

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
South African revolution: Historic victory for working people
 — PAGE 8

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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Liberals hail FBI witch hunt against Trump White House

BY TERRY EVANS

Liberals are singing the praises of the U.S. political police after former FBI boss Robert Mueller indicted 13 Russian individuals and three Russian organizations for conspiracy to “defraud the United States” by interfering in politics here.

The Feb. 16 indictments accuse the 13 Russians of participating in a so-called troll operation on the internet beginning in 2014, inventing U.S. identities, promoting a variety of political views to roil viewers and staging rallies related to the 2016 campaign. They make no allegation that Donald Trump’s campaign was involved in any way, and they say there is no evidence this operation affected the election outcome. Those charged worked for a company with close ties to the Kremlin, Mueller claims. The evidence marshaled is similar to previous press reports, including a 2015 *New York Times* magazine piece called “The Agency.”

“Our FBI, CIA, NSA [National Security Agency], working with the special counsel [Mueller], have done us

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Demand amnesty for immigrant workers!

Propertied rulers debate who to let in, keep out



Omaha World-Herald/Kent Sievers via AP

Sept. 10 Omaha, Nebraska, protest. Socialist Workers Party says Amnesty for all immigrants!

BY SETH GALINSKY

Democratic and some Republican senators on the one side and President Donald Trump on the other are blaming each other for the failure to pass legislation that would block the deportation of thousands of immigrant “dreamers” who came to the U.S. be-

fore they were 16.

Meanwhile, the number of immigrants crossing the border is rising again, as bosses seek cheap labor in the midst of an uptick in production.

**AMNESTY NOW!
 NO DEPORTATIONS!**
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Last September President Trump announced he was phasing out the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, created by former Presi-

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Capitalist rulers in South Africa see new government as road to profits

BY SETH GALINSKY

The propertied rulers in South Africa are hoping the ouster of President Jacob Zuma and his replacement with wealthy businessman Cyril Ramaphosa, who recently replaced Zuma as president of the African National Congress as well, signals a more favorable environment for stability and capitalist development.

Production and trade never recovered in South Africa, the most industrialized nation in Africa, after the economy was ravaged by the 2008 worldwide capitalist economic crisis. Mining, which once comprised close to 20 percent of the country’s gross domestic product, generated just 7.3 percent by 2016. International rating

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Conflicts heat up in Syria as US, rivals push interests

BY TERRY EVANS

The multifront conflicts in Syria being fought by rival capitalist powers in the region — alongside intervention from Moscow and the imperialist rulers in Washington — continue to take a horrific toll on working people there. As each of these powers seeks to assert its own military and political interests, conflicts among them have sharpened.

Officials of the opposing sides clashed at the Feb. 16-18 Munich Security Conference.

Holding a piece of an Iranian drone Israeli forces shot down after it flew into Israel from Syria, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told the gathering that Tel Aviv would do whatever it takes to prevent Tehran from having a permanent military presence in Syria and would continue to directly target Iranian Revolutionary Guard and Tehran-backed militias based there.

In response, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif taunted Netanyahu about how Syrian gunners brought down an Israeli jet that retali-

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‘The Cuban people made a real revolution, it changed everything’



Militant photos: Above, Lea Sherman; inset, Arnold Weissberg “In Cuba, if a worker is hurt, an immediate investigation is done. The focus is what those running the project should have done to prevent the accident,” Griselda Aguilera said at Feb. 9 meeting, above, with Black construction workers of Laborers Local 79, one of a dozen events during her New York/New Jersey tour. Inset, Aguilera at citywide meeting at Nurses union hall Feb. 10.

BY SHEILA LAWRENCE

NEW YORK — “In a real revolution, everything changes. In 1959 in Cuba there was a real revolution and everything and everyone changed,” Griselda Aguilera told students at City College of New York Feb. 8. Over the course of five days Aguilera spoke to more than 400 people at 12 events in



New York City and New Jersey, one leg of a tour on the East Coast.

Aguilera was the youngest of tens of thousands of volunteers who joined the effort that wiped out illiteracy in Cuba in 1961. Some 700,000 workers and peasants learned to read and write during what the Cubans called the “Year

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Criminal ‘justice’ parole system pushes workers back into prison

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

There is a debate today among the capitalist rulers and those they’ve tasked with running their criminal “justice” system — whether it’s in their best interests to reduce the number of workers behind bars and those

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Agreement ends final case against Quebec rail worker IG Metall, Germany’s biggest union, makes a deal

Protesters demand Aboriginal rights, hit racist ‘Australia Day’

BY RON POULSEN

SYDNEY — Tens of thousands of people, overwhelmingly youth, protested around the country Jan. 26 in the largest demonstrations in support of Aboriginal rights in decades. The actions were called to counter the rulers’ patriotic Australia Day holiday.

Aboriginal people view the anniversary of the founding of the original British penal settlement at Sydney Cove in 1788 as Invasion Day, making it a focal point for anger over oppressive social conditions indigenous people continue to face. This undermines the moral legitimacy and so-called “national cohesion” the capitalist rulers crave as they face a deepening political and moral crisis.

Aboriginal youth and elders here led off a march of up to 20,000 from The Block — a traditional inner-city Aboriginal district — to the nearby Yabun concert celebrating indigenous culture and music.

Another Aboriginal rights rally here drew 1,000. Backed by Labor Party and union officials, some Aboriginal leaders called for a treaty between the government and Australia’s First Peoples, similar to those reached between native peoples and other colonial-settler imperialist governments in New Zealand and Canada.

They marched to the building in central Sydney where a Day of Mourning congress was held in 1938, the first national Aboriginal civil rights protest.

The marches were awash with red, black and yellow, the colors of the Aboriginal flag. Chanting “No pride in

genocide!” and “Always was, always will be, Aboriginal land!” protesters pointed to the decimation of the indigenous population by massacres, disease and being driven off their ancestral tribal lands.

Largest such protests since 1970s

Thousands in other cities around the country joined similar protests. By far the biggest was in Melbourne, where some 60,000 took to the streets. “I haven’t seen a crowd like this since the 1970s, the heyday of the Aboriginal political movement,” Gary Foley, a longtime Black activist and now a history professor, told the rally.

The Australian rulers’ celebration “is essentially about colonization, death, murder, and rape,” Aboriginal activist Adrian Burragubba told the Sydney rally. Burragubba is the leader of a campaign by traditional Aboriginal landowners to block the huge Adani coal mine development in Queensland.

Ken Canning from Fighting in Resistance Equally, who chaired the Sydney rally, drew attention to Black deaths in detention. “We have the highest deaths in custody rates in the world per head of population, the highest imprisonment rates,” he said.

“Too many cops, never any justice!” marchers chanted as they kicked off the demonstration here. Other banners denounced federal government police intervention in the affairs of remote Northern Territory Aboriginal communities.

The protest was to highlight the



Militant/Ron Poulsen

Tens of thousands marched Jan. 26 across Australia, including in Sydney, above, in largest march for rights of Aborigines in years, protesting what First People call “Invasion Day.”

“fight for the right to our land, our culture, our language, our people, our laws,” Sue-Ellen Tighe, founder of Grandmothers Against Removals, told the Sydney rally. “In 2018 we should not be the marginalized race in the nation. We are the First Peoples.”

Some placards called for the Australian government to “change the date” of Australia Day, reflecting a growing debate in politics and the media here. Some Greens, Labor and Black representatives to Parliament seek to deflect Aboriginal protests by moving the nationalist celebration to some other, “less divisive” holiday.

In recent years, the rulers have used the celebration to talk about Australia’s

growing “multiculturalism,” trying to reinforce the myth that “we are one.”

“But there is no ‘we’ in Australia’s class-divided society,” I said, speaking for the Communist League, at a Militant Labor Forum here Feb. 17. “This is what we explained to people on the march.

“The billionaire ruling families exploit and oppress the real ‘us’ — the working class and its allies, whether Aborigine or Caucasian, immigrant or native-born,” I said. “The Communist League points to the example of the socialist revolution in Cuba, where workers and farmers organized to take political power and uprooted discrimination and oppression.”

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— Jack Barnes

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THE MILITANT

Defend a woman’s right to abortion!

