

Big response to win in fight for ex-prisoners' right to vote

BY MAGGIE TROWE

As the Socialist Workers Party's eight-week drive to win 1,400 readers of the *Militant*, sell 1,400 copies of books by party leaders and raise \$100,000 for the SWP Party-Building

SWP SPEAKS IN INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

Fund enters its final week, branches of the SWP across the U.S. are on a stepped-up footing to reach the goals. The SWP's sister parties, Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the U.K., are part of the effort.

"We're organizing door-to-door teams every day between now and Dec. 4 both here and in the region," Alex Huinil, party branch organizer in Albany, New York, said Nov. 27. "We get a great response to the *Mili-*

Continued on page 3

SF, Hawaii hotel strikers: '1 job should be enough!'

BY JOEL BRITTON

SAN FRANCISCO — Hundreds of striking hotel workers, members of the UNITE HERE union, gathered in a steady rain Nov. 23, rallying at downtown Yerba Buena Gardens on Mission Street to show their determination to continue their strike at seven Marriott hotels here.

Over 5,000 Marriott workers are on strike in San Francisco and Hawaii. Others have settled in Boston, Detroit, Oakland, San Diego and San Jose.

The strikers' central demand is "One job should be enough!" The cost of living, especially housing, means many of these workers have to work two or three jobs to get by. The slogan is widely popular among all workers.

A union flyer distributed on the picket lines reads, "We are calling on Marriott to provide jobs that are enough to live on. Marriott workers want one job that's safe, secure, and enough to make ends meet."

Anand Singh, president of UNITE HERE Local 2 in San Francisco, reported to the rally that Marriott bosses are demanding the union give up on winning both a substantial wage increase and retaining their medical coverage as it is. Under the contract that expired in August, single workers

Continued on page 5

Join workers in struggle, break with bosses' parties



Militant/Laura Garza

Dennis Richter, Socialist Workers Party candidate for US Senate in California during 2018 election, talks with worker at Farmer Johns meatpacking plant in Vernon, Oct. 31.

Workers seek road forward out of crisis of capitalism

Workers, farmers and young people Socialist Workers Party members talk to are attracted to the strike of Marriott Hotel workers who have popularized the cry "One job should be

EDITORIAL

enough!" Many say, "That's right, I'm working two jobs myself." Or, "I work, my husband works, and we barely scrape by."

Continued on page 9

Join Socialist Workers Party campaigning in working class

BY SETH GALINSKY

Socialist Workers Party members found widespread interest in the party's program, and in how it championed workers on strike to defend their jobs, wages and safety, and joined in protests against police brutality, Jew-

Continued on page 7

California Camp Fire catastrophe caused by dog-eat-dog capitalism



The Union via AP/Elias Funez

Impalas Car Club members serve meal to fire survivors in Walmart lot, Chico, California, Nov. 17. In face of government neglect, working-class solidarity key to get food, clothes, supplies.

BY JEFF POWERS

A social catastrophe has been visited on working people who live in the Northern California area devastated by the Camp Fire, the deadliest wildfire in the state's history. At least 88 are dead as

of Nov. 26, 203 remain unaccounted for, and some 14,000 homes and thousands of other buildings have been destroyed, leaving thousands homeless.

Thousands of volunteers — both

Continued on page 4

'UK out now!' Brexit is best terrain for the workers to fight

BY TONY HUNT

LONDON — Defying millions of working people who voted for Brexit, Prime Minister Theresa May is pursuing a "deal" — a 585-page opaque document — that will keep the U.K.'s capitalist rulers aligned with the pro-

Continued on page 9

Inside

US rulers push back against Beijing's expanding challenge 2

'Yellow vests' in France protest against 'president of the rich' 6

Thousands hit widespread gov't corruption, misrule in Haiti 7

—On the picket line, p. 5—

Bus drivers in New Zealand beat back lockout, pay raise agreed to
Lorain, Ohio, nurses fight bosses' attack on health benefits

Fall Campaign to sell Militant subscriptions and books

Oct. 6 - Dec. 4 (Week 7)

Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold
UNITED STATES				
Albany	115	73	115	51
Atlanta	85	67	85	43
Chicago	115	96	115	62
Dallas	50	43	50	35
Lincoln	15	14	15	11
Los Angeles	125	78	125	32
Louisville	30	23	30	17
Miami	40	16	40	26
N. New Jersey	35	22	35	21
New York	110	87	110	52
Oakland	85	76	85	57
Philadelphia	55	36	55	36
Pittsburgh	15	17	15	11
Seattle	90	66	90	30
Twin Cities	65	42	65	26
Washington	80	50	80	57
Total U.S.	1,110	806	1,110	567
Prisoners	25	28		
UNITED KINGDOM				
London	60	50	60	34
Manchester	50	48	50	25
Total U.K.	110	98	110	59
CANADA				
Montreal	50	36	50	33
Vancouver	45	39	45	30
Total Canada	95	75	95	63
NEW ZEALAND				
New Zealand	40	32	30	22
AUSTRALIA				
Australia	30	22	15	2
Total	1,410	1,061	1,360	713
SHOULD BE	1,400	1,218	1,400	1,218

U.S. rulers push back against Beijing’s expanding challenge

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Sharpening frictions between the rulers in the U.S. and China were revealed at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, held in Papua New Guinea Nov. 17-18. It became a platform for the U.S. capitalist class and its close allies, from Australia to Japan, to advance moves to push back against Beijing’s growing influence in the region.

Vice President Mike Pence and Chinese President Xi Jinping gave speeches reflecting the hardening rivalry between Washington, the world’s still dominant but weakening imperialist nation, and Beijing, the main emerging capitalist economic and military force in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. As the old capitalist world order is being ripped apart, the rulers of smaller nations in the region are being forced to choose sides or try to wriggle between the two.

An op-ed in the Nov. 18 *Australian* said, “The U.S. has made a naval commitment to Australia’s immediate region not seen since World War II: a warning to China that its days of easy gains against a distracted Western alliance should be over.”

For the first time in APEC’s 25-year history, the assembled capitalist leaders failed to reach agreement on a final communiqué, however bland. Papua New Guinea Prime Minister Peter O’Neill, the summit chair, said the deep rift between “the two big giants in the room” on trade and investment was responsible. Washington reportedly demanded condemnation of Beijing’s “coercive and predatory” trade practices.

Pence cited President Donald Trump

saying that China has “taken advantage of the United States for many, many years.” And that “those days are over.”

“Authoritarianism and aggression have no place in the Indo-Pacific,” Pence cynically asserted. This ignores the bloody history of U.S. imperialism — and its close allies like Australia — from World War II through the Korean and Vietnam wars to the conflicts in Central Asia and the Middle East today.

He repeated the White House’s long list of charges against Beijing, from industrial espionage to theft of “intellectual property” to its military buildup, throwing in “concerns about human rights” for good measure.

Rivalry over riches of the Pacific

Attacking Beijing’s territorial claims and expanding military outposts on islets in the South China Seas, Pence said Washington would continue to “uphold the freedom of the seas and the skies.”

While in Port Moresby for the APEC summit, Pence announced Washington would be joining Canberra in the redevelopment of a Papua New Guinea naval base on Manus Island. The planned expansion would open the base to even the largest U.S. aircraft carriers. This slammed the door on a bid by Beijing to develop the deep-water port. Situated off PNG’s northeast coast, it offers a commanding sweep of the approaches to the South Pacific.

At the same time, Beijing is deep in negotiations with the Samoan government over bankrolling the redevelopment of the port at Asau.

The U.S. rulers view control over the



Contest over profitable markets, trade, raw materials in strategic Indo-Pacific region are behind Washington, Beijing clash at Asia-Pacific forum, in Papua New Guinea Nov. 17-18.

western Pacific’s markets and resources as the biggest gain they made in the second imperialist world war.

On his way to the APEC meeting, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced a strengthening of military and economic ties between the long-time U.S. allies, Japan and Australia. He was the first Japanese leader to visit Darwin since the bombing of that northern Australian city by Japanese aircraft in 1942, two months after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Washington hits Beijing’s expansion

As he spoke to APEC delegates Nov. 17, Pence attacked the Chinese rulers’ signature Belt and Road Initiative. The plan spans 70 countries across Asia to Europe and Africa. Its goal is a series of huge infrastructure projects led by Beijing to open up capitalist development while shortening transport costs and times for goods made in China.

