

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
SWP leader at Havana event: 'In defense of the US working class'
 — PAGES 5-9

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE VOL. 82/NO. 23 JUNE 11, 2018

SWP, 'Militant' expand reach deeper into the working class

BY DAN FEIN

The *Militant* extends a warm welcome to the 1,540 people who subscribed for the first time or renewed their subscriptions in the course of a just concluded eight-week campaign of the Socialist Workers Party to expand the paper's readership, sell revolutionary books and raise money for

A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW READERS!

the Militant Fighting Fund.

The fund campaign raised \$119,904, nearly \$8,000 over the goal! Some 1,360 copies of books by party leaders and other revolutionaries were snapped up by working people interested in learning more about the roots of today's economic, political and moral crisis and the party's revolutionary program.

Many of you came across the paper at demonstrations and strikes by teachers and other school workers that swept five states, demanding pay raises, dignity, more funding for public schools and pensions. Party

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3,000 rail workers strike against Canadian Pacific

Bosses demand Ottawa force workers back



Striking rail workers at Canadian Pacific Intermodal Yard, Lachine, Montreal, May 30. Action by conductors and engineers shut down CP, delayed freight movement around North America.

BY BOB CARTER

MONTREAL — Over 3,000 Canadian Pacific Railway locomotive engineers and conductors, members

As we go to press ...

The Teamsters Canada Rail Conference union says it has reached a tentative agreement with Canada Pacific and will end its strike.

of the Teamsters union, set up picket lines at 10 p.m. on May 29, shutting down Canada's second largest freight railway system.

The strike halted much of the country's rail freight transportation of industrial and agricultural production.

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Ireland: Repeal of abortion ban shows shift on women's rights

BY PAMELA HOLMES AND CATHARINA TIRSÉN

Determined to end severe restrictions on abortion rights, a large majority in Ireland voted to repeal the Eighth Amendment to the country's constitution May 25. The amendment "acknowledges the right to life of the unborn" and prevents women's access to abortion.

For decades thousands of women who could afford to do so traveled to have abortions abroad, while others were forced to choose between illegally buying abortion pills online or giving birth.

Celebrations broke out among the crowds waiting outside Dublin Castle May 26 as the final results were announced — 66.4 percent voted yes. The voter turnout was 64 percent. In the end 39 of 40 constituencies voted yes with clear majorities and the exception, Donegal in the northwest, only voted to keep the amendment by 52 percent.

Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar

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Tens of thousands of Las Vegas casino workers prepare for strike



Members of Culinary and Bartenders unions gather May 22 at the Thomas and Mack Center at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, vote overwhelmingly to authorize strike.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

"It's good if we have to strike. The union does everything for us, that's why we fight," said Wendy Almada, a guest room attendant in Las Vegas, in a phone interview May 25.

She and some 25,000 other members

of UNITE HERE's Culinary and Bartenders unions in that city voted three days earlier to authorize a strike once their contract expires June 1. Almada, 43, has worked at Harrah's Hotel and Casino for seven years. Of those casting

Continued on page 4

US rulers, Pyongyang seek to reset denuclearization talks

BY SETH GALINSKY

The U.S. and North Korean governments are moving full steam ahead toward a summit meeting to negotiate an agreement on "denuclearization" of the Korean Peninsula. U.S., North Korean and South Korean officials have been meeting in the U.S., Singapore and in the demilitarized zone between North and South to discuss and work out the details of the meeting and parameters of the agreements to emerge from it.

After earlier negotiations broke down, President Donald Trump wrote May 24 to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, saying that their June 12 summit in Singapore was on hold. The liberal ruling-class press — which views almost all politics through their anti-Trump hysteria — proclaimed Trump had blown it and the negotiations were dead in the water. Trump blamed Pyongyang and Beijing for his decision to suspend the summit, saying that officials in the North had expressed "open hostility" to Washington and Beijing had encouraged them.

Nevertheless, the same day, the North Korean government used explosives to destroy the tunnels at its Punggye-ri nuclear testing site, inviting reporters from the U.S. and other

countries to observe.

Working people in Korea and the U.S. — whatever their views of President Trump or the regimes in Korea — would welcome an agreement that would remove nuclear weapons from the Korean Peninsula and surrounding areas. Ending U.S. and U.N. sanctions, opening the door to economic growth in the North, and eliminating barriers to travel, communication and economic relations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would be a historic advance for workers and farmers in Korea, Asia and worldwide.

The liberal pundits went on a ti-

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Puerto Rico: Workers confront capitalist disaster after storm

BY JOHN STUDER
AND MARTÍN KOPPEL

HUMACAO, Puerto Rico — “After Hurricane María hit the island, the government left us to fend for ourselves. But here we all joined together — to clear debris and reopen the roads and to help make sure people could survive,” said Raúl Laboy, a retired electrical worker. “Residents brought food and water to those who needed it the most, took care of the elderly and disabled, and helped each other repair homes. It was solidarity — solidarity among workers.”

Together with other family members and friends, Laboy was helping rebuild his brother’s house, whose roof was ripped off and windows blown out by the hurricane last September.

Like a number of other workers in the hilly region here, he and Wilfredo Abreu took a break from their construction and carpentry work to talk

with us, the editor and another reporter from the *Militant*, members of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States. We were visiting the community of Mariana, outside Humacao, and other areas in southeastern Puerto Rico that still have no electricity. The hurricane made landfall here.

Puerto Rico was devastated by the storm, which left most of the island without power. Many areas had no water or other essential services. Now, more than eight months later, Puerto Rico’s electric company reports that 13,000 customers — some 52,000 people — still had no electricity. That includes most of the 3,200 residents of Mariana, where electrical crews were just now beginning to show up.

“Now we’re facing the other hurricane — the social hurricane — which is much worse than the natural one and began much earlier,” said Laboy. “That is the result of capitalism.



Militant/John Studer

Retired electrical worker Raúl Laboy, left, and Wilfredo Abreu, in Humacao, Puerto Rico, talk to *Militant* reporters. “Social hurricane” of capitalism is worse than natural one, Laboy said.

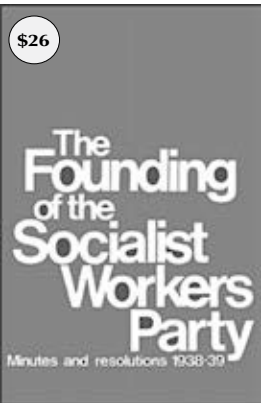
“And the fiscal control board imposed by the U.S. government is still insisting on cutting social benefits, closing schools, increasing university tuition and other cutbacks in order to pay the bondholders on Puerto Rico’s debt,” he said.

Laboy is one of the founders of ARECEMA, the Recreational and Educational Community Association of Mariana, whose leaders toured us around the area. He was a shop steward in UTIER, the electrical workers’ union, a long-time socialist, distributor of *Claridad* and supporter of revo-

lutionary Cuba.

During our visit to San Juan, Humacao and Yabucoa, we met workers, fishermen, students, retirees and others who described how they are confronting the social disaster caused by capitalist rule and magnified by U.S. colonial domination of Puerto Rico. They described how they came together to help each other — organize demonstrations demanding rapid restoration of electrical power, protest planned school closings and other actions. A fuller report will appear in next week’s *Militant*.

Recommended reading



“US imperialism exploits the peoples of Latin and Central America, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Liberia, the Philippines. ... Neither they nor the American workers can expect to win freedom except in joint combat against the common enemy. ... The SWP is opposed to any attempt by American imperialism, open or masked, to infringe upon the right of self-determination of any nation or people.”

