

Longtime supporter of International Committee in US dies

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David Nickerson, a longtime supporter of the Socialist Equality Party in the United States and its forerunner, the Workers League, died in his sleep in Los Angeles on November 25 at the age of 62. He had battled a rare degenerative muscular disease and a heart condition for nearly a decade.

David was born in 1941 in Dedham, Massachusetts, a suburb of Boston. He joined the Workers League in 1971 after spending several years in the US Navy, stationed on a ship in the Mediterranean, and studying in Marlboro, Vermont and at the City College of New York, where he graduated with a mathematics degree in 1970.

In New York City, Dave enthusiastically campaigned for the party's policies in Local 3036 of the Taxi Drivers and Allied Workers union, where the Workers League had considerable support among cab drivers opposed to the union leadership, headed by Harry Van Arsdale. In November 1971, Dave won over 20 percent of the vote among Manhattan cab drivers, running on a platform which called for a general strike to overturn President Richard Nixon's pay freeze, the removal of all union leaders from Nixon's Pay Board and for the building of a Labor Party to oppose the Democrats and Republicans in the 1972 presidential elections.

Dave did political work in several cities, including Cleveland, Ohio, in the early 1970s and Los Angeles, where he lived until his death. In Cleveland he won a following for the Workers League and its newspaper, the *Bulletin*, among co-workers at Alcoa Aluminum and the US Post Office. In Los Angeles he worked actively among auto, dock, rubber and aerospace workers during the militant trade union struggles of the late 1970s. Comrades who worked with him remember Dave for his enormous energy, devotion to the principles of the movement and his willingness to defy

the threats and, at times, physical attacks of the union bureaucracy and other political opponents.

By the 1980s Dave was no longer as politically active. However, he continued to support the Workers League and expressed his solidarity with the International Committee of the Fourth International in the 1985-86 split with the British Workers Revolutionary Party, which had abandoned the internationalist principles of the Trotskyist movement.

With the launching of the Socialist Equality Party in 1996 and the *World Socialist Web Site* two years later, Dave revived his political activity. Despite his physical ailments, he contributed several articles—written under the pen name Nick Davis—on the social and political crisis in California and its impact on the working class and found ways to distribute statements from the WSWs to workers and students. He joined in the distribution of the party's statement on director and FBI informant Elia Kazan during the Academy Awards ceremony in 1999. He also intervened in several antiwar demonstrations in Los Angeles in the lead-up to the US attack on Iraq last March.

Most recently Dave actively participated in the SEP's campaign during the recall election in California. Again, despite his physical limitations, he enthusiastically gathered signatures needed to place John Christopher Burton on the ballot and explained the need for the working class to build its own political party as a socialist alternative to the two big business parties.

According to his wife of 13 years, Alison, Dave's passion for politics grew out of his passion for life. "He thought about the world 24 hours a day, seven days a week—what was happening, what was needed. But he was passionate about many things," she said. Beginning at the time he was a sailor in the Navy, she

said, Dave developed a deep affection for the work of Shakespeare, reading plays on the ship's bridge late at night. He was a great lover of classical music, particularly Bach, and until his final days he attended classes in Balkan and Israeli folk-dancing.

Dave is survived by his wife and three brothers.

On Sunday, December 14, family, friends and comrades will gather in Los Angeles to spread Dave's ashes in the Pacific Ocean.



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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