The Belt and Road Initiative involves loans to developing countries, whose repayment is secured by significant territory and infrastructure acquisitions for Beijing in case of defaults. Pence said the unsustainable loans saddled smaller nations with a “sea of debt.”

While true, coming from a spokesman for the number one imperialist power, this was another staggering piece of hypocrisy. The U.S. capitalist rulers have plundered every corner of the globe for decades.

Xi responded to the U.S. vice president by appealing to globalist aspirations against “unilateralism.” He said APEC should “firmly uphold the rule-

based multilateral trading system and say no to protectionism.” The capitalist rulers in China continue to take advantage of World Trade Organization status as an “underdeveloped country,” to warrant Beijing’s state protectionism, even though the last three decades of capitalist development have turned eastern China into an industrial powerhouse.

Xi denied Beijing’s rail, road and port infrastructure loans were a trap. He said the growing export of Chinese capital was just to share “opportunities with the world to seek common development.”

The capitalist rulers of the U.S., Japan and Australia announced a trilateral partnership in July to invest in infrastructure projects to counter Beijing in the Asian-Pacific region. This includes a massive power and internet cabling project in Papua New Guinea, the underdeveloped former Australian colony.

Trump and Xi are due to meet at the Group of 20 summit in Buenos Aires at the end of November. Much more is at stake than a trade war.


The U.S. rulers and their allies are fighting a rear-guard action against a Chinese state capitalist powerhouse whose moves to claw its way to top dog in the Asia-Pacific are making progress.

The real question for working people — in the Pacific region and beyond — is which class will rule in the new world being forged. Will the superrich who live by exploiting our labor stay on top? Or will the working class fight to take political power out of their hands and transform ourselves and society in the interests of the toiling majority.

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Militant/Johanna Engen

Nov. 17 protest in Oslo against gov’t plan to curb women’s right to choose abortion.

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Ex-prisoner vote wins response

Continued from front page
tant’s coverage of the Florida victory extending the right to vote to tens of thousands of ex-prisoners.”

“We’re building on gains made in our recently concluded SWP election campaign here. When we campaign confidently and boldly, it attracts workers to the party.

“We’re making an effort to introduce our books along with the *Militant* early in the discussions. We sold 13 books in the past week at workers’ doors and on the job.”

The final-week plan of SWP members in Los Angeles includes going door to door in communities near the Mexican border to discuss why the labor movement needs to fight for amnesty for the millions of undocumented workers living in the U.S. They are also traveling to Ventura County to talk to working people affected by a raging forest fire there.

“The only way workers can defend ourselves effectively is when we face the bosses and their government united and organized,” Gerardo Sánchez, a member of the SWP in Dallas, told Cristina Retana, when he knocked on her door in Fort Worth, Texas. He showed her pictures of workers responding to factory raids by the rulers’ immigration cops in *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?* by SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters.

“It’s true. They keep us divided to attack us,” Retana said. The SWP fights for the labor movement to demand amnesty for all those in the U.S. without papers, Sánchez explained.

After reading the back covers of the books that Sánchez showed her, she got Waters’ book, as well as *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record* and *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes, along with a subscription to the *Militant*.

“In northern New Jersey we’re behind on our quotas, but we have a detailed day-by-day plan to complete the drive,” SWP organizer Dave Prince told the *Militant* Nov. 27. The drive overall is behind schedule.

As we go to press, 1,061 subscriptions and 713 campaign books have been sold, and \$68,312 has been received for the fund.

Knocking on doors in a trailer park in Marietta, Georgia, Nov. 25, Susan LaMont, SWP organizer in Atlanta, and Sam Manuel met Shanae Swan and her husband Roy, who works for an apartment maintenance company. Shanae used to work in the Walmart deli in Dalton, where she grew up.

“I had to quit after two months, because they were asking me to work 60 hours a week,” she said. When LaMont and Manuel showed her the *Militant* article on the Florida victory for ex-felons, Shanae and Roy both said this was good for all workers.

Looking over the *Militant*, including the article on the hotel workers’ strikes in San Francisco and Hawaii, Shanae decided to subscribe. “I’d like to try the *Militant* because it’s interesting to learn about different outlooks and what other people, like the hotel workers, are doing,” she said.

Rachele Fruit, who ran as the 2018 SWP candidate for governor of Georgia, reports she sold five campaign books along with four subscriptions on a door-to-door team in Douglasville.