— From *Declaration of Principles of the founding convention of the Socialist Workers Party adopted in 1938.*

Available from distributors on page 4 or visit:
www.pathfinderpress.com

Help fund ‘Militant’ reporting trips to Puerto Rico and Nicaragua!

Militant editor John Studer and correspondent Martín Koppel have just returned from their fact-finding and solidarity trip to the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico where they talked to workers in San Juan, Humacao and Yabucoa. Studer will speak for the Socialist Workers Party at the June 18 annual hearing of the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization, explaining why the fight for revolutionary change and independence for Puerto Rico is in the interest of working people there, in the U.S. and around the world.

Correspondents Maggie Trowe and Róger Calero have also returned from a reporting trip to Nicaragua where they spoke with working people and learned about fast-moving political developments there. Articles from both these reporting trips will appear in coming issues.

Help make trips like these possible! Send contributions, payable to the *Militant*, to 306 W. 37th St, 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

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THE MILITANT

Fight cop killings, police brutality

Hawa Bah, whose son Mohamed was killed by New York cops in 2012, beat back the city’s attempt to overturn a civil jury’s verdict that cops were guilty of “excessive force.” “The true fight is to get justice so no other mother faces this,” Bah said. “I hope this victory helps.”



Militant/Seth Galinsky

Hawa Bah, at May 17 NY hearing where verdict against cop killing her son was upheld.

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SWP expands ‘Militant’ reach

Continued from front page members and other workers brought support to these actions and returned home to discuss with co-workers how to deepen solidarity and strengthen the unions.

This work continues. Alford Slee and I — who both work at Walmart — visited the Teamsters Local 727 strike picket line in Northlake, Illinois, last week. Afterwards Slee said, “Bringing solidarity is important. It’s how we can win.”

Many party branches won new contributors to the annual Militant Fighting Fund, helping expand the number of workers who join the fight to sustain a working-class newspaper. A thank you goes out to those who contributed. These funds have made possible recent reporting teams. The paper’s editor, John Studer, and Martin Koppel, have just returned from Puerto Rico where they learned more about how working people are responding to the disregard shown by the island’s colonial government and the U.S. rulers to the devastation from last year’s hurricane.

The fund drive also made possible a reporting trip by Rogér Calero and Maggie Trowe to Nicaragua where they provided the paper’s readers with eyewitness reports on the deepening political crisis in that country.

Door-to-door campaigning in working-class neighborhoods is where we also met workers inspired by the teachers’ struggle who picked up subscriptions, bought books by SWP leaders and made financial donations.

Ibrahim, a courier service worker, told Don Mackle and Tamar Rosenfeld that he had not expected to meet

members of the Socialist Workers Party in Jersey City, New Jersey, after they knocked on his door. He had recently moved there from Egypt. He picked up a subscription to the paper and a copy of *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?* by SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters.

When Rosenfeld called him a few days later he said he enjoyed reading “the article about people who have subscribed to the paper, who talked about their situations and their families.” He added, “They are workers just like me.”

Mike Tucker from Auckland, New Zealand, writes, “The campaign by members of the Communist League here to sell subscriptions and books coincided with a by-election for the city council’s Maungakiekie-Tamaki local board, which encompasses several working-class districts. The League stood Annalucia Vermunt, a factory worker and union member, to raise a working-class voice. During the election campaign 15 people picked up subscriptions to the *Militant* and 14 bought one of the campaign books. Vermunt joined protests by nurses and school workers and was invited to address a high school



Militant/KatyLeRougetel
Mechanic Corey Whiteloch in Surrey, suburb of Vancouver, British Columbia, is one of many new Militant readers. He signed up when Lynda Little knocked on his door April 14, and got *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?* by Jack Barnes, contributed to Militant Fighting Fund.

history class on communism and the Cuban missile crisis and its relevance for today.”

To the readers of the *Militant*: Keep your eyes open for union fights, as well as other actions in the interest of the working class! Bring your co-workers, friends, neighbors, and

relatives to the protests! This is the road toward our unions becoming the fighting mass organizations that we need, that can fight for the class interests of *all* workers, union and nonunion, native-born and immigrant, Black and Caucasian, women and men.

3,000 rail workers strike against Canadian Pacific

Continued from front page “We are striking for safety, dignity and respect in the workplace, against fatigue conditions and intense punitive discipline,” locomotive engineer Chris Yeandel told the *Militant*. Yeandel is vice-general chair of Locomotive East, Teamsters Canada Rail Conference.

The rail workers overwhelmingly voted against the Canadian Pacific bosses’ “final contract offer,” during a May 14-23 electronic vote organized by Ottawa officials at the request of the company.

The workers charge that the bosses have refused to deal with the issue of tiring work schedules that compromise safety. The company forces workers to work exhausted, compounded by a reign of harassment, which has resulted in hun-

dreds of disciplinary firings and 8,000 outstanding grievances.

Adding insult to injury, Canadian Pacific offered individual workers a bribe of \$1,000 if they dropped their grievance.

At one picket line at the Port Coquitlam, British Columbia, rail yard a majority of the pickets raised their hands when asked by the picket captain how many had the experience of going to bed and being awakened by a phone call ordering them to report to work.

As a result of layoffs and speedup from Canadian Pacific’s productivity and profit drive over a number of years, 3,000 engineers and conductors currently do the work previously done by 4,300 workers. In 2017 CP’s profits rose sharply to 2.4 billion Canadian dollars, up from Can\$900,000 in 2013.

Just before the strike began an additional 360 signal workers, members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, reached a three-year ten-

tative agreement with Canadian Pacific preventing a shutdown of commuter rail service in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal.

“Instead of negotiating, the company is relying on the government to resolve the dispute,” said Vancouver Teamsters Canada Rail Conference Local Chairman Jason Hnatiuk. Bosses that ship commodities and raw materials across North America using Canadian Pacific rail urged the government to intervene to try to force the striking workers back to work.

A two-day strike in February 2015, when pickets carried placards that read, “Fatigue kills,” ended under threat of federal strikebreaking legislation when union officials agreed to send the issues to arbitration. A 2012 strike also ended under threat of a back-to-work law.

Joe Young and Michel Dugré in Vancouver, British Columbia, contributed to this article.

Campaign to expand reach of ‘Militant,’ books, fund						
March 24–May 22 (final)						
Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold	Fund quota	Received
UNITED STATES						
Albany+	95	111	95	102	\$5,400	\$5,600
Atlanta	90	91	90	82	\$9,700	\$9,855
Chicago*	120	128	120	103	\$11,500	\$11,468
Dallas*	50	52	40	55	\$1,900	\$1,900
Lincoln*	25	27	20	20	\$300	\$301
Los Angeles+	125	135	125	125	\$10,500	\$10,828
Miami	35	36	35	38	\$3,200	\$3,518
New York	165	163	165	152	\$16,700	\$16,769
Oakland	85	89	85	74	\$13,000	\$13,463
Philadelphia	65	70	65	67	\$3,600	\$3,740
Seattle+	95	104	95	97	\$9,625	\$10,023
Twin Cities*	85	85	85	73	\$4,500	\$4,632
Washington	70	79	70	78	\$7,500	\$7,533
Total U.S.	1,105	1,170	1,090	1,066	\$97,425	\$99,630
Prisoners	25	31				
UNITED KINGDOM						
London	70	77	70	70	\$2,500	\$2,500
Manchester	50	54	50	53	\$950	\$1,050
Total U.K.	120	131	120	123	\$3,450	\$3,550
CANADA						
Montreal	60	66	60	57	\$5,700	\$6,840
Vancouver	45	45	45	49	\$3,000	\$3,030
Total Canada	105	111	105	106	\$8,700	\$9,870
NEW ZEALAND						
	45	51	45	33	\$4,000	\$4,037
AUSTRALIA						
	40	46	40	20	\$800	\$967
FRANCE						
					500	502
Other				12		1348
Total	1,440	1,540	1,400	1,360	\$114,875	\$119,904
SHOULD BE	1,400	1,400	1,400	1,400	\$112,000	\$112,000
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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

This column gives a voice to those engaged in labor battles and building solidarity today — from school workers in West Virginia, Oklahoma, Arizona and Colorado, to retail and factory workers looking to stand up and fight. Send in articles, photos and letters on picket lines and other labor protests to themilitant@mac.com or mail them to: 306 W. 37th St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10018; or call us at (212) 244-4899.

