to more effectively combat the rising tide of Islamophobia and anti-immigrant and anti-refugee hatred in this country. The ad-hoc coalition that was formed took the name Stand Together Against Racism and Islamophobia ("STARI") and put out a call for a week of coordinated actions across the country between Feb. 13 and Feb. 21.

As the call explains: "The corporate media and some politicians on both sides of the aisle believe their interests can be advanced by scapegoating the poor and those oppressed by racism, anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant prejudice, mass deportations, and the exclusion of refugees fleeing endless U.S.-supported wars abroad.

"Hate, fear mongering and war are increasingly publicly promoted for heinous ends and especially to divide the victims of the ever-deepening social cut-backs government austerity policies inflict. We say no to Islamophobia and all forms of religious prejudice. We denounce the endless racist police murders of unarmed members of the nation's Black and poor communities. We reject militarily sealed borders and mass deportations of Latino people."

Responding to the call, even before the official week started, two significant events were held on the East Coast. On Jan. 19, more than 200 people came out to a zoning board hearing in Bayonne, N.J., to support the Muslim community when their application to build an Islamic community center drew vitriolic protest from racists.

Unfortunately, the packed meeting, which ran four hours, produced no decision from the board, and advocates for justice will be forced to return to the next hearing slated for March 14. On Jan. 31, the Bangladesh American Community Council held a Town Hall Meeting in the Bronx, N.Y., to strengthen minority

voices in the national dialogue.

By the time the week started, nearly 70 organizations across the country had endorsed the call, and events took place from California to Connecticut and from Superior, Wis., to Houston, Texas.

The week began on Saturday, Feb. 13, with a panel discussion at Trinity College in Connecticut. The event was entitled, "Opposing Islamophobia, Deportations, Racism, and War," and drew about 60 people to hear Connecticut Council of American Islamic Relations (CAIR) director Mongi Dhaouadi, among others. Grannies for Peace in Albany, N.Y., held a Valentine's vigil that same day. Featuring a banner that read, "Grannies Embrace Refugees: Spread Love Not Hate," and wearing red, 19 grannies (and their allies) braved frigid weather to send their message of love to refugees driven from their homes by war and climate change.

On Valentine's Day, shoppers at a mall in Houston were greeted by members of the Islamic Society of Greater Houston Social Services Committee who passed out 300 roses, with the Quran verse attached: "Humanity is but a single brotherhood; so make peace with your brethren." In Tallahassee, Fla., the Network for Justice and Peace, together with local chapters of Vietnam Veterans Against the War and Veterans for Peace held a Peace and Justice Picket Line.

In Superior, Wis., where mayor Bruce Hagen was in the news recently for an Islamophobic smear of President Obama, 10 picketers brought the message: "Love Diversity / Hate Islamophobia" to a busy intersection. The action drew an equal number of counter-protesters, presumably to advocate AGAINST diversity and FOR hatred.

Before the week was over, there was an interfaith discussion in Orchard, N.Y., a film showing in Rochester, N.Y. ("My Name is Khan" provides perspective on the life experience of Muslim refugees and immigrants in this country), and forums in Berkeley, Calif., Richmond, Va., and Minneapolis. The Solidarity Forum in Virginia was dedicated to the legacy of Malcolm X

(Above) Anti-racist protesters in Minneapolis.

(marking the 51st anniversary of his assassination) and included six speakers who addressed attacks on Middle Eastern and African-American Muslims, Latino immigrants, the Black community generally, low-income workers, and the environment in front of an audience of nearly 60.

In Minneapolis, over two dozen endorsing organizations came together to create a new coalition, Minnesotans Against Islamophobia, which hosted a rally, march, and panel presentation on Saturday, Feb. 20. More than 150 people participated over the course of the afternoon. With such signs as "NO to War, YES to Refugees," and chants including "FBI let's be clear, Muslims are welcome here," the rally & march through the West Bank neighborhood delighted the largely immigrant residents, some of whom joined in.

At the panel that followed the march, audience members learned about the Department of Homeland Security's "Countering Violent Extremism" (CVE) program and the effect it is having on the local Somali Community. The speakers were CAIR-MN executive director Jaylani Hussein, Sadik Warfa of Global Somali Diaspora, Imam Hassan Mohamoud, and Deqa Warsame—the mother of Khalid Abdulkhadir, one of several Somali youth currently in jail awaiting trial on very serious charges.

Minnesota has the largest population of Somali immigrants in the country and is one of only three metro areas where the controversial CVE program is being tested (the other two are Boston and Los Angeles). In the name of stopping terrorism, this program is in local high schools, directing teachers to spy on "radicalizing" students.

Wearing head covering or other religious clothing is taken as a sign that a student is becoming radical. Paid informants are sent in to entrap young people. This is what happened in the case of some youths arrested

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