The Irish government’s decision to hold a referendum on repeal of a constitutional ban on abortion is part of a broader shift in support for social rights. The referendum, and increasing support for its passage, comes in response to a growing campaign for abortion rights.



Reuters/Clodagh Kilcoyne

Protest in Dublin, Sept. 24, 2016, demanding repeal of Ireland’s ban on abortion.

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Communist League in UK says workers need to fight for power

BY ÓLÖF ANDRA PROPPÉ

LONDON — Pamela Holmes, the Communist League candidate for mayor of the borough of Tower Hamlets, East London, took her communist campaign to an area where residents are demanding the borough council improve the safety of their homes. Their efforts follow the deaths of 71 people at a fire at Grenfell Tower in West London last June where authorities failed to take measures that could have prevented the rapid spread of the inferno.

The fire was fed by cladding on the building's exterior that the council knew was a hazard, but did nothing about, creating a death trap. Tens of thousands of other workers around the country continue to live in similar housing. Tower Hamlets residents have presented petitions calling on the council to inspect the cladding on the blocks where they live and immediately install sprinklers.

Joined by campaign supporters, Holmes knocked on doors Feb. 10 to talk to workers in Tower Hamlets.

"Neither Conservative nor Labour parties have an answer to the political and moral crisis of the capitalist rulers," Holmes told construction worker Segree Hall when he answered the door. "That's why the Communist League explains that workers need to organize independently of them and build a movement of millions that can take power from the U.K.'s capitalist rulers."

"There are plenty of construction workers around here who could do all the work that's needed but the jobs go to workers at the big companies," Hall said. With some 1.4 million people out of work according to government figures, workers are forced to compete with each other to try to make a living.

"Working people need to find ways to overcome the competition for jobs as we fight to meet the need for safe homes," Holmes said. "The Communist League fights for a public works program to put millions back to work at union-scale wages to make the repairs and build the houses, hospitals and other facilities workers need." Hall set an appointment for Holmes to come back to talk further and to take a look at the CL's literature.

Supporters of the campaign also introduced the party's revolutionary course as they joined thousands demonstrating here Feb. 3 against declining health care from the country's National Health Service. The campaign table displayed placards, including two that read: "It's not who you're against it's what you're for! Workers must take political power!" and "Organize all workers — agency and permanent, native born and foreign born! Amnesty for undocumented workers!"

For lack of sufficient government funding thousands of people have had "nonurgent" surgeries canceled this winter, and there has been a shortage of beds with many patients kept waiting in ambulances outside hospitals. In January Accident and Emergency doctors wrote to Prime Minister Theresa May complaining that patients were dying in corridors while waiting for treatment.

The demonstration was called by the People's Assembly and Health Campaigns Together under the banner: "NHS in crisis: Fix it now." The People's Assembly says the answer is to throw out the ruling Conservative Party and replace it with Labour.

"I travel a lot," Angus Ford, a film location worker attending the protest, told Holmes. "And every time I come back



Militant
Pamela Holmes, Communist League candidate for mayor of Tower Hamlets, East London, discusses how to fight for jobs with construction worker Segree Hall on his doorstep Feb. 10.

there are new stories about how the NHS has got worse. Might it not be better with a Labour Party government?"

"No, Labour promises to protect the NHS and make capitalism 'fairer.' But it's not just a matter of putting more funds into health care," Holmes replied. "Under capitalism health care, like everything else, is a commodity that's bought and sold for profit. In these conditions there will always be a class-divided crisis of health care for working people.

"Workers here must look to our own

capacities like the toilers in Cuba who overthrew capitalist rule, ending its dog-eat-dog social relations, and set out to build a society based on human solidarity and the needs of the toiling majority," Holmes said. She pointed to the decisive role played by Cuban doctors and medical staff in eliminating Ebola in West Africa. Ford picked up a subscription to the *Militant* to follow the campaign.

The Communist League is also running Hugo Wils for Tameside Council and Catharina Tirsén for Manchester City Council.

Gov't moves to reopen frame-up case against Bundys

BY SETH GALINSKY

U.S. prosecutors have not given up their witch hunt against the Bundy cattle-ranching family in Nevada, even after the feds' frame-up charges against them and their supporters have either been thrown out of court or led to acquittal at trial.

The Nevada U.S. Attorney's Office asked U.S. District Judge Gloria Navarro Feb. 7 to "reinstate the entire indictment" against Cliven Bundy, his sons Ammon and Ryan Bundy, and supporter Ryan Payne, or to allow them to prosecute on at least some of the charges.

At the same time the prosecutors moved that charges against four other

defendants in a parallel case be dismissed, since, they admitted, there is little chance a conviction can be won.

When the frame-up began to unravel, Navarro decried the government's "outrageous" and "flagrant misconduct" Jan. 8, and dismissed all the charges against the Bundys and Payne "with prejudice" — meaning they cannot be filed again. This is what government prosecutors are trying to get the judge to reverse.

The judge noted not only did the prosecution withhold evidence from the defendants, it made "several misrepresentations to the defense, and to the Court." Among the "misrepresentations" — legalese for lies — were deni-

als that the government deployed snipers and surveillance cameras around the Bundy ranch, as well as hiding the existence of government reports containing information that contradicted the prosecutions' case against them.

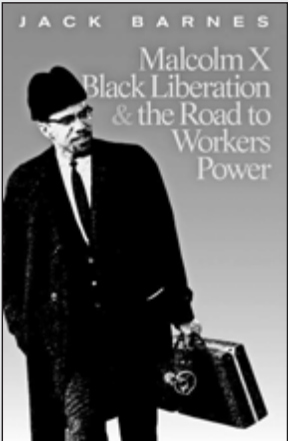
The frame-up charges — from conspiracy to "impede and injure a federal officer" to "obstruction of justice" — stem from the refusal of Cliven Bundy to allow the Bureau of Land Management to confiscate hundreds of his cattle in April 2014. When the family called for help and hundreds of supporters showed up, federal agents backed down and the cattle were released.

The four defendants had been held in prison for some two years waiting for trial.

The BLM claimed that the restrictions on cattle grazing on federal land the Bundys had used for decades — restrictions that drove every other rancher in Clark County out of business — were necessary to protect the "threatened" desert tortoise. Yet in 2013 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reported so many thousands of pet desert tortoises had been abandoned at a wildlife center that it couldn't take any more.

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Amnesty for immigrants!

Continued from front page
dent Barack Obama by executive order. Trump said he wants to hang onto the dreamers too, but it has to be done by Congress.

Six bills were introduced but none was able to get the 60 votes needed under current Senate rules to be approved. The bill backed by Trump would grant the deferred status to some 1.8 million youth, far more than the 800,000 applicants approved under Obama’s program.

The bill coupled the reprieve for the dreamers with new restrictions on immigration. It would limit family-based visas to parents and nonadult children; end the immigration lottery, which provides a road to the U.S. for tens of thousands; and authorize billions of dollars to extend the already existing wall on the Mexican border.

A bipartisan Senate bill that also failed would have increased those eligible to be dreamers to some 3.2 million, and without restrictive measures Trump demanded. Backers of this bill knew it didn’t have a chance of passing, much less overcome a presidential veto. Their goal was to score points against Trump, with an eye to the 2018 elections.

Two recent federal court rulings have temporarily blocked ending the DACA program March 10, giving more time for a possible compromise.

Absent from the feigned concern for the dreamers and the rulers’ debate are the rest of the 11 million undocumented workers in the U.S.

Bosses depend on immigrant labor

The propertied rulers have never been out to halt the flow of immigrants, only to regulate it based on their needs. By maintaining a pariah layer of workers — without “proper” papers or with “guest” papers that give them almost no rights — the bosses get cheaper labor, divide the working class and keep wages for everyone down. This is essential for U.S. capital to bolster its competitive drive against rivals abroad.

The liberal press and middle-class left gives the impression that the Trump administration has engineered a huge crackdown on immigrants. And, they claim, Trump’s election represents a growing racist and anti-immigrant wave in the working class.

In January 2017, Obama’s last month in office, 42,463 people without papers were detained trying to get into the country. By April, under Trump, that number had fallen to 15,766, a reflection that fewer workers were trying to cross.