Teamsters strike Dr Pepper bottler, get solidarity

Some 140 truck drivers, members of Teamsters Local 727, struck the American Bottling Company May 22, setting up lively picket lines at the Northlake and Harvey facilities outside Chicago, where some 800 workers are employed.

Drivers at the company, which produces soft drinks, have been working without a contract since May 1. Union members voted down the bosses' final offer May 20 that pays drivers \$2 an hour less than at Pepsi and Coca-Cola.

Similarly, workers told the *Militant* that drivers at American Bottling receive half of what their counterparts receive in pension payments.

Among those visiting the picket line are Coca-Cola truck drivers from the same Teamsters local, five workers from Walmart, and Chicago nurse Desmond Norris. "This was my first picket experience," said Norris. "I was surprised about how happy they were to see us with our signs. I appreciated the opportunity to stand with them in their fight."

— John Hawkins

Ukraine rail workers work-to-rule, refuse unsafe equipment

Members of the Free Trade Union of Railway Workers of Ukraine (VPZU) employed at the state-owned rail company have been working strictly to company rules since May 14, refusing to operate dangerous equipment. The actions started at six depots and have spread across the country.

At a May 22 news conference workers and union leaders pointed to the lack of maintenance and investment, illustrated with photographs of safety hazards in yards, locomotives and cars. Because of the substandard condition of the rolling stock, working to rules has shut down locomotive depots in several cities and halted or substantially cut freight.

Drivers, their assistants and shunting operators in the railway department at ArcelorMittal in Kryvyi Rih joined the action May 17, refusing to operate locomotives. Production was shut down for four days in the giant steel and mining

plant, which employs 21,000 workers.

"The railway workers are protesting because the technical condition of our trains and vehicles is critical. It causes threats to the lives of employees, passengers and, in general, all citizens, as an accident on the railways can lead to people's injuries and deaths," Mykhailo Volynets, head of the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine, said in a statement. "They do need solidarity!"

The rail workers' actions follow a series of strikes over the past year and a half by shipyard workers and miners in the coal, iron ore and uranium industries. Through these fights workers have wrested some concessions from the bosses and strengthened the independent union movement in the country.

— Emma Johnson

Widespread support for 2-day U.K. hospital workers strike

WIGAN, England — "I am proud of what we have done. They thought we were the small people. They thought they could get away with this outsourcing, but we've showed them we are not minions," Amanda Grimes, a cleaner and one of 600 hospital workers on strike in Greater Manchester told the *Militant* May 23 on the picket line here.

"The bosses claim that our terms will



Chicago Teamsters on strike against American Bottling Company on picket line in Northlake, Illinois, May 22, joined by Walmart and other workers, bringing solidarity with union fight.

be protected for 25 years. But we are not stupid. Before you know it overtime rates will change, new starters will be on different conditions," she said.

The workers, organized by the Unison and UNITE unions, struck Warrington, Wigan and Leigh hospitals May 23-24 after bosses published plans to transfer 900 catering, cleaning and porter jobs to a new company, WWL Solutions Ltd. This is a "wholly owned subsidiary" of the National Health Service. Like others set up at 19 hospital trusts across the country, bosses are not required to pay workers the same rate as those hired directly by the NHS.

More than 300 workers took part in the lively picket line outside Wigan Royal Edward Infirmary, waving placards and flags and blowing vuvuzelas. Passing drivers honked in support.

A group of nurses brought lunch for all of the pickets from a nearby restaurant after collecting donations at one of the hospital wards.

NHS Providers, which represents the bosses at hospital, mental health and ambulance trusts in the U.K., claim the subsidiaries will "deliver operational productivity improvements." The 2006 Labour Party government decided hospital trusts could establish subsidiaries.

Jillian Harrison, who joined the picket line with two co-workers from the hospital switchboard, said she did not believe the bosses' assurances that wages and conditions of the workers would not be changed. "They start with lowest and work their way upwards," she said.

Unison has set another 48-hour strike for June 8-9, as negotiations continue.

— Dag Tirsén

Las Vegas casino workers prepare for strike

Continued from front page

ballots, 99 percent voted yes.

"Workers are showing a spirit of solidarity and fight for what they deserve," Bethany Khan, spokesperson for Culinary Workers Union Local 226 told the *Militant*. "Workers don't want to strike but will do so to protect what we fought so hard for over all these years."

The union includes bartenders, guest room attendants, cocktail servers, food servers, porters, bellmen, cooks and kitchen workers. The workers are fighting for increased wages, job security against the bosses' drive to subcontract out jobs, protection against layoffs when the bosses introduce new technology,

measures to protect workers from sexual harassment, and safeguards for immigrants with temporary status.

The union contracts cover 50,000 workers at 34 casino resorts and hotels on the Las Vegas Strip and downtown, with MGM Resorts International and Caesars Entertainment Corp. operating more than half of these properties.

As union members gathered to vote May 22 at the large Thomas and Mack Center at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, some workers chanted, "Hey Caesars, look around, Vegas is a union town" and "No contract, no peace."

"Some employees stopped by in their casino-resort uniforms on their way to

or from work," reported The Associated Press, "while others donned shirts emblazoned with 'Vegas strong' and the union logo."

Oleg Stewart, a 58-year-old cook at Harrah's, told the *Nevada Independent* that he wanted to ensure that a younger generation has the same benefits he has had over his 20 years with the union.

"You know because we have people that were here before us and I'm doing my part to keep it going for the ones that's going to be after," he said. "We're paving the way for them."

Almada said that one of the main issues is countering sexual harassment at work. We need "space to protect our bodies and space because there is a lot of harassment," she said. The union is demanding safety buttons for workers on the floors and to make sure radio and Wi-Fi work in the towers where guest room attendants work.

"The culinary union is the largest organization of immigrants" in Nevada, said Khan. Thousands marched on May Day demanding, "No deportations" to "show they're not afraid and will keep fighting every day for their families and communities," she said.

"A vote such as this is an expected part of the process," MGM said in a statement after the results of the strike authorization vote was announced.

The unions are appealing to individuals and groups not to stay at any of the 34 casinos and hotels affected by the labor dispute.

"This will be a wake-up call to let (the companies) know we are together, we are united, we are not separated," Lewis Thomas, a utility porter at the Tropicana casino hotel, told AP.

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In defense of the US working class

SWP leader at Havana event answers question: ‘Can working people in US make a socialist revolution?’

The following is the talk by Mary-Alice Waters to a conference organized by the Cuban Institute of History and the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC) in Havana, Cuba. Waters is a member of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party and president of Pathfinder Press. The talk, given April 26, opened a two-part program on the class struggle in the United States that was a major feature of the three-day 12th International May Day Scientific Conference.