One of the books was “*It’s the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the US ‘Justice’ System*”: *The Cuban Five Talk About Their Lives Within the US Working Class*. This book — which has interviews with five Cuban revolutionaries who served up to 16 years in U.S. prisons on frame-up charges for their activity in defense of the Cuban Revolution — helps describe both the conditions faced by workers behind bars and the example of the Cuban Revolution for workers in the U.S.

‘Finally, we won something real’

Steve Warshell, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate in Florida in the last election, talked with airport worker Ed Laporte, 40, and his sister at their doorstep in Miami Gardens, Florida, Nov. 18. Laporte’s brother is serving a 10-year prison sentence for burglary. He said the passage of Amendment 4 was “about time. Finally people have won something real.”

“We need to build on this victory and fight for the right to a trial by a jury of one’s peers,” Warshell said. “It’s reached the point where the police don’t have to prove anything,”



Militant
SWP member Seth Galinsky shows Ligia Rivera the *Militant* at the day care center she runs out of her home in the Bronx, Nov. 11. Many Uber drivers leave their children with her during the crazy hours that they work, she said. She bought a *Militant* subscription, as well as *Malcolm X, Black Liberation*, and the *Road to Workers Power* and *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record*.

Laporte said, agreeing. “They just threaten and people feel they have to accept a prison sentence.”

“My brother never had a trial,” Laporte said. “He didn’t really know what he was accused of doing until after he’d been in the Broward County jail for weeks and his lawyer told him the proposed ‘deal’ from the prosecutor. He was afraid they would carry out their threat to accuse him of murder if he didn’t agree.”

“My supporters and I are involved in the ongoing fight for the right of workers behind bars to read my party’s paper, the *Militant*, in Florida prisons,” Warshell said. Laporte and his sister decided to subscribe.

Dan Fein met Christine Kelley when he knocked on her door campaigning in Blue Island, Illinois, Nov. 25. He told her about how workers on strike against Marriott Hotel bosses in several cities have the slogan, “One job should be enough!”

“I work three jobs!” Kelley told him. “Full time at a child care center, part time in a restaurant, and I sing in a band. We certainly need unions where I work. I like what you stand for, like amnesty for the undocumented workers,” she said. Fein showed her *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?* which Kelley decided to buy along with a subscription.

“Hold on!” Deborah Collins, a re-

tired medical assistant, told SWP members after they’d talked about working-class politics and the party at her doorstep in an apartment building in New York Nov. 23. She went inside to get money to make a contribution to the SWP Party-Building Fund. She said she was particularly interested in the *Militant*’s coverage of a recent victory by Walmart cashiers in their fight for the right to sit while at work.

“The people who write these rules sitting at their desk, wouldn’t survive standing all day, every day,” she said, handing over her donation. “I know, I worked on my feet my entire life.”

Subscriptions and information on book sales received by Dec. 4 will count toward the drive, as will fund contributions received by Dec. 11.

If you’d like to join SWP members as they broaden their reach, either in the final week of the drive or as they keep knocking on doors afterward, contact the nearest party branch listed in the directory on page 8.

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Socialist Workers Party Fund Drive			
Oct. 6 - Dec. 4 (Week 7)			
Area	Quota	Collected	%
Albany	\$6,000	\$4,467	74%
Atlanta	\$9,500	\$7,266	76%
Chicago	\$11,000	\$6,445	59%
Dallas	\$2,500	\$1,585	63%
Lincoln	\$225	\$160	71%
Los Angeles	\$10,000	\$4,934	49%
Louisville	\$800	\$912	114%
Miami	\$3,500	\$1,755	50%
New York	\$14,000	\$11,877	85%
N. New Jersey	\$2,500	\$2,548	102%
Oakland	\$12,500	\$9,512	76%
Philadelphia	\$3,000	\$1,500	50%
Pittsburgh*	\$1,200	\$150	13%
Seattle	\$10,000	\$7,710	77%
Twin Cities*	\$4,800	\$3,156	66%
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To subscribe or purchase books at these prices, contact Socialist Workers Party or Communist League branches listed on page 8.