But over the last eight months the number has begun to grow again — a result of the uptick in the capitalist economy. More than 40,000 people were arrested in December.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents arrested nearly 106,000 so-

called criminal immigrants in 2017 and 38,000 “noncriminals.” This is higher than similar arrests in Obama’s last year in office, but half the number arrested each year during Obama’s first term.

In 2008 the government stopped conducting immigration factory raids, due to their unpopularity among workers, immigrant and native-born alike. In their place ICE stepped up workplace audits, which lead to the firings of thousands of workers without papers. Under Obama, the audits skyrocketed from 503 in 2008 to more than 3,000 in 2013 and 2014. In 2017, after Trump took office, ICE carried out 1,360 audits.

‘Merit-based’ immigration?

A Feb. 6 *Wall Street Journal* column by liberal William Galston, a former adviser to Bill Clinton, was titled “The Case for Merit-Based Immigration,” arguing for restricting legal entry of “unskilled” immigrants.

“President Trump has proposed moving toward a [merit-based] system,” he says. “This idea is worth discussing.”

Despite the heated factional rhetoric, this view is shared by most liberals, including many middle-class leaders of groups protesting for the dreamers, who are touted as future professionals with “so much to offer America.”

At least some opponents of deportations are uncomfortable with this meritocratic, anti-working-class view, and with leaders of immigrant rights groups abandoning the fight for amnesty for all undocumented workers.

“There are millions of others that will be left out in the cold under any deal for the dreamers,” Kevin Appleby from the Center for Migration Studies told the *National Catholic Reporter* Feb. 13. “I am a bit concerned that advocates have not kept talking about the need to bring everyone out of the shadows, not just the dreamers.”

Liberals hail FBI witch hunt against White House

Continued from front page
amazingly proud,” columnist Thomas Friedman gushes in the *Times* Feb. 18. But there is no “us.”

The spy agencies he applauds serve the propertied rulers *against* the working class. The FBI is tasked by the bosses to spy on, disrupt and frame up working-class militants, Black rights and Puerto Rican independence fighters, and opponents of Washington’s wars. Examples include framing up leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and the Teamsters union in Minneapolis for speaking out against the rulers’ drive to enter the second imperialist world war to decades of Cointelpro attacks on the party and other political groups.

Like all the rulers’ frame-up grand juries and special prosecutors, Mueller’s probe against the Trump presidency starts with a target and then roots around for evidence. The charge that those indicted conspired to “defraud the U.S.” is so broad it could be used to target almost anyone for anything. Such laws are written that way to make it easy for the cops and spy agencies to use them to go after working-class fighters.

The liberals and middle-class left are determined to criminalize their political differences with Trump to drive him out of office. Democrats lined up in a frenzy to claim Mueller had found the “smoking gun” against him. It went so far that Democrat Rep. Jerry Nadler from New

‘We’ll protest until all the lights are on in Puerto Rico’



Alex Figueroa

More than 200 residents of Aguas Buenas and nearby towns marched outside Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority’s central offices in San Juan Feb. 12. They sang, “We come from Aguas Buenas to let you know, if the light doesn’t come on, we’ll be here [outside your office] forever.”

Five months and counting since hurricanes Irma and Maria hit the island at least 700,000 people are still without light, and many don’t have running water.

“At a meeting at the House of Christ the Savior Catholic Church, community members decided to organize ourselves regardless of political affiliation or religion and protest,” Father Hipólito Vicens, who helped organize the action, told the *Militant* by phone Feb. 16. The Feb. 12 protest was the largest of dozens of similar actions that have been taking place across the U.S. colony.

“There’s some work being done on the outskirts of the town, but it’s extremely slow,” Vicens said. “And 10 or 11 trucks from a U.S. company park here every day, but they don’t do any work.”

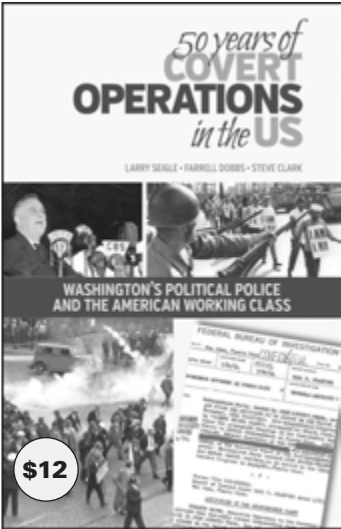
How did company bosses respond? “The power company removed all the brigades that were actually doing any work,” he said. “Now the only ones that come are the ones from the U.S. that park their trucks and don’t do anything.”

“We’re going to hold another assembly Feb. 26 to discuss what’s next,” Vicens said. “Our dream is to include people from the rural and mountainous areas across the central part of the island. These are the poorer, less developed zones that have been left totally on their own.”

A bankruptcy court Feb. 19 approved a \$300 million loan to the Power Authority, less than a third of what it says it needs to buy enough fuel to keep running. To help pay the Puerto Rican government’s \$74 billion debt, Gov. Ricardo Rosselló plans to sell off the power company to the highest bidder.

The Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico — tasked with squeezing Puerto Rican working people to pay as much back to bondholders as possible — is now demanding the colonial regime strike down laws there that prevent bosses from firing workers without cause.

— SETH GALINSKY



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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Seattle school bus drivers win new contract

SEATTLE — Seattle School District bus drivers who are members of Teamsters Local 174 overwhelmingly ratified a contract with First Student bosses Feb. 10 after a nine-day strike here. Teamster leaders say advances were made in getting health care coverage workers can afford, and drivers will become part of the Teamsters pension plan.

“We have a specific job to make sure students get to and from school safely,” Miguel Angel Camargo, a five-year veteran driver for First Student, told Socialist Workers Party members when we joined their picket line. “We need to be healthy and are entitled to decent health care coverage.”

Drivers said backing from the community and the teachers union helped to win the contract. On Feb. 7, Seattle Education Association members fanned out across the city to tell people about the strike. They lined street corners near their schools with signs and chanted support for the strikers’ demands.

“The Teamsters supported us in our strike a few years ago,” said Emma Klein, a teacher at Genesee Hill Elementary School, explaining that they had stood at a busy intersection in West Seattle. “We have common goals and we want to make sure the drivers have a living wage, health care and pensions.”

In recent weeks drivers employed by First Student also fought for new contracts in Southern California, Montreal, and Manchester, England.

— Edwin Fruit

IG Metall, Germany’s biggest union, makes a deal

After a month of brief walkouts and a series of 24-hour protest strikes, IG Metall, Germany’s biggest union, has signed a contract covering 900,000 workers in the state of Baden-Wurttemberg. The same deal is likely to be rolled out for the union’s members nationwide — some 3.9 million metal and electrical workers at thousands of companies, including manufacturing giants like Volkswagen, Bosch, Siemens, Mercedes-Benz and Airbus.

The agreement, which runs for 27 months, stipulates a 4.3 percent wage raise starting in April. Individual workers won the option to work 28 hours a week if they need time to care for children or aging relatives, but they would face a cut in pay. The standard workweek for IG Metall members is 35 hours.

And union officials agreed to a trade-off — if bosses find themselves short of workers, they can sign 40-hour-a-week contracts with workers. Bosses told the press the deal has some “painful elements,” but most thought it would work well for them.

“Employees have more opportunities to reduce their hours of work,” said Stefan Wolf, chief negotiator for Sudwestmetall, “while companies get more options to increase the volume of working hours.”

Last year the German economy grew at its fastest rate since 2011 and official unemployment is at its lowest since 1990.

— Emma Johnson

Faculty union calls first strike ever at University of Quebec in Outaouais

SAINT-JEROME, Quebec — Some 250 professors at the University of Quebec in Outaouais went out on the first strike action in the faculty union’s 37-year history Jan. 17. The University of



Militant/Michele Smith

Seattle Education Association members picket Feb. 7 in support of Teamsters school bus drivers who struck First Student bosses. Nine-day strike led to gains in health care coverage, pensions.

Quebec is a system of 10 public universities in the province.

The 10-hour strike occurred in Gatineau and Saint-Jerome, where the main campuses in Quebec are located. Members of the Professors Union have been without a contract since May 1, 2015. The union is demanding wage parity with the system’s other similar-sized universities, more funds for research, equitable working conditions among campuses, and the representation of union members in the committees that decide policy for the university.