Waters’ presentation was followed by a panel of four workers and a farmer from the US who described their own work experiences in different industries, as well as the union and social battles they’ve been part of (see biographies on next page). An article reporting on the conference appeared in the May 21 issue of the Militant. Copyright © 2018 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

Waters was introduced by René González Barrios, president of the Cuban Institute of History.

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

Thank you René for your generous introduction.

On behalf of all of us presenting this morning’s program on the class struggle in the United States, I want to thank the compañeros of the Cuban Institute of History, the Central Organization of Cuban Workers, and our hosts here at the Cigar Workers Palace for the privilege — and responsibility — you have extended us.

Six months ago, when René first asked us to prepare this session of the 12th International May Day Scientific Conference, I was skeptical. “We’re neither professional historians nor academic researchers,” I told him. “We’re workers, trade unionists, farmers, communists, members and supporters of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists. Will our presentation be appropriate?”

Each of you has a copy of the brief biographies we prepared on the members of our panel. I won’t repeat what’s in those notes, except to say that those you will hear from today have lived and worked in every part of the United States — on the land and in jobs from coal mines, oil refineries and railroads, to garment shops, construction sites, slaughterhouses, auto assembly lines, warehouses, and retail giants like Walmart — the largest private employer in the US today with 1.5 million workers on the payroll (and another 800,000 worldwide).

As class-conscious workers, of course, we are participants in every social, political, and cultural battle at the center of the class struggle in the US, starting with opposition to every act of aggression, every war waged openly or covertly by US imperialism.

René listened patiently to all our hesi-



Chris Dorst/Charleston Gazette-Mail via AP

Striking teachers at West Virginia Capitol in Charleston, Feb. 26, 2018, as one of most significant labor battles in U.S. in decades exploded. Teachers and other school workers went on strike statewide, winning support from students, parents, churches and other unions. Strikes and protests spread to Oklahoma, Kentucky, Arizona, Colorado, and North Carolina. “What happened there is a living refutation of the portrait of working-class bigotry and ‘backwardness’ painted by middle class liberals and much of the radical left,” says Socialist Workers Party leader Mary-Alice Waters.

tations. Then he just smiled and said: “Well, that’s what we need to hear about. Here at the history institute we talk to many who study the working class. We need to hear from those who *are* workers.”

So here we are, and we look forward to your questions, to your doubts and comments, and to a fruitful discussion especially.

I can assure you in advance that what you hear from us today will not be what you regularly hear, see, or read in either the “mass media,” or on what is now known as “social media” — although I prefer “bourgeois media” as the more accurate label for *both*.

Focus on two questions

I will focus my remarks on two questions.

First. Did the 2016 electoral victory of Donald Trump register a rise in racism, xenophobia, misogyny, and every other form of ideological reaction among working people in the US? Is that why tens of millions of workers of all races voted for him?

Second. Is a socialist revolution in the US really possible? Or are those like

ourselves, who answer with an unhesitating “Yes,” a new variety of utopian socialist fools, however well meaning?

The clearest and most demonstrative answer to the first question is being given right now from West Virginia to Oklahoma, from Kentucky to Arizona and beyond by tens of thousands of teachers and other public workers in states Trump carried by a large margin in 2016.

Less than two months ago in the state of West Virginia, one of the most significant labor battles in several decades exploded onto the national scene. Some 35,000 teachers, janitors, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, and other public school employees walked off the job together, defying past court rulings denying public employees the right to strike. With overwhelming support from their communities, they closed down the schools in every single county in the state. Yes, *every single one*. Fifty-five counties in all. It was a surprise even for the fighting teachers.

The action came after years of ruling-class budget cuts that slashed funding for students’ meals, textbooks, school supplies, building maintenance,

salaries of teachers and other employees, and so-called extracurricular activities such as sports, art, music, and other programs indispensable for a child’s growth and learning.

West Virginia is the historic heart of coal country in the United States, the site of some of the hardest fought union battles in US history. It has long been one of the most economically ravaged areas of the country, and even more so today.

Over the last three decades, the coal bosses and their government, determined to drive down their labor costs and break the back of the United Mine Workers union (UMWA), have waged a concerted assault on the lives and living standards of all working people.

Coal companies have closed hundreds of mines throughout the Appalachian region, as they’ve shifted capital to oil, natural gas, and other fossil-fuel energy sources, including their vast open-pit and nonunion surface coal mines in western regions of the United States. Their only concern is to increase their rate of profit as they employ fewer miners.

Some fifty years ago the UMWA, long the most powerful union in the country, represented 70 percent of coal miners. That figure today stands at 21 percent.

We don’t have time to tell the story of how the owners have closed health clinics won by the union in prior battles. Or why black lung disease, the deadly scourge of miners, driven back in the 1970s and 1980s, has once again exploded across the region, now hitting younger miners in an even more virulent form thanks to “new mining technology.”

Nor can we describe how the mining companies have used bankruptcy proceedings, court rulings, and corporate “restructurings” to cease recognizing union contracts, dump pension obligations, and eliminate UMWA-controlled

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Maykel Espinosa/Juventud Rebelde

Panel on class struggle in U.S. at April 2018 Havana conference organized by Cuban Institute of History (IHC) and Cuba’s union federation. From left, Willie Head, Omari Musa, Alyson Kennedy, Jacob Perasso and Mary-Alice Waters. At right, René González Barrios, president of IHC. At podium (not in photo) is Róger Calero.

West Virginia teachers set example for working class

Continued from page 5
mine safety committees that were fought for and conquered in previous battles. Through those union committees, miners themselves asserted their power to shut down work on any shift in face of *any* unsafe conditions.

You will hear more about these questions later in the program from one of our panelists, Alyson Kennedy, who worked fourteen years as an underground coal miner.

The consequences of this decades-long assault are registered in the statistics.

West Virginia today has the lowest median household income of all fifty states in the union save one, Mississippi. In only three states — Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Mississippi — do teachers earn less than in West Virginia.

Measured by official US government figures that include so-called “discouraged workers” — those who haven’t been able to find a job for so long that they’ve temporarily given up — unemployment in West Virginia is one of the highest in the country: more than 10 percent in 2017.

The state is a center of the drug addiction crisis in the US — it has the highest opioid overdose rate in the country. And the drug crisis is still accelerating, registered most forcefully in one fact: life expectancy in the United States actually *dropped* for two consecutive years in 2015-16.

To this picture you have to add the not-so-hidden toll of Washington’s endless wars, the burden of which, as always, falls most heavily on working-class and farm families in the most depressed regions of the country. Among veterans of the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and elsewhere, the suicide rate is twenty a day. Yes, you heard that right. *Twenty a day.*

We could add more to this picture, but it’s not necessary.

The point is that without understanding the devastation of the lives of working-class families in regions like West Virginia (and there are many more) — without understanding the vast increase since the 2008 financial crisis in *class* inequality, including the accelerating inequality within classes — *you won’t be able to understand*

what’s happening in the United States.

You have to compare this panorama of carnage with the lives of the upper layers of the meritocracy to be found in places like Silicon Valley, and the *more* exclusive (far from the *most* exclusive) neighborhoods of population centers like Manhattan, Washington, and San Francisco.

This devastation facing working people is not only the consequence of the worldwide capitalist crisis of production and trade, which began in the mid-1970s and is still deepening. It is the consequence of the *policies* initiated by the Democratic Party administration of the two Clintons in the 1990s and pursued with equal vigor by the Republican administration of George W. Bush and the Democratic administration of Barack Obama.