Camp Fire social catastrophe

Continued from front page

workers forced to evacuate as the fire leveled Paradise and other towns in the area and others who left jobs and responsibilities to help fellow workers in need — came to organize supplies, clothes, shelter and to help people keep and care for their pets that survived. They were joined by a handful of sports figures like Aaron Rogers, the Green Bay Packers quarterback who originally comes from nearby Chico, and a number of prominent chefs who helped prepare Thanksgiving dinners for some 15,000 people.

The biggest beneficiary, however, has been the bosses at Northern California power company Pacific Gas & Electric. After the company was hit by a pile of lawsuits for proven responsibility for wildfires in wine country last year, the state legislature passed a bill in September to allow them to pass the cost of settling the cases onto their customers.

A loophole in the bill — specifically omitting coverage for any new wildfires in 2018 — has led to a new law being prepared to shield the company from expected lawsuits from the Camp Fire. “We want to send a signal to the financial markets that we are not going to leave the utilities flapping in the wind,” one state congressional consultant told the press Nov. 20.

The Camp Fire broke out in the area shortly after PG&E reported it was having problems with a high voltage power line near Paradise.

Workers face government disdain

Workers seeking aid from the Federal Emergency Management Agency are told it will take more than a week just to get an application for relief. When Socialist Workers Party members from Oakland went to Paradise to offer solidarity, David Insular, a retiree camping in the Walmart parking lot in Chico, said, “I contacted the Red Cross and asked them for \$40. They said they couldn’t help.”

Capitalist bosses, bankers and politicians aren’t interested in meeting workers’ needs. Instead they seek to maximize their profits and defend their system of exploitation and greed.

On Nov. 25 California firefighters, helped by a significant rainfall the previous week, announced that the wildfire was 100 percent contained. The blaze isn’t completely out. It will be months before all the smoldering tree stumps and roots are no longer burning.

At every turn, working people have faced government bodies that take little responsibility. When they had to evacuate, they were on their own. Now with the rains, there’s a danger of floods and landslides in area hills. Again they’re told they’re on their own to decide what to do.

The temporary accommodations that have been set up in Chico and other Northern California towns are overwhelmed. At the same time, authorities are moving to push more people into facilities at the Butte County Fairgrounds. This is one of the places where individuals have come down with norovirus, a highly contagious disease that causes vomiting and diarrhea.

Paradise and Magalia had been home to a number of retirees who couldn’t afford to live in other parts of the state. More than 25 percent of people in Paradise are 65 or older.

Among the thousands of structures destroyed in Butte County were nursing

homes, assisted living facilities, elderly care centers and mobile home parks built to cater to retirees. Over 2,300 older people in the fire zone relied on home health aides to get by.

One problem for many was having to leave their medications behind as they scrambled to get out of harm’s way. There was no effective alarm system to warn people of the fast approaching fire. The “escape route” was a single two-lane road that almost immediately became an almost immovable traffic jam. A number of people died in their cars unable to escape.

“I had to beg like a dog to get my medications,” Dorothy Melton, 69, told the *New York Times*, reflecting the difficulties many had in getting help from government and other official relief agencies. She couldn’t remember the names of some of her pills and most doctors in the area had fled.

Working-class solidarity

It’s been the widespread working-class solidarity that has been the difference for many. Without this, there would have been no Thanksgiving for tens of thousands. They cooked and served at area churches still standing, in the parking lot of the Walmart in Chico and elsewhere.

Two huge dinners were organized by the World Central Kitchen, a food operation project coordinated by chef José Andrés. He was joined by professional chefs Guy Fieri, Tyler Florence and others, and by thousands of worker volunteers, who cooked, served and tended to over 10,000 people at the huge amphitheater in the Sierra Nevada brewery and on the campus at Chico State University.

The all-volunteer North Valley Ani-



Drone photo of damage near Paradise, California, where Camp Fire ravaged region. It broke out under PG&E high voltage lines shortly after company reported wire problems there.

mal Disaster Group set up an animal rescue center inside a jet hangar at the Chico Municipal Airport. As of Nov. 21 they were tending some to 800 dogs, ducks, cats, pigs, geese, and a 6-foot-long python, all of whom, the *Chico Enterprise-Record* says, “are waiting patiently for their humans.”

“We’re in it for the long haul,” volunteer Norm Rosene said, describing how they go to great lengths to make the animals comfortable. They play music to reduce stress and make sure every dog is walked twice a day.