“In the last 30 months, professors have tried to come to an understanding with an employer bent on maintaining a kind of immobility, in addition to confusing the issues surrounding the aims pursued by the administration,” Louise Briand, the union president, told the press. “We have repeatedly tried to reason with the employer regarding the importance of offering work conditions that are necessary for the university’s development.”

— David Lefrancois, member of the Professors Union

Agreement ends final case against Quebec rail worker

BY JOHN STEELE

On Jan. 19 locomotive engineer Tom Harding and train traffic controller Richard Labrie, members of United Steelworkers Local 1976, won acquittal by a jury on frame-up charges of criminal negligence for the deaths of 47 people in the July 2013 Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, oil train derailment and explosion. The Quebec prosecutor’s office announced Feb. 16 it will not appeal the verdict.

Facing some lesser noncriminal charges flowing from the disaster, Harding, the central target of the frame-up, a handful of Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway officials, and the now bankrupt railway company went on trial in a

Lac-Mégantic courtroom Feb. 5.

In a deal brokered between the government and the defendants, Harding and the five railroad officials agreed to plead guilty to some of the charges.

Harding had said at a press conference Jan. 22, three days after he successfully defeated the frame-up, that he accepted some of the blame for the tragedy. “I assume this responsibility and I will always assume it,” he said. “I do not find the words sufficient to express my sympathies” to those affected.

During the more than three-month-long criminal trial it became clear that the profit-driven rail bosses, with complicity of the government’s Transport

Canada agency, bore central responsibility for the disaster. To cut costs, they imposed a one-person crew on rail workers, created repeated threats to the safety of workers and those who lived by the tracks, and refused to allow engineers to engage an emergency braking system that would prevent runaway trains.

At the conclusion of the hearing Harding was sentenced to six months of house arrest, plus 240 hours of community service. The five company officials were each fined a maximum of \$50,000, and the defunct railroad, which has no assets, was fined \$1 million.

Lac-Mégantic resident Jean Clusiaux, whose 24-year-old daughter died in the disaster, attended the hearing, as he had most of the earlier trial. Like most people in Lac-Mégantic, he said justice was done when Harding and Labrie were acquitted. He told the press that Edward Burkhardt, owner of Montreal, Maine and Atlantic, and other top officials should have been charged for the deaths.

When this hearing brought all the legal proceedings to a close, he told the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, “I don’t think we will ever see any money from the MMA.”

Under pressure from trial revelations about Transport Canada’s collusion with Montreal, Maine and Atlantic officials to allow unsafe conditions on the railroad, Ottawa announced it would help fund the construction of a rail bypass around Lac-Mégantic, a demand residents there have been fighting for.

The widespread support for Harding among working people in the area was reflected when Yvon Deshaies, mayor of nearby Louiseville, officially invited Harding to carry out his community service there.

He said that the owners of restaurants, motels and other business there had offered to pay for Harding’s food, lodging and expenses.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



March 5, 1993

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — An historic International Solidarity Conference organized by the African National Congress here February 19-21 endorsed the ANC’s call for rapid elections to a Constituent Assembly to end racist apartheid rule once and for all.

“There are certain moments that capture the essence of life itself,” ANC president Nelson Mandela told the 900 participants from almost 70 countries. “Today is such a moment for me. For you are the friends from five continents who kept hope alive. ... You refused to let the world ignore the tragedy wreaked by apartheid.

“You are here to help us transform all this,” Mandela continued, “to help us move from antiapartheid to democracy.” The ANC president called on antiapartheid fighters around the world to aid the ANC struggle for “free and fair elections” to a Constituent Assembly.



March 4, 1968

What started as seemingly routine negotiation of a new contract for New York City sanitationmen erupted suddenly into a strike struggle of national significance. The issues and events involved have far-reaching political implications. They throw new light on the growing militancy in the union ranks, on the consequent sharpening of the labor-capital conflict, and on the resulting crisis of union leadership.

The strike came after seven months of fruitless efforts to get a contract renewal for the 10,000-member Union of Sanitationmen’s Association, a Teamster affiliate. Union demands centered on a \$600 annual wage increase retroactive to July 1, 1967, when the old contract expired. Mayor Lindsay rejected the demands and refused to make any serious counterproposal. The strike began and was 100 percent effective.



March 6, 1943

The lynch campaign against labor, which has been gathering momentum since United States entry into the war, reached new heights last week as Congress, state legislatures and the whole apparatus of employer propaganda rang with denunciations of unions and dire threats against workers who have dared to defend their rights.

The reasons for this campaign are: 1. To intimidate the workers into discontinuing their present demands for higher wages to meet the rising cost of living; and 2. To lay the groundwork for combating militant union struggles, if the workers refuse to be intimidated.

A swarm of anti-labor bills are now being considered by various committees. If adopted and enforced, the unions might still exist legally, but they would be unable to do anything in defense of the workers’ interests.

End US sanctions against North Korea! Korea is one!

Letter from Socialist Workers Party National Committee

Below is a Feb. 15 letter from Steve Clark, on behalf of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party, to the people of Korea on the occasion of their Feb. 16 national holiday.

The Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists send revolutionary greetings on the occasion of this February 16 national holiday of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We reaffirm our commitment to the Korean people's fight to reunify their country and to end the partition that Washington, with Moscow's complicity, imposed at the end of World War II and has maintained ever since at the cost of millions of Korean lives.

We welcome the DPRK's recent proposals for joint North-South Korean participation in the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics, which was then followed by Washington's and Seoul's decision to postpone annual joint military maneuvers and war games. Those provocative and threatening "exercises" must now be *ended once and for all*. The US government must withdraw all troops and armaments from Korea's soil, skies, and waters, including the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile batteries and espionage station deployed by the Donald Trump and Barack Obama administrations. In face of Washington's massive and deadly submarine, naval, air, and ground-based ballistic missile systems across Asia and the world, we renew our call for a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula and Pacific.

We demand that the US imperialist rulers *unconditionally* sit down with the DPRK for talks and at long last, after almost sixty-five years, sign a peace treaty ending the barbaric and failed war it waged against the Korean people from 1950 to 1953. As Washington affirms today that its "maximum pressure campaign is going to continue and intensify" to punish the people and government of the DPRK, we demand an end to ever-tightening US and US-initiated "UN" economic, financial, and political sanctions — *all of them, now!*

In the United States and across much of the world, a political awakening is under way among tens of millions of working people whose lives have been devastated by the consequences of capitalism's deepening economic and political crisis — and by Washington's ongoing military operations and wars in Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, and beyond. Vanguard workers are seeking to increase solidarity and overcome capitalist-fueled competition and divisions by defending and strengthening our trade unions, demanding amnesty for immigrant workers, combating racial discrimination and cop brutality, and demanding dignity and an end to second-class treatment for women.

As socialist workers and youth talk with fellow workers on their doorsteps and elsewhere across the United States, we explain that it is *this* resistance and openness to discuss a working-class course — not entrapment in capitalist politics dominated by the Democratic and Republican parties (and its growing pornographication and rationalization

of unleashing federal police power and prerogatives) — that offers a way forward for working people.

It is among workers and farmers such as these that growing support can be won for the demands the Socialist Workers Party — on this DPRK national holiday — is determined to fight for until they are won: End all economic and banking sanctions against the DPRK. US troops, ships, planes, and THAAD missiles and radar systems out of Korea. For a Korean Peninsula and Pacific Ocean free of nuclear weapons.

Korea is one!



Protest against deployment of U.S. missile and espionage station THAAD in Seongju, South Korea, March 18, 2017. SWP demands withdrawal of all U.S. troops, armaments from Korea.

NY cop who killed Deborah Danner is let off

BY EMMA JOHNSON

NEW YORK — On Feb. 15 State Supreme Court Judge Robert Neary acquitted Sgt. Hugh Barry of murder in the killing of Deborah Danner, a 66-year-old woman suffering from schizophrenia. Once again, the decision shows the difficulty in winning a case against the cops.

Like most cops, Barry opted to be tried by the judge rather than face a jury of working people.

Barry shot Danner in her Bronx apartment Oct. 18, 2016. Neighbors had called for help when Danner began acting erratically. In the preceding two years cops had been there at least twice when she had problems. On both occasions they had broken down the door to get into the apartment.