Policies such as the elimination of federal aid to children of single mothers and drastic cuts in other social welfare programs on all levels.

Legislation and policies disguised under names like the “war on drugs” and “criminal justice” that have made the United States the country with the highest incarceration rate in the world — some 25 percent of all prisoners on earth. It was among those prisoners, we should add, that our five Cuban brothers lived and carried out their political work for some sixteen years.

All these questions are explained and documented in several of the most widely read books published by Pathfinder Press that are available on the table that many of you have already visited: *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record* and *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?* both by Jack Barnes, the national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, and *“It’s the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the US ‘Justice’ System”* in which the five Cuban heroes talk about their experiences as part of the working class behind bars in the United States.

Workers resist ... search for answers

Often when we explain these social realities to compañeros and friends here in Cuba (and elsewhere), they ask, “Why do people accept this? Why hasn’t there been any resistance?”

Our answer is always the same: “There is resistance. Workers never



Above, Militant/Steve Marshall; Left, Associated Press
Striking teachers and public workers in West Virginia built on lessons of union battles in coalfields over decades, winning support of current and retired miners and their families. Above, United Mine Workers members and supporters shut down Pittston coal plant in Virginia during 11-month strike in 1989. Left, coal miners in Bellaire, Ohio, 1943, read article reporting UMW president John L. Lewis’ defiance of government threat to use troops to replace striking miners during World War II. “You can’t mine coal with bayonets!” miners replied.

Virginia by a vote of 69 percent to 27 percent for Clinton?

stop looking for ways to fight back — and *act* when they find ways.” But if you are not part of the working class, you’re not aware of what is happening until it explodes.

No worker goes on strike until they’ve exhausted other remedies. Until they feel they have no other choice.

The West Virginia teachers strike was just that kind of explosion. It seemed to come out of nowhere, but it had been building for years. Its roots are deep.

And when the teachers and other school employees walked out, when they saw the strength of their numbers, their confidence and determination exploded too. With support from their pupils, families, unions, and churches — and a long memory of the many bitter battles fought by the miners — they organized emergency food services for the students and strikers. Daytime activities for the children were put in place. Clothing and funds were collected, and more.

In the best traditions of trade unionism — and a precursor of the fighting labor movement that will again be built — the strike became a genuine social movement, battling for the needs of the entire working class and its allies.

“What we’re seeing is a class of people rising up,” one striking worker proudly told a reporter.

And he was right. They were the men and women whom Hillary Clinton so contemptuously labeled “a basket of deplorables” during her presidential campaign. People from the “backward” (that was her word!) expanses of the country between New York and California. People she described as “racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic,” and especially women, “married white women,” too weak to stand up to “pressure to vote the way your husband, your boss, your son” tells you to.

Is it any wonder Trump won West

The *better* class of people who engaged in this struggle not only kept every school closed for nine days. They sent thousands of demonstrators to occupy the state capitol day after day. Midway through the walkout, teachers rejected their union officialdom’s call to accept the governor’s promise of a deal. *They’d heard promises before.* They stayed out until they forced the legislature to pass, and the governor to sign into law, a five percent pay raise. And not only for school personnel, but for every single state employee.

A confident mass of red-shirted vic-



tors marched out of the state capitol building shouting, “Who made history? We made history!”

And as word spread, teachers in Oklahoma, Kentucky, and Arizona prepared for the next strike actions. “Don’t make us go West Virginia on you!” became their battle cry.

Of all that, you’ll hear more from the panel later this morning.

What has happened in West Virginia is a living refutation of the portrait of working-class bigotry and “backwardness” painted, almost without exception, by a broad spectrum of middle class liberals and much of the radical left in the US, and around the world as well. It is not only Donald Trump they obsessively hope to impeach. Their target — and the object of their fear — is that class of people who are rising up, many of whom voted for Trump.

What’s behind the actions of tens

of thousands of working people like these is not hatred of Mexicans, Muslims, African Americans, or a desire to keep women at home, barefoot, and pregnant. Just look at the pictures on the display board at the back of the room. Look at the faces of the women in West Virginia, Kentucky, Arizona and elsewhere who are at the forefront of the teachers’ battles!

Workers engaged in these fights are not clamoring for a border wall, groping women, or marching with KKK hoods and burning crosses. They are demanding dignity and respect for themselves and their families, and for all working people like them.

And they have nothing but distrust and growing hatred for those they call “the political class” in Washington and in every state capital in the country, both Republican and Democratic. That’s why chants of “Drain the swamp!” resonated



Beinecke Library, Yale University
Socialist Workers Party leaders were pioneers of U.S. and world communist movement in 1920s and of labor battles that built industrial unions in 1930s, including organizing drives that brought tens of thousands of truckers into the Teamsters union.

Left, Minneapolis Teamsters leader announces victory in 1934 drivers strike. Teamsters local organized citywide Union Defense Guard to halt fascist recruitment and led union opposition to U.S. imperialist aims in World War II. They “taught us what the U.S. working class is capable of as it awakens in struggle,” says Waters.

At top, longtime SWP leader James P. Cannon (table, second from left), was founder of U.S. communist movement in 1919 and a delegate to 1922 Congress of Communist International in Moscow. Also at presiding table are Karl Radek (Bolshevik party, Russia, left) and Clara Zetkin (Communist Party, Germany, right). At podium is Claude McKay, one of U.S. delegates.

far beyond those who voted for Trump. It’s not reactionary attitudes that are driving most of these working people. Their strike action registered something different: a step in the direction of independent political consciousness, which can only develop over time through *large-scale working-class actions on picket lines and in the streets.*

With the West Virginia strike and its spreading example, working-class resistance and class solidarity in the US have entered a new stage.

If you remember even one thing from our program here this morning, I hope it will be this:

Among working people in the United States, there is greater openness today than at any time in our political lives to think about and discuss what a socialist revolution could mean and why it just might be necessary. Why our class should shoulder the responsibility of taking state power. How we can ourselves become different human beings in the process.

What’s more, that political openness is as great among those who voted for Trump as among those who voted for Clinton, or the record number who couldn’t bring themselves to vote for either presidential candidate.

We know this not from polls or news reports filed by others. We know it from our own experiences, and from those of our kin scattered across the United States. We know it firsthand from our regular communist propaganda activity, as we go door to door in working-class neighborhoods of every racial and ethnic composition, urban and rural, from one end of the United States to the other, talking about these questions with thousands of working people. With whoever comes to the door.

A socialist revolution in the US?

That brings us to the second question. Is a socialist revolution in the US really possible?

Two months ago, we were asked that by a student here in Havana at the foreign ministry’s Higher Institute for Foreign Relations (ISRI). He didn’t believe it, he said. The economic and military strength of Washington is far too great — and the working class far too backward. US imperialism, he insisted, will

have to be defeated “from the outside.”

We in the Socialist Workers Party are certainly among a small minority, even among those who call themselves socialists, who say without hesitation, “Yes, socialist revolution is possible in the United States.” And no liberating movement of millions can ever be imposed “from the outside” *on any country.*

We say not only is socialist revolution in the US possible. Even more important, revolutionary struggles by the toilers are *inevitable.* They will be forced upon us by the crisis-driven assaults of the propertied classes — as we’ve just seen in West Virginia. And they will be intertwined, as always, with the example of the resistance and struggles of other oppressed and exploited producers around the globe.

What is *not* inevitable is the outcome. That is where political clarity, organization, prior experience, discipline, and, above all, the caliber and experience of proletarian leadership are decisive.