Profits over human beings

One group of workers not treated so well was farmworkers toiling in the strawberry fields around Oxnard. They hadn’t been threatened by the fire, but were forced to keep working when the area was saturated with smoke. “Smoke stung his eyes and throat,” the *Washington Post* reported Nov. 20, “but Santiago said his supervisor told workers to go

faster because ash from the wildfires could wreck the produce.”

The fire, or at least its deadly extent, could have been curtailed. The capitalist rulers make excuses for the deaths and destruction, saying the fire was an unprecedented natural disaster. This is what they always say, whether it’s hurricanes like Katrina or Maria; threatened floods, like in Oroville near Paradise last year; or wildfires.

Power lines can be buried underground, or incendiary debris and trees cleared far away. Governments can clear forestland of dried pine needles, dead trees and thin out forests. Houses can be built to prevent or minimize fire possibilities. But for the capitalist rulers and their government at all levels, steps like these cost too much. They have the money — look at the military budget or steps to rescue banks “too big to fail” or their all-out defense of PG&E. Their priority is the defense of profits.

Join May Day brigade, learn about Cuban Revolution

BY JANET POST

Workers and young people from around the world have a special opportunity to learn firsthand about Cuba’s socialist revolution and offer their solidarity with the Cuban people by joining the 14th May Day International Volunteer Work Brigade in Solidarity with Cuba April 22 to May 5.

Next year is the 60th anniversary of the triumph of the Cuban Revolution. On May 1, brigade participants will join hundreds of thousands at the annual International Workers Day march and rally in Havana’s Plaza of the Revolution.

It’s a powerful opportunity to see and meet workers and farmers from all across the island and discuss the impact of the revolution with them.

The U.S. contingent is being organized by the National Network on Cuba, which announced that applications to participate will be available on their website soon. These are due not later than March 29. “Please help spread the word,” it says. “To get on the list now, write: ICanGoToCuba@nnoc.info.”

The brigade is sponsored by the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP). Its call for participation explains that 2019 also marks the 80th anniversary of the Central Organization of Cuban Trade Unions (CTC). As part of their itinerary, participants will have the opportunity to meet with CTC members and discuss the history and efforts of the union

movement there.

Brigade activities will “take place in the provinces of Havana, Artemisa, Villa Clara and Sancti Spiritus, where participants will carry out voluntary work, and visit places of historical, economic, cultural and social interest,” ICAP said. This will include visits to museums on the revolution’s history, helping on agricultural cooperatives and discussions with Cuban workers and farmers in political and cultural organizations there.

A \$551 fee covers expenses, including accommodation, meals and transportation inside Cuba over the 14-night stay. The round-trip airfare

to Cuba is extra.

The brigade will be based at the Julio Antonio Mella International Camp, in Artemisa province, an agricultural area 25 miles from Havana.

Mella was a leader of student protests at the University of Havana in the 1920s and a founder of the Cuban Communist Party. He sought to emulate the example of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. After being expelled from school and arrested by the dictatorship of Gerardo Machado, Mella made his way to Mexico. He was assassinated there in 1929, while organizing to return and overthrow

Continued on page 6

Books on the Cuban Revolution



Three books that help understand the importance of the Cuban Revolution and the road to building a working-class movement that can take power out of the hands of the capitalist class.

To Speak the Truth: Why Washington’s ‘Cold War’ Against Cuba Doesn’t End

Fidel Castro and Che Guevara — \$18

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution

by Jack Barnes — \$10

Aldabonazo: Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground: 1952-58
by Armando Hart — \$25

See list of distributors on page 8
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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

This column gives a voice to those engaged in labor battles and building solidarity today. Send in articles, photos and letters on picket lines and other labor protests to themilitant@mac.com, post them directly on our website, or mail them to 306 W. 37th St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Bus drivers in New Zealand beat back lockout, pay raise agreed to

HAMILTON, New Zealand — Union bus drivers were back driving the streets here Nov. 24 after fighting a five-day lockout by the Go Bus company. The First Union announced that Go Bus and the city government had agreed to a substantial pay raise.

The lockout was imposed after union drivers had planned to launch a protest in which they would not collect fares from passengers. Shut out from their buses, they built support for their wages' fight by organizing daily pickets in busy city streets.