Six cops and two emergency medical technicians responded this time. "She just wanted us to get out, to just leave," one of the cops testified in court. "She didn't like dealing with us."

When Barry arrived on the scene, he took command. He testified that Danner was just outside her bedroom door when he decided to charge in and grab her. He missed her and she retreated into the bedroom. "She was too fast for me," he told the judge. Danner was disabled and 5 feet 6 inches. Barry was

half her age and 6 feet tall.

He said he rushed after her and that she took out a baseball bat, got up on her feet and placed herself in a stance to swing. He said he feared for his life so he shot her twice in the chest with the gun he already had in his hand. She died instantly. Barry had not been on the scene more than five minutes before Danner lay dead in her bedroom.

But the law says that a cop walks as long as he says he feared for his life.

Barry acknowledged Danner never swung at him. He claimed he couldn't back off because the other five cops were blocking his way. He conceded he had not followed guidelines for dealing with mentally ill people and that he had never called for help.

Cop acquitted on all counts

Barry was indicted for murder, manslaughter and criminally negligent homicide, the first New York cop on duty to face charges like this since the killing of Amadou Diallo in 1999. He was acquitted on all counts. It took Judge Neary less than a day to reach the verdict.

"They always say that — they're afraid, the cops do not kill. They protect the system and put the less fortunate down," Hawa Bah, whose son

Mohamed was killed by New York cops in 2012, told the *Militant* Feb. 16 after attending the trial. "We need justice. This is not justice."

Hawa Bah dialed 911 for an ambulance when her son was suffering a mental breakdown. Instead of an ambulance, nine heavily armed cops arrived. They forced their way into the apartment and, claiming Mohamed Bah threatened them with a knife, shot and killed him. Then they "lost" evidence from the crime scene.

None of the cops were indicted, but Hawa Bah doggedly pursued a civil suit, and in November a federal jury ruled that the cops used excessive force in killing her son, awarding her \$2.21 million.

Barry chose to be tried by the judge, who is part of the same criminal "justice" system as the cops, and much more likely to "understand" his actions. Roughly one-quarter of all people killed by cops are identified as suffering from mental illnesses. In her already agitated state, Danner certainly didn't need six heavily armed cops crowding her into her bedroom. In a 2012 essay she wrote about living with schizophrenia she expressed concern at the police killing people with mental problems.

"We are all aware of the all too frequent news stories about mentally ill who come up against law enforcement instead of mental health professionals and end up dead," she wrote, referring to the 1984 police killing of Eleanor Bumpurs, another New York woman with mental issues. Bumpurs "was killed by police by shotgun because she was perceived as a 'threat to the safety' of several grown men who were also police officers," Danner wrote.

The Patrolmen's Benevolent Association and other cop groups campaigned for Barry, putting a full-page ad praising him and demanding his acquittal in the *New York Daily News*. Every day of the trial cops took up the front row.

"I wasn't surprised at the verdict," Hawa Bah said. "I've been there. They murdered my son and after four years they told me there was not enough evidence to indict. They *don't want* to indict. This goes on and on and on. They don't care about justice.

"We just have to keep fighting. Never give up."

Danner's relatives are pursuing a federal lawsuit to hold the city responsible for her killing.

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— Jack Barnes

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by Jack Barnes

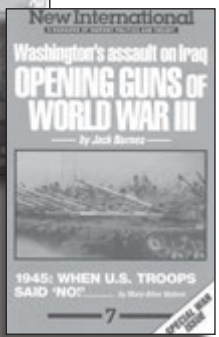
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Malcolm X: ‘It is impossible for capitalism to survive’

Below is an excerpt from an interview with Malcolm X published in the March-April, 1965 issue of the Young Socialist, conducted Jan. 18 of that year by Jack Barnes and Barry Sheppard of the Young Socialist Alliance. A month later, on Feb. 21, Malcolm was assassinated while speaking at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem, New York. The interview appears in By Any Means Necessary, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for February. Copyright © 1970, 1992 by Betty Shabazz and Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

QUESTION: Why did you break with the Black Muslims?

MALCOLM: I didn't break, there was a split. The split came about primarily because they put me out, and they put me out because of my uncompromising approach to problems I thought should be solved and the movement could solve.

I felt the movement was dragging its feet in many areas. It didn't involve itself in the civil or civic or political struggles our people were confronted by. All it did was stress the importance of moral reformation — don't drink, don't smoke, don't permit fornication and adultery. When I found that the hierarchy itself wasn't practicing what it preached, it was clear that this



Malcolm X in Mecca in 1964. Malcolm spent half of that year traveling in Africa, meeting with political fighters and leaders. The experiences had a profound impact on his political outlook as he met people of all colors who were “true revolutionaries dedicated to overturning the system of exploitation that exists on this earth by any means necessary,” he said.

part of its program was bankrupt.

So the only way it could function and be meaningful in the community was to take part in the political and economic facets of the Negro struggle. And the organization wouldn't do that because the stand it would have to take would have been too militant, uncompromising, and activist, and the hierarchy had gotten conservative. It was motivated mainly by protecting its own self interests. I might also point out that although the Black Muslim movement professed to be a religious group, the religion they had adopted — Islam — didn't recognize them. So, religiously it was in a vacuum. And it didn't take part in politics, so it was not a political group. When you have an organization that's neither political nor religious and doesn't take part in the civil rights struggle, what can it call itself? It's in a vacuum. So, all of these factors led to my splitting from the organization. ...

QUESTION: How do you define black nationalism, with which you have been identified?

MALCOLM: I used to define black nationalism as the idea that the black man should control the economy of his community, the politics of his community, and so forth.

But, when I was in Africa in May, in Ghana, I was speaking with the Al-

gerian ambassador who is extremely militant and is a revolutionary in the true sense of the word (and has his credentials as such for having carried on a successful revolution against oppression in his country). When I told him that my political, social, and economic philosophy was black nationalism, he asked me very frankly, well, where did that leave him? Because he was white. He was an African, but he was Algerian, and to all appearances, he was a white man. And he said if I define my objective as the victory of black nationalism, where does that leave him? Where does that leave revolutionaries in Morocco, Egypt, Iraq, Mauritania? So he showed me where I was alienating people who were true revolutionaries dedicated to overturning the system of exploitation that exists on this earth by any means necessary.

So, I had to do a lot of thinking and reappraising of my definition of black nationalism. Can we sum up the solution to the problems confronting our people as black nationalism? And if you notice, I haven't been using the expression for several months. But I still would be hard pressed to give a specific definition of the overall philosophy which I think is necessary for the liberation of the black people in this country. ...

QUESTION: How do you view the role of the U.S. in the Congo?

MALCOLM: As criminal. Probably there is no better example of criminal activity against an oppressed people than the role the U.S. has been playing in the Congo, through her ties with Tshombe and the mercenaries. You can't overlook the fact that Tshombe gets his money from the U.S. The money he uses to hire these mercenaries — these paid killers imported from South Africa — comes from the United States. The pilots that fly these planes have been trained by the U.S. The bombs themselves that are blowing apart the bodies of women and children come from the U.S. So I can only view the role of the United States in the Congo as a criminal role. And I think the seeds she is sowing in the Congo she will have to harvest. The chickens that she has turned loose over there have got to come home to roost.

QUESTION: What about the U.S. role in South Vietnam?

MALCOLM: The same thing. It shows the real ignorance of those who control the American power structure. If France, with all types of heavy arms, as deeply entrenched as she was in what then was called Indochina, couldn't stay there, I don't see how anybody in their right mind can think the U.S. can get in there — it's impossible. So it shows her ignorance, her blindness, her lack of foresight and hindsight and her complete defeat in South Vietnam is only a matter of time. ...

QUESTION: What is your opinion of the worldwide struggle now going on between capitalism and socialism?

MALCOLM: It is impossible for capitalism to survive, primarily because the system of capitalism needs some blood to suck. Capitalism used to be like an eagle, but now it's more like a vulture. It used to be strong enough to go and suck anybody's blood whether they were strong or not. But now it has become more cowardly, like the vulture, and it can only suck the blood of the helpless. As the nations of the world free themselves, then capitalism has less victims, less to suck, and it becomes weaker and weaker. It's only a matter of time in my opinion before it will collapse completely.