Our confidence comes from the class-struggle battles we ourselves have been part of, as well as what we learned firsthand from the battle-tested workers who recruited us to the communist movement. I will give you just three examples.

Those who recruited my generation were among the founders of the first Communist Party in the United States in 1919. They were delegates to the founding congresses of the Communist International. They were leaders of the great labor battles of the 1930s, battles that in a few short years swept past the craft-divided business unions of the American Federation of Labor to build a powerful social movement that organized industrial unions in virtually every basic industry.

By the high point in the late 1940s some 35 percent of the privately employed working class was unionized, up from 7 percent in 1930 (and that number is close to the 6.5 percent who are union members today). The lessons we learned from the speed and power of that transformation, the pitched battles not only with employers’ goons and police, but fascist gangs and National Guard troops sent in to break strikes,

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Books for working-class fighters:

OUT NOW!
A PARTICIPANT'S ACCOUNT OF THE MOVEMENT IN THE U.S. AGAINST THE VIETNAM WAR
by Fred Halstead \$35

TEAMSTER BUREAUCRACY
by Farrell Dobbs
Last of 4-part series — \$15

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution
by Jack Barnes \$10

OUT NOW!
A PARTICIPANT'S ACCOUNT OF THE MOVEMENT IN THE U.S. AGAINST THE VIETNAM WAR
by Fred Halstead \$35

Malcolm X, Black Liberation, & the Road to Workers Power
by Jack Barnes \$15 (special)

For special offers see list of distributors on page 4

Working-class leadership develops through struggle

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are all part of our basic education.

The rise of the CIO, the Congress of Industrial Organizations, is told in rich detail in one of the books you'll find on the Pathfinder table at the back, *Labor's Giant Step* by Art Preis, one of the *Militant's* principal labor reporters for many years.

What I want to call special attention to here today, however, is the most far-reaching and politically significant of the labor battles of the 1930s — the union-organizing drive of the Teamsters, the truck drivers union. It was an organizing campaign that began in the North Central city of Minneapolis in 1934 and, by its high point in 1938-39, had been spread across an area nearly the size of the Indian subcontinent. Yes, the Indian subcontinent!

The rich history and lessons of this campaign are recorded in four remarkable books — *Teamster Rebellion*, *Teamster Power*, *Teamster Politics*, and *Teamster Bureaucracy*. And it is with great pleasure that today, here at this conference all four volumes are available for the first time ever in Spanish.

Farrell Dobbs, the author of the *Teamster* series, was in his twenties shoveling coal in a Minneapolis depot when he emerged as a leader of the 1934 strikes that turned that city into a union town. He was the central organizer of the campaign that brought tens of thousands of over-the-road truckers into the union — from Tennessee to North Dakota, from Texas to Michigan. He resigned as general organizer of the Teamsters union national staff in 1940 to become labor secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, and he was sent to prison during World War II along with seventeen other leaders of Teamsters Local 544-CIO and the Socialist Workers Party for organizing labor opposition to the imperialist war aims of the US government. He later served as national secretary of the SWP for twenty years.

More than any other labor experience, it is the Teamsters organizing drive that taught us what the US

working class is capable of as it awakens in struggle. It taught us how quickly the working class can learn the meaning of class political independence, proletarian internationalism, and begin to transform the union movement into an instrument of revolutionary struggle for the entire class and its allies.

Those experiences involved organizing the unemployed, farmers, and independent truckers as allies. They included launching and training a disciplined Union Defense Guard that stopped in its tracks a fascist recruitment effort promoted by the bosses. These experiences included broadening international horizons, as union militants followed events in Germany, China, and Spain and took on gangs of anti-Jewish thugs. There was growing awareness of the need for workers to enter the political arena as an independent class force, with their own party.

That rapid advance came to an end in 1939-40 as Washington's intensifying imperialist war drive came down on the labor movement. But as Dobbs writes in his "Afterword" to *Teamster Bureaucracy*, "The principal lesson for labor militants to derive from the Minneapolis experience is not that, under an adverse relationship of forces, the workers can be overcome, but that, with proper leadership, they can overcome."

That is one of the same lessons taught us by the political cadres who under Fidel led the Cuban Revolution to victory.

Battle to bring down Jim Crow

None of us on this panel today lived through the great labor battles of the '30s. But several of us *were* part of the generations transformed by our experiences as part of another profoundly revolutionary, working-class struggle — the mass movement of the 1950s and



Above, first mass meeting in Montgomery, Alabama, 1955, to back boycott of segregated bus system. **Inset**, April 16, 1956, *Militant* promotes bus boycott. **Right**, Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate Farrell Dobbs speaking on Pontiac, Michigan, radio station WCAR calling on listeners to back Montgomery fight. Dobbs drove to Alabama with first station wagon donated for volunteer shuttle service during boycott.



'60s that brought down the Jim Crow system of institutionalized race segregation in the US South. That successful battle forever changed social relations, both North and South, including within the working class and unions.

And that is my second example.

The roots of that struggle are to be found in the century of resistance to the counterrevolutionary violence and terror against African Americans that reigned throughout the South following the abolition of slavery in the US Civil War — the Second American Revolution. The betrayal of post-Civil War Radical Reconstruction by the rising forces of finance capital and the bloody overthrow of often Black-led popular governments in the states of the former slavocracy were the greatest defeat ever suffered by the US working class.

The objective conditions for the explosion of another wave of that struggle in the 1950s, however, were the product above all of:

- The mass workers struggles of the 1930s, which fought to integrate the workforce in auto, steel, trucking, and many other industries.
- The social convulsions of World War II, which included the exodus from the land and the accelerated incorporation of millions of

African American workers, both male

and female, into industry and other urban employment, North and South. That was part of what is known as the Great Migration that had begun during the first imperialist world war, and included the recruitment of hundreds of thousands of soldiers who were Black to serve in segregated, dangerous, so-called noncombat units of the US armed forces during World War II.

- The first steps toward desegregation of the US armed forces in the years of "peace" between the atomic bombing of Japan and the Washington-organized invasion, partition, and occupation of Korea. These were followed in late 1951 by the desegregation of the army's combat units as well, as the US rulers' invasion force faced determined resistance from Korean and supporting Chinese troops.

- The victorious national liberation struggles that swept the colonial world during and after World War II, from China, Korea, Vietnam, and Indonesia to India, Africa, and the Caribbean. This includes the Cuban Revolution, which marked the point of furthest advance of those battles.

- The naked hypocrisy and moral bankruptcy of the US rulers who claimed to have instigated and pursued that second worldwide slaughter for "freedom" and "equality."

For my generation, and several others of us here this morning, the years of mass struggle that overturned the American prototype of apartheid were a school of popular revolutionary action, *our* school.

That's when we learned discipline. When we learned the power we had, not as individuals, but in our numbers and, above all, our organization. When we learned how to engage within the movement in heated, yet civil debate. When we learned to be political, not naïve, as we joined in political battles raging within the movement for Black rights.

One of the myths of the battle to bring down Jim Crow is that it was a pacifist

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Militant/Larry Seigle

Washington was shaken by spread of mass opposition to Vietnam War "not just among students and millions of workers but increasingly the ranks of the U.S. draftee army," says Waters. **Above**, Fort Jackson Eight, GIs who fought effort to court martial them in 1969 for speaking out against the war. **Right**, Vietnamese liberation fighters, April 1975, celebrate atop captured U.S. tank after victory over decades-long U.S. imperialist intervention.



Los Angeles teachers rally for contract, win support

BY BERNIE SENTER

LOS ANGELES — “Arm me with a fair contract!” read placards held by several thousand members of United Teachers Los Angeles and their supporters in a union-organized rally of 4,000 here May 24. The L.A. teachers fight for a contract is impacted by the strikes and protests by school workers that have swept West Virginia, Oklahoma, Kentucky, Arizona, Colorado, North Carolina and elsewhere over the last few months.

The action is a sign that the end of the school year may not bring an end to the uprising by school workers across the country and that strikes and teacher protests may continue in the fall.

Union and nonunion teachers alike have said, “Enough is enough!” and organized to maximize the weight of the rank and file, finding ways to unite workers, move forward and make gains.

They have learned to forge unity over professional and union lines and beat

back attempts by the government to pit them against each other. They have won solidarity and transformed their fight into a broader social movement. And as the strikes and protests have moved from one state to another, they have inspired and learned from each other.

United Teachers Los Angeles represents 35,000 teachers, health and human resource workers in the Los Angeles Unified School District and in charter schools. Union members have been without a contract for a year. Their demands mirror the other battles — increased funding for schools and supplies, pay raises, smaller class sizes, more support staff and less test-driven curriculum.

District funding for the 640,000 students there is among the lowest per student in the country. Class sizes are ballooning — one kindergarten class this year had 47 students.

UTLA President Alex Caputo-Pearl told the rally that if there is no progress



Militant/Bernie Senter

Thousands of teachers and their supporters rallied in Los Angeles May 24. Members of United Teachers Los Angeles have worked without a contract for a year. Their demand for increased funding mirrors that of other school workers' actions around the country.

in talks during the summer, a strike vote will be taken in September and a strike organized for later in the fall.

Marshe Doss, an 11th-grader and leader in the Student Deserve coalition, and parent organizer Eloisa Galindo also spoke.

Speakers repeatedly exhorted the

crowd to focus on voting, pointing to liberal big-business politician Democrat Gavin Newsom. Newsom, the state's current lieutenant governor, is the front runner in the upcoming California gubernatorial primary.

Rebecca Garelli, a middle school

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In defense of the working class in the United States

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movement. That all those involved were opposed, in principle, to taking up arms in self-defense against the violence of the Ku Klux Klan, White Citizens Council, and other vigilante outfits deeply intertwined with the Democratic Party and police departments across the South and parts of the border states.

The record shows otherwise. It was workers with military training and combat experience in Korea who organized themselves as the Deacons for Defense and Justice in Louisiana, and a chapter of the NAACP in Monroe, North Carolina, to protect their communities and their kids who were marching. Martin Luther King was protected by well-organized security.

Above all, we identified with and learned from Malcolm X, as he more and more consciously charted a revolutionary, an internationalist, and then, yes, a working-class course. As he charted a course to join forces with those the world over, whatever their skin color, who understood that we are fighting a worldwide battle “between those who want freedom, justice and equality for everyone and those who want to continue the systems of exploitation.”

For many of us, it was that mass, Black, proletarian movement in the United States, combined at the same time with the example of the workers and farmers of Cuba and their advancing revolution, that gave *our* generation unshakable confidence in the revolutionary capacities of working people.

That story is told in one of the most important books we have brought with us, *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* by Jack Barnes.

“The greatest obstacle to the line of march of the toilers,” Jack says in those pages, “is the tendency, promoted and perpetuated by the exploiting classes, for working people to underestimate ourselves, to underestimate what we can accomplish, to doubt our own worth.”

What the workers and farmers of Cuba showed us is that with class solidarity, political consciousness, courage, focused and persistent efforts at education, and a revolutionary leadership of a

caliber like that in Cuba — a leadership tested and forged in battle, in sacrifice, over years — it is possible to stand up to enormous might and numbers that initially seem to pose insurmountable odds — *and win*. And then to accelerate the building of a *truly* new society, led by the only class capable of doing so.

That was the foundation of the political education of our generation.

Vietnam and the antiwar struggle

As the mass proletarian struggle against Jim Crow triumphed, our confidence in the revolutionary capacities of the US working class deepened with the third example I'll point to. That was the battle to put an end to the US rulers' war against the people of Vietnam. We never doubted that the Vietnamese people — and those of us determined to defend their fight for national sovereignty and unification — would win.

In the course of that battle, as the mobilizations against the war grew to involve millions, the widening fissures in the fabric of US society struck *fear* in the hearts of the US rulers.

- Massive revolts exploded in the Black ghettos of major cities in the North, culminating in those that spread to virtually every US city in 1968 following the assassination of Martin Luther King in Memphis, Tennessee — a cold-blooded political assassination in the midst of a strike by sanitation workers there for whom King had gone to rally support.

- In an effort to intimidate and quell protests, the US rulers increasingly resorted to the mobilization of National Guard troops, culminating in May 1970 in the fatal shooting of two students at Jackson State in Mississippi and four students at Kent State University in Ohio. These killings took place as demonstrations of unprecedented size rocked the US in opposition to Washington's invasion of Cambodia, along Vietnam's border.

- And we saw how the US rulers and their servants were shaken by the spread of mass antiwar opposition not just among students and growing millions of workers but increasingly

the ranks of the US draftee army, especially those being sent to fight in Vietnam.

This was what the bourgeois political crisis known as Watergate and ouster of President Richard Nixon was really all about — the tremors of fear among the US rulers.

It is experiences such as these that have taught us something about the political dynamics that will inevitably be part of a victorious American socialist revolution.

* * *

One final point, to close.

The world we are living in today is not headed toward a future of capitalist peace and prosperity. To think otherwise you'd have to believe that the ruling families of the imperialist world and their financial wizards have found a way to “manage” capitalism in crisis. That they've discovered the means to preclude shattering financial collapses and breakdowns of production, trade, and employment.

You'd have to believe that the credit crisis that exploded as recently as 2007-08 was an aberration and won't happen again, with even more devastating consequences for working people.

The opposite is the truth.

The crisis of finance capital is not a short-term cyclical adjustment. World capitalism's profit rates have been on a long downward curve for more than four decades, since the mid-1970s. Do any of us believe, under the domination of breakdown-ridden financial and banking capital, that world capitalism is entering a sustained period of increased investment in the expansion of industrial capacity and massive hiring of workers? All evidence points in the other direction.

We have entered what will be decades of economic, financial, and social convulsions and class battles. Decades of bloody wars like those in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, and more.

The coming years *will* end in World War III — inevitably — *if* the only class capable of doing so, *the working class*, fails to take state power. If we fail to take

the power to wage war out of the hands of the imperialist rulers.

But for us, a sober and realistic assessment of what lies ahead is reason neither for panic nor demoralization and despair. To the contrary. The years that are coming will also bring increasingly organized resistance — worldwide — by growing vanguards of working people pushed to the wall by the capitalists' compulsion to intensify the exploitation of working people in order to reverse their declining rate of profit.

It is through those battles that class consciousness, as well as confidence and leadership capacity, will develop among working people — unevenly but apace.

And time is on *our* side — not theirs.

On March 13, 1961, barely a month before the victorious battle of Playa Girón, or the Bay of Pigs debacle as it is known in the US, Fidel Castro spoke to tens of thousands of Cuban workers, farmers, and youth preparing to meet the invasion we all knew was coming. Answering Washington's illusions that the coming battle would install in Cuba a government subservient to the US rulers, Fidel told the cheering crowd: “There will be a victorious revolution in the United States before a victorious counter-revolution in Cuba.”