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New government in South Africa

Continued from front page
agencies downgraded the government's credit rating to junk status in November.

Zuma was forced to resign Feb. 14, after a bitter fight inside the ANC, which has ruled South Africa since the overthrow of the hated apartheid system in a mighty democratic revolution in the early 1990s. Ramaphosa defeated the Zuma-backed candidate for ANC president Dec. 18, leading to replacing Zuma as president of the country.

Ramaphosa was a leader of the struggle against apartheid, like Zuma, and a founder of the National Union of Mineworkers. He became ANC general secretary after Nelson Mandela was freed in 1990 and helped write the nation's new democratic constitution after apartheid was brought down. In 1996 Ramaphosa resigned his government posts, using his connections and ANC influence to become one of South Africa's wealthiest businessmen, part of the new layer of Black capitalists.

Ramaphosa's wealth is estimated at \$450 million, with stakes in mining, finance, McDonald's and Coca-Cola bottling plants.

He was a board member of the Lonmin mining company when 34 miners were cut down in cold blood by cops in 2012 during a strike for higher wages and better working conditions. The day before the miners' rally was attacked, Ramaphosa called on police to act against what he called the "dastardly criminals."

The capitalist class hopes that Ramaphosa still has enough authority from his days as an anti-apartheid and labor leader to push through what they call a "reset" in the economy.

Democratic revolution

Half the population in South Africa today is too young to have been part of the democratic revolution that overturned white supremacist rule in South Africa, a revolution that inspired working people across the globe.

For decades the South African government controlled virtually every aspect of the lives of African peoples there. Every individual was assigned a race category — White, Indian (many of them descendants of indentured servants brought to the country), Coloured (of mixed race), and Black.

Black Africans were denied the most basic rights: where to live, who they

could live with, the right to change jobs, to own land, to farm, to vote, to protest. A notorious pass system was imposed to control the movement of Blacks.

"The apartheid system had one central and overriding purpose: to organize and perpetuate the superexploitation of African labor by capital," wrote Jack Barnes, national secretary for the Socialist Workers Party, in a 1985 article titled, "The Coming Revolution in South Africa."

In 1954 the African National Congress joined with the Indian Congress, the South African Coloured Peoples Organization and the Congress of Democrats — made up of white opponents of apartheid — to organize the Congress of the People.

"South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white," said the Freedom Charter the 3,000 delegates approved. The first four sections were: The people shall govern! All national groups shall have equal rights! The people shall share in the country's wealth! The land shall be shared among those who work it!

It became the program of a decades-long struggle waged through strikes, marches and mass disobedience. The struggle received a decisive boost when thousands of internationalist volunteers from revolutionary Cuba helped defeat a series of invasions of neighboring Angola by the South African army, culminating in the 1988 battle of Cuito Cuanavale. The defeat of the apartheid army there punctured the regime's myth of invincibility. Within two years the apartheid rulers were forced to free Nelson Mandela.

The democratic revolution ended the hated system of white supremacy, guaranteed universal citizenship rights to all who make up the nation and opened space for working people to organize. But many demands of the Freedom Charter have never been carried out and a revolutionary working-class leadership has never developed that could lead the toilers to power.

Capitalist South Africa still unequal

Although post-apartheid governments built millions of homes, extended access to water and electricity, expanded health care, and provided welfare payments to millions of people, class divisions have widened. Millions live in shantytowns. A third of the population has no toilet. Official unemployment is at 26.7 percent and Blacks still make less than a fourth of what whites earn.

The response to Ramaphosa's election is class-divided. He is hailed by employers and middle-class layers in the Black community, who relate to his story as a successful businessman.

Working people aren't so sure. Most say they stick with the ANC, but it doesn't do much for them. "I keep thinking it might change, it might change, let me give him some time," Dipuo Kalodi, a domestic worker, told the *New York Times*. "But there's no change."

The situation of farmworkers in the Eastern Cape have deteriorated over the last several years, Owen Tapiwa told the *Militant* by phone from De Doorns Feb. 20. Tapiwa was a participant in strikes by thousands of farmworkers in 2012 and 2013.

"The country is rich," Tapiwa said. "In some places people are living good



Mineworkers at 2017 commemoration of August 2012 massacre of 34 strikers at Lonmin mine, Marikana, South Africa. Then company board member Cyril Ramaphosa, now South African president, urged cops to act against strikers. Outcry over killings boosted support for strike.

and for others it's like another world. Thousands of farmworkers are living in shacks, nothing is provided to them. They don't have proper clinics, proper food, electricity.

"We have a leadership, the ANC, but no one is actually fighting for the people," he said. "Here in De Doorns, the same people in the ANC are the labor brokers, who provide workers to the farm owner."

As Ramaphosa has taken the leadership of the ANC and the government, the currency has surged and the South Africa Reserve Bank cranked up its growth forecasts.

He has pledged to "engage" with mine owners on new, pro-capitalist laws.

In his Feb. 16 State of the Nation speech, Ramaphosa promised to work to change what he admits is "a highly unequal society, in which poverty and prosperity are still defined by race and gender." He also called for mine bosses, union leaders and "communities" to work together, code words for speedup, deeper exploitation and higher profits.

On Feb. 20 Finance Minister Malusi Gigaba released the 2018 budget promising "tough measures," including a higher sales tax that will hit working people hardest. Also on the table are proposals to overturn laws passed after the fall of apartheid that make it harder for bosses to fire workers.

South African revolution: Historic victory for the working people

Below is an excerpt from a speech given in 1985 by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, titled, "The Coming Revolution in South Africa." It's published in New International magazine no. 5. Copyright © 1985 by New International. Reprinted by permission.

BY JACK BARNES

What is the historic character of the revolution in South Africa?

It is a revolution to overthrow the apartheid state and tear apart the apartheid system.

It is a revolution to open the door to forging, for the first time, a nonracial South African nation-state.

This new nation will incorporate the African people from various tribal backgrounds, the descendants of those who lived there and worked the land before the white colonizers arrived, and who are the vast majority of the population of South Africa today. It will incorporate those the apartheid system classifies as Coloureds and Indians, who, together with the Africans, constitute the oppressed Black population. And it will incorporate those whites who will accept living and working as citizens with equal rights — no more, no less — in a democratic South Africa.

It is a revolution to conquer the right of the Black majority to own, work, and develop the land from which they have been expelled by the apartheid regime. To win the right of Africans to become free farmers, producing cash crops for an expanding home market. To carry out a real Homestead Act, opening the

land to those who want to work it.

It is a revolution to abolish all restrictions on the rights of Black South Africans to live, labor, and travel where they choose. To establish full equality in the job market. To guarantee full trade union and labor rights.

It is a revolution aimed at replacing the state of the white minority with a democratic republic based on one person, one vote. Its goal — in the words used by the African National Congress — is a single, united, nonracial, and democratic South Africa.

It is a revolution in which the toilers are seeking to replace minority apartheid rule with rule by the working people, the great majority. They will then use that new revolutionary power to ensure that not a single brick of the apartheid system is left intact and that the democratic program of the revolution is put into practice.

From the historical standpoint, the South African revolution today is a bourgeois-democratic revolution for these goals. It is a democratic revolution, a national revolution. The working people are striving to lead it to victory and to create for the first time a true South African nation-state.

The South African revolution today is not an anticapitalist revolution. It will open the road to the transition to an anticapitalist revolution, but no one can predict how long, or short, that road will be. That will be determined by the relationship of class forces in South Africa and internationally that will emerge from the revolutionary overthrow of the apartheid state.

The Coming Revolution in South Africa

by Jack Barnes

The lead article in *New International* no. 5 describes the character of the revolution to replace South Africa's apartheid system and the course to forge a communist leadership of the working class.

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‘Cuba made a real revolution’

Continued from front page of Education.” The campaign came just two years after workers and peasants had overthrown the U.S.-supported dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. Fidel Castro and the revolutionary leadership knew “an ignorant and illiterate people couldn’t carry out the tasks the revolution needed,” Aguilera said.

The campaign effectively involved the whole country, she said. Schools were shut down that year so that “students could become teachers.” If you weren’t a brigadista or a student, she said, you were helping organize transportation, food, uniforms, lanterns and hammocks for them, or taking up arms to defend your country against those trying to overthrow the first socialist revolution in the Americas.