His words were not empty bravado. Fidel *never ever* stooped to demagoguery. Nor was he gazing in a crystal ball, pretending to divine the future. We, and the revolutionary people of Cuba, understood him well. He was speaking as a leader offering — *advancing* — a line of struggle, a line of march, for our lifetimes. He was, as always, addressing Lenin's question, “What is to be done?”

In North America — and Cuba as well — each succeeding generation of revolutionaries has carried those words on our banner.

The political capacities and revolutionary potential of workers and farmers in the US are today as utterly discounted by the ruling families and their servants as were those of the Cuban toilers at Playa Girón.

And just as wrongly.

Ireland abortion ban repealed

Continued from front page
says his government will introduce a law to allow abortion, but will impose a time limit of up to 12 weeks of pregnancy and up to 24 weeks in “exceptional” circumstances.
The vote is a reflection of the deep-going changes in the outlook of women and men to the fight for women’s rights coming out of the integration of women into the workforce. This has occurred in Ireland as it has in many other parts of the capitalist world.

The number of working women in Ireland jumped 20 percent since 1993. Restrictions on the sale of contraception were dropped in 1993, divorce was legalized in 1996, votes in 1992 and 2002 altered the law to permit abortion if a woman was deemed a suicide risk, and same sex marriage was legalized by a 62 percent vote in 2015.

Broad campaign
“This result is bigger than Ireland. We know the world watches us as abortion access is being eroded in other places,” said Linda Kavanagh, spokesperson for the Abortion Rights Campaign, part of the coalition that led the efforts to repeal the amendment.

The fight heated up after Savita Halappanavar, a 31-year-old dentist, died on Oct. 28, 2012, after University Galway Hospital authorities refused to give her an abortion. She went to the hospital in extreme pain as she was having a miscarriage. She got septicemia, several organs began to fail, but hospital authorities refused to save her life.

Within weeks protests were mounted in towns across Ireland. Some 10,000 people marched in Dublin, protesting her death and the constitution’s onerous restrictions on access to abortion.

In September and October 2017 demonstrations in Dublin, Belfast and London mobilized growing support for changing the law. Over 30,000 marched in Dublin.

Responding to the growing support for the campaign for abortion rights, Varadkar announced the referendum Jan. 29. Since then, thousands of women and men have been involved in street campaigning from tables in town centers and door to door.

Marissa McMahon who works in Belfast, traveled with others from Northern Ireland to the Irish Republic to campaign in Drogheda with “Together for Yes” for two weekends. “We did not quite know what to expect canvassing door to door, and in rural and working-class areas,” she

told the *Militant* in a phone interview May 27. “But we were welcome, we never encountered a hard ‘No’ with no possibility to have a discussion. On the contrary, women would come out and tell us their personal stories.”
After the referendum results were announced, John McGuirk, a spokesman for Save the 8th campaign, said that his group would continue to fight against women’s access to abortion “if and when abortion clinics are opened in Ireland.”

‘The North is next’
“The pressure is on for the North now,” McMahon said. “When I walked through the center of Belfast last night with my ‘Repeal’ hoodie on, I was greeted by all kinds of people, and a lot of young guys especially were giving me high fives.”
The 1967 Abortion Act made abortion widely available in Britain under the National Health Service. But the law does not apply in Northern Ireland, where women seeking abortions can face life in prison, and doctors who perform them face five years. As a result hundreds of women travel to

Britain each year.
Since the referendum result became known, there have been calls for a change of legislation in Northern Ireland by the Alliance Party, the Social Democratic and Labour Party and Sinn Fein, while the Democratic Unionist Party remains opposed. In

US rulers, Pyongyang reset denuclearization talks

Continued from front page
rade against the White House. Trump should never have agreed to the meeting in the first place, they said. Trump was “unprepared,” too “hotheaded,” had “excessive expectations,” and would give away the farm at any meeting.

The next day President Trump made it clear plans were still moving ahead for the summit and that sometimes sharp exchanges between Washington and Pyongyang were all part of negotiations. Former Democratic President Jimmy Carter joined those urging Trump be considered for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Trump, like all his predecessors in the White House, defends the interests of U.S. imperialism. The measures he has implemented, including tightening the squeeze on working people in North Korea, are nothing new. But unlike previous U.S. administrations, the Trump White House has succeeded in getting the government of China to significantly step up its implementation of sanctions and the resulting hardships on working people in the North. Some 90 percent of North Korea’s trade is with China.

Kim has made ending North Korea’s economic isolation a priority. At the end of April he announced the Workers’ Party had adopted a “new strategic line,” retreating from investment in armaments to focus on rebuilding the country.

US rulers leveled Korea
The 1950-53 Korean War was a result of the division of Korea by Washington, along with Moscow, after the second imperialist world war ended with the defeat of Japan’s capitalist rulers. They did so against the will of the Korean people.

Washington crushed revolutionary mobilizations in the South and, after the war broke out, used massive bombing and napalm to level virtually every building in North Korea and — on only a slightly lesser scale — in the South.



Reuters/Clodagh Kilcoyne
Mass celebration in Dublin May 26, day after referendum victory ending ban on abortions.

other governments will join South Korea and Japan to help finance economic development in the North, and to assure the protection of the North Korean government.

“We welcome recent steps that have opened the road to agreement by Seoul, Beijing and Washington to sit down at the table with the DPRK for talks,” the Socialist Workers Party said in a message to North Korean leaders last month.”
“The stakes have never been higher in ensuring a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula and Japan, including an end to Washington’s nuclear ‘umbrella’ and deployment of nuclear-armed warships and submarines in the surrounding seas and skies,” the SWP said.
“Korea is one!”

Preparations for the summit
On May 26 South Korean President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim met in Panmunjom. According to press reports, Moon hopes to travel to Singapore during the summit for what would be the announcement of a formal peace treaty.

On May 28 a delegation of Sung Kim, U.S. ambassador to the Philippines; Allison Hooker, director of Korea for the National Security Council; and other U.S. officials met with a North Korean delegation in the demilitarized zone to discuss meeting arrangements.

On May 29, the White House said it was holding off beginning tighter economic sanctions planned against North Korea.

After consulting with Chinese officials in Beijing, Gen. Kim Yong Chol, a high-ranking official in North Korea, arrived in Washington May 30. He will meet with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, reportedly to discuss what steps toward denuclearization can be decided.

Discussions also concern the massive arsenal of nonnuclear weapons the North has amassed on the demilitarized zone aimed at Seoul 30 miles away, as well as withdrawal of some U.S. forces from the South.

Once Washington-North Korea agreements are signed, Trump says Washington will work to ensure that

LA teachers rally

Continued from page 9
teacher from Arizona and a leader of Arizona Educators United, told the rally, “Striking was the only way we could show our collective power.” The AEU joined with the Arizona Education Association to lead a sustained campaign of rallies, “Red for Ed” walk-ins and finally a strike that won new funding and substantial wage increases.

Members of Service Employees International Union Local 99, who work as the school district’s bus drivers, cafeteria workers, custodians and other nonteaching staff, joined the rally wearing their union shirts. Their local got a tentative new contract May 8, subject to vote by members, after 16 months of fruitless negotiations.

The union — which represents 30,000 workers — got the new proposal after they called a one-day strike for May 15 and the UTLA announced its members wouldn’t cross their picket lines. Within hours a new offer was made.

Local 99 posted a picture on its website of their contingent in the teachers’ rally, captioned, “You were there for us, we are here for you!”

LA teachers rally

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Abortion Is a Woman’s Right!

by Pat Grogan, Evelyn Reed



Why abortion rights are central not only to the fight for the full emancipation of women, but to forging a united and fighting labor movement. — \$6

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