“We began to eliminate racism. Women broke the taboos and notions of what they could do and who they could be. We broke down the barriers between city and countryside,” she said. “Through this effort we became different people and a generation was forged that has sustained the Cuban Revolution through difficult days. It is not an accident that the revolution is still here.”

At most of Aguilera’s events the documentary “Maestra” (Teacher) by Catherine Murphy was shown. The film features interviews with veterans of the literacy campaign, including Aguilera. It shows Washington’s efforts to overthrow the revolution, including footage of the April 1961 invasion at the Bay of Pigs by U.S.-sponsored mercenaries, who were defeated by Cuban troops and volunteer militias in less than 72 hours. “Maestra” also describes ongoing attacks on literacy workers and students by counterrevolutionary bandits.

Talks with construction workers

A highlight of Aguilera’s visit here was her talk at the monthly meeting of 100 Black Construction Workers, organized by the Laborers’ International Union of North America. Most of those in attendance came straight from work. Aguilera had worked with workers in the construction industry in Cuba to expand their education and advance enforcement of health and safety.

“In Cuba, if a worker is hurt, an immediate investigation is done. The focus is what those running the project should have done to prevent the accident,” she said after workers described how bosses routinely blame on-the-job accidents on the worker in the U.S. To big applause she noted that all construction workers in Cuba are in the union.

“In Cuba the life of each person is fundamental,” Aguilera said the next day at a citywide meeting at the hall of the New York State Nurses Association. “The construction workers told me that here bosses want everything done fast, even if it means doing it unsafely and without proper training and equipment.”

Gail Walker, executive director of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization and one of the coordinators of the National Network on Cuba, which is organizing U.S. participation in the May Day Brigade to Cuba, chaired the meeting. She introduced Juanita Young and Hawa Bah, who explained how their sons had been killed by New York City police — Malcolm Ferguson in 2000 and Mohamed Bah in 2012. They described how they

organized a growing group of mothers whose children had been killed by cops, and the fight they waged to hold the police accountable. Young and several of the other mothers visited Cuba in 2017.

At the massive May Day parade, “I noticed right away that we weren’t surrounded by cops,” she said. “What I saw on May Day and at the school we visited was a society based on solidarity, not competition. It showed me there is a different way of living.” She urged meeting participants to go see for themselves.

“It’s very emotional to hear these stories,” Aguilera said. “I knew these things happened in the United States, but it’s different to actually meet the mothers who have lived through it.”

At each meeting Aguilera explained that while the peasants and workers learned how to read and write, they taught the literacy volunteers too. “Responsibility, discipline, the importance of hard work, the maturity to confront life, the daily battle of field work. This was very different from the life of a young person in the city,” is how she put it at one of the two meetings for her at the Graduate School of Education at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey. “The volunteers came home much more mature.”

In response to a question, Aguilera explained the ways the literacy campaign helped deepen the fight the revolution waged against racism. She said that Cuba was a very race-divided country before the July 26 Movement led the 1959 overthrow of Batista. “Sometimes a peasant who was white would say they didn’t want to be taught by a black teacher,” she said. “Instead of giving in, we would patiently explain how ideas



Granma file photos

Hundreds of thousands of young people, majority women, volunteered in Cuba’s 1961 campaign to teach workers and farmers to read and write. Griselda Aguilera, youngest volunteer at age 7, on tour in New York, said they became lifelong supporters of Cuba’s socialist revolution.



like that were a remnant of the same society that had kept them from owning the land and oppressed them.”

But the campaign also began breaking down racism among the young teachers from the cities, she said. “Before, blacks had been friends with blacks, whites with whites. But the brigades were integrated. We all worked together as equals through all these experiences. The same was true of men and women, boys and girls. When we returned to school, the old divisions didn’t exist anymore.”

In Cuba, we have plenty of “problems of life,” Aguilera told a meeting of Puerto Rican independence activists at a program at El Maestro, a boxing club and community center in the South Bronx. “We don’t have enough housing, too many generations of a family are still forced to share a home.”

But everyone in Cuba has a place

to live, she said, contrasting this to the homeless she had seen sleeping on the streets of New York, and the big, red “X”s marking empty and condemned housing she saw in Albany.

During the tour over a dozen people signed up to find out about the April 22-May 6 May Day Brigade to Cuba.

Aguilera also spoke at meetings of the People’s Organization for Progress and at Essex County College in Newark and to several classes of high school students in Plainfield, New Jersey; and at a Domestic Violence Shelter and at the office of *Haiti Liberté* newspaper in Brooklyn. She gave greetings to 60 students at an event organized by Students for Justice in Palestine being held in the room next to her City College meeting.

Nancy Boyasko contributed to this article.

See Cuba for yourself, sign up for May Day Brigade

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

You have a unique opportunity this spring to spend two weeks in Cuba to learn firsthand how workers and farmers there made a revolution in 1959, what it means for them today and the example it provides for us here and throughout the world. Sign up now for the April 22-May 6 May Day Brigade to Cuba!

The brigade is organized by the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP) and the National Network on Cuba is coordinating ef-

forts to sign people up in the U.S.

Participants will join Cuban farmers in agricultural work, meet with representatives of Cuba’s student, trade union, women’s and other mass organizations; visit historic sites in the revolution; and have a chance to talk with veterans of those struggles. They will join with hundreds of thousands in the May Day march in Havana and participate in an international conference of solidarity with the socialist revolution the next day.

During her recent East Coast tour,

Griselda Aguilera, a veteran of the 1961 literacy campaign in Cuba, encouraged people to join the brigade. More than a dozen of those who came to her meetings in New York and New Jersey Feb. 8-12 signed up for more information.

“I’ve been studying the legacy of the Cuban Revolution and want to experience it myself for the first time,” Jorge Cruz, 19, a student at City College in New York, told the *Militant* Feb. 19. Meeting and hearing Aguilera, Cruz said, “solidified my desire to participate in the brigade.” Cruz said he’s working on convincing his professors to let him take his tests early so he can go.

A number of construction workers, members of Laborers’ International Union Local 79, organized a meeting at their hall to hear Aguilera, and some have signed up for the brigade.

The cost of the package, including meals and lodging in Cuba, is \$675. Air travel, which costs extra, is being coordinated with the Marazul agency. Brigadistas will stay at the Julio Antonio Mella International Camp in Artemisa province, which can accommodate up to 220 people.

“If you want to go, don’t wait until the March 16 deadline to get your applications in,” Gail Walker, one of National Network on Cuba co-chairs and executive director of IFCO/Pastors for Peace, told the *Militant* Feb. 19. Applications and the full schedule can be downloaded at www.NNOC.info. Email: ICanGoToCuba@nnoc.info.

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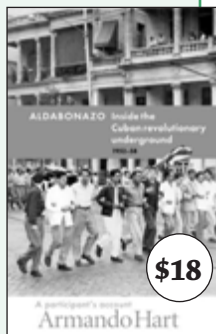
by Armando Hart

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Amnesty now! No deportations!

The Socialist Workers Party says, “Stop the deportation of the ‘dreamers.’” We stand for this as part of the fight to win amnesty for all 11 million workers who don’t have papers recognized by the courts and the cops in the U.S.

The bosses need a layer of workers without “proper” documents. They want workers they can pay less, work harder, intimidate and use as scapegoats to boost profits and divide the working class. The capitalists depend on this pool of superexploited labor. They cannot compete worldwide and accumulate capital without it.

The U.S. rulers have *never* sought to deport all undocumented workers in the country. What they want is tighter control, so they can speed up or slow down the flow of cheap labor to match the ups and downs of their capitalist system.

There is less anti-immigrant sentiment in the working class today than ever before. U.S.- and foreign-born workers toil side by side in the same factories; our children go to the same schools; we live in the same neighborhoods. Workers don’t want to see friends, neighbors and co-workers torn from their homes and thrown out of the country.

At the same time, anti-immigrant rhetoric from sections of the ruling class still gets a hearing. When cap-

italist production and trade fall, competition for jobs grows in the working class. Workers need a perspective of how to fight these conditions.

The SWP campaigns for the labor movement to fight for a government-funded public works program to provide millions of jobs at union scale to build infrastructure, schools, health clinics, child care and other things working people need.

Workers in the United States — wherever we were born, whatever language we speak, whatever our skin color — face the same class enemy. Today less than 7 percent of workers in private companies belong to a union. It is only by rejecting the bosses’ dog-eat-dog divide-and-rule moves that we can organize the working class as a whole, rebuild a fighting union movement, take steps toward independent political action and transform our unions into instruments of class struggle.

When there is an economic downturn the fight for the political soul of the working class intensifies. The stakes are high.

Class-conscious workers fight to win the labor movement and the working class to demand: Stop the deportations! Amnesty now! Organize the unorganized!

Conflicts in Syria as US, rivals push interests

Continued from front page

ated against Iranian-backed forces in Syria.

Israeli defense forces Feb. 10 responded with airstrikes on Iranian military forces inside Syria, alongside raids that wiped out half of the Bashar al-Assad dictatorship’s air-defense capabilities.

U.S. National Security Adviser Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster spent much of his time there seeking to win support from European governments for Washington’s plans to renegotiate aspects of the agreement struck by the Barack Obama administration with Tehran in 2015. That deal eased sanctions against the Iranian regime in exchange for slowing down its nuclear weapons program. McMaster spoke out on Washington’s alarm at what he called Tehran’s “network of proxies” that “is becoming more and more capable.”

The U.S. rulers, along with Tel Aviv, are resetting relations with regimes in the region to counter the Iranian regime’s rising influence. This includes Washington’s announcement that it would keep 2,000 troops in Syria alongside its Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces allies that now control some 25 percent of Syria, including most of its oil wells.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov condemned Washington’s actions on his way to the conference. He told Euronews Feb. 16 that the U.S. was violating “Syria’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. They are forming quasi-local authorities in a bid to establish a Kurd-based autonomy there.”

“It may entail big problems in a number of other countries with Kurdish populations,” Lavrov added, which face, he said, “the Kurdish problem.”

Some 30 million Kurdish people are divided among four countries — Syria, Turkey, Iraq and Iran — and denied a homeland by the rulers there.

Turkish invasion targets Kurds in Afrin

The Turkish rulers are deeply concerned about their “Kurdish problem.” Ankara began sending bombers, tanks, Turkish forces and thousands of Ankara-backed Free Syrian Army troops to invade territory controlled by the Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG) in the Kurdish province of Afrin in northwestern Syria Jan. 20.

The Turkish government is also intensifying its attacks inside Turkey on anyone who speaks out against the assault on Afrin. Over 2,100 people have been

detained on charges of terrorism for questioning the invasion, and a curfew was imposed Feb. 14 in the predominantly Kurdish area of southeastern Turkey.

Ankara sees as a threat the autonomous areas of Syria, taken by Kurdish-led forces in the vacuum created by the years of war there and through their role as an ally of Washington against Islamic State. They seek to oust the YPG from Afrin because they fear the impact Kurdish gains in Syria will have on aspirations of Kurds facing national oppression within Turkey.

No end to Syria war

Fighting broke out Feb. 7 when what was reported to be forces organized by the Syrian government attacked Kurdish-led SDF troops and U.S. forces near oil fields in Deir el-Zour province near Raqqa. Washington responded with massive firepower and reportedly killed over 200 of the attackers.

Since then Moscow acknowledges that at least some of those killed were Russians. It insists there were just five, all mercenaries with no connection to the government, even though they were trained and supplied at Russian bases in Syria. Other sources, including associates of the mercenaries in Russia and people who fought with them previously in eastern Ukraine, say the majority of those killed were Russian mercenaries.

Moscow is seeking to minimize any direct conflict with Washington in Syria, and to deflect anti-war reaction at home.

The Assad government in Syria has been able to retake control of most of the country — outside areas run by the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces — with the intervention of Russian airpower and ground troops from Iran, Hezbollah and other Tehran-backed militias. Before this intervention, Assad had steadily lost ground in a civil war after he brutally suppressed a 2011 popular uprising aimed at overthrowing his rule.

As a result of their efforts to bolster Assad’s rule, Iran’s counterrevolutionary rulers have extended their influence across the region. They have established a route to transport materiel from Iran to their Hezbollah ally in Lebanon. The Israeli rulers are determined to push back against Tehran’s strengthened position.

Last year Moscow signed a “de-escalation” agreement with opposition forces in eastern Ghouta, a suburb of Damascus that Assad has besieged for five years. But in recent weeks Russian warplanes and Syrian forces have unleashed a murderous assault there. The Syrian Observatory reports that bombardments Feb. 18-20 destroyed five hospitals, killed 250 civilians and wounded 1,200.

Parole system ‘justice’

Continued from front page

on the parole and probation merry-go-round that all too often puts them back in prison. Some prison administrators are calling to cut the number of people on parole and probation in half, saying they don’t have the money to keep up with necessary “supervision” costs.

U.S. rulers put the largest percentage of the population in prison of any country in the world. Some 1.5 million are in federal and state prisons; another 750,000 in local jails, most of whom have never been convicted of anything. And there are 4.7 million people on probation or parole — subject to ongoing restrictions, indignities and intrusion into their affairs by their minders.

The numbers of working people imprisoned has more than quadrupled since the 1980s — with the biggest jump, nearly 60 percent, coming under the Bill Clinton administration in the 1990s. The number of people on parole and probation grew just as rapidly.

“Originally designed as alternatives to incarceration, probation and parole are a deprivation of liberty in their own right and have become key drivers of mass incarceration by serving as a trip wire to reincarceration for many of those under supervision,” said a report issued by Columbia University’s Justice Lab Jan. 29. The report was signed by 20 parole and probation administrators in New York, Los Angeles and elsewhere.

The study found that 33 percent of people in jail and 23 percent of those in prison in the mid-2000s were on probation at the time of their arrest, a quarter of whom were thrown back behind bars solely for technical violations.

One in 53 adults in the U.S. is on probation or parole. For African-American males it’s one in 12, and nearly 20 percent for Black youth.

“As someone currently on probation I feel as if I’m walking on glass on top of heated coals,” Valdez Heron, organizer for Katal Center for Health, Equity and Justice, told the media. “It’s definitely mentally straining knowing that if you make even a small mistake, like showing up late to a meeting, then you could find yourself back in jail, maybe even losing your job or housing.”

The report urges that “probation and parole populations be significantly reduced,” that “revocations to incarceration be sharply curbed,” and “probation and parole fines be curtailed.”

Over the past 18 years there has been a 31 percent reduction in the number of people in New York state prisons, a report issued the same day says. But those imprisoned for parole violations has been rising.

For every 10 people who succeeded in making their way through the hoops and getting off parole in New York in 2015, nine others found themselves back in prison. And, in 2016, people imprisoned for technical violations on parole accounted for 29 percent of all incarcerations in New York state prisons.

Many workers one step from jail

Many workers caught up by the pressures of the capitalist social crisis find themselves a step away from financial disaster and run-ins with capitalist “justice.”

All kinds of things in capitalist society are stacked against working people. If you can keep a minimum balance of \$1,500 in a Bank of America account, you can get free checking. But, the *Washington Post* reports, “More than 40 percent of Americans say they struggle even to make ends meet each month and would be unable to cover an unexpected \$400 expense without real hardship.” That means monthly fees and charges for the checks you write — and onerous charges if you ever write a check you can’t cover.

The *Post* article, entitled “Why It Costs So Much to Be Poor in America,” describes how Sirrea Monroe’s electricity was cut off because she fell \$70 behind on her bill. She called to pay and get the electricity turned back on. The company representative replied, “I need \$250 for the ‘new customer’ deposit.” That took her another six months to pay off.

Sitting behind all this is jail. They say there’s no debtors prison in the U.S., but if you can’t pay your tickets, or fines or your bail, you end up behind bars.

“Kevin Thompson in DeKalb County, Ga., made an illegal left turn and spent five days in county jail because he could not quickly pay \$838 in fees and fines related to the traffic stop,” the *Post* said.

Correction

The article “What’s Behind Protests in Iran Against Dress Code for Women?” in the Feb. 26 *Militant* incorrectly said that women were “photographing themselves taking off their chador” in public. It should have said hijab.