Militant reporters joined a picket line of 50 drivers and supporters outside the Waikato Regional Council Building Nov. 20. The council is responsible for services throughout the region, of which Hamilton — home to 160,000 people — is part. Workers cheered as numerous drivers tooted their horns in solidarity.

Joe Teinakore, a First Union delegate (shop steward), told the *Militant* that unionists had earlier blocked some buses from exiting one of the city's bus depots. Teinakore works out of the depot, where about half the 150 drivers are in the union, he said. The fight has been going on for some 20 months.

"We work our butts off — it's not an easy task to be driving — so we just want to be treated fairly," said Jono Walters, who has been driving four years for Go Bus and its predecessor Pavlovich Coachlines.

Another driver told the *Militant* that he works 64 hours over six days to make enough to pay the rent and help provide for his family. Workers described working a variety of shifts, from part-time jobs often handled by workers over retirement age to split shifts that divide morning and afternoon routes with an hourslong unpaid break.

The company's imposition of the lockout "showed they want to be in control — it's about power," said Isobel Waitere, who has been a driver for Go Bus for one year. The lockout brought

the dispute "out in the open," she said.

While talks are ongoing, the First Union said the regional council, which contracts the bus routes to Go Bus, has agreed to allocate extra funding for wage increases that would "align with the living wage." Unions in New Zealand say that should be \$20.55 an hour — about \$2 more than most drivers earn.

— Patrick Brown

Lorain, Ohio, nurses fight bosses attack on health benefits

Over 100 nurses, members of Service Employees International Union Local 1199, were joined by area unionists and other supporters in a milelong "silent march" and rally outside the Mercy Regional Medical Center in Lorain, Ohio, Nov. 20. The nurses were protesting hospital bosses' moves to force them to pay much more for health care.

The day before the unionists voted down management's demand to replace the workers' current plans with higher out-of-pocket costs — as much as \$7,000 in annual deductibles.

"As one of the greatest and largest providers in the state of Ohio, Mercy RNs deserve to have good health care coverage," Judy Maldonado, a registered nurse in Mercy's behavioral health unit and vice president of Local 1199, told the *Lorain Morning Journal*. She said the union is standing for all workers there, whether they're in the union or not.



Militant/Baskaran Appu

Union bus drivers picket regional council building in Hamilton, New Zealand, Nov. 20, part of fight against five-day lockout by Go Bus bosses over workers' demand for a pay raise.

"I believe all human beings deserve to have adequate health care coverage," she said. "I am here to ask Mercy not just to maintain the health care Mercy RNs currently have but to raise the bar and let other employees — housekeepers, kitchen staff, aides, and everyone else have health care."

SEIU Local 1199 is in the third year of a five-year contract. Hospital bosses and union officials agreed at the signing to rediscuss the nurses' health care plan midway through the contract.

"People often think health care is the best for those who deliver the care at the hospital," Maldonado said. "In truth, we pay very high percentages for our health care and many members of our team at the hospital pay extremely high deductibles."

Nurse Shelly Shagovac and her husband Stuart, a member of the United Auto Workers union at the Ford auto plant, were among those who joined the action. "They have to make a stance because if they're going to do this to the nurses," Stuart Shagovac told the *Chronicle-Telegram*, "what are they going to do next?"

"Keep the faith, keep your morale strong," said Andrea Thomas, vice president of United Auto Workers Local 2192, who joined the action along with members of the union. The local organizes dining service workers and others at nearby Oberlin College, as well as workers at Lorain County Job and Family Services. "Work together as much as you can," she said.

— Brian Williams

Marriott Hotel strikers: 'One job should be enough!'

Continued from front page

paid no premium and workers married with family paid \$10 a month.

Resounding shouts of "No! No! No!" rang out when Singh asked whether Marriott's demand was acceptable.

"It doesn't make sense. We need both a wage increase and health care," St. Francis hotel striker Carlos Zevallo told the *Militant*. "Can Marriott afford it? Of course! Marriott is playing

hardball. We have got to be stronger than them mentally. Remember, the service inside must be terrible."

The unionists, many wearing red, the union's color, and holding umbrellas, marched through throngs of Black Friday shoppers to Union Square to swell the picket line at the Westin St. Francis. "One job should be enough!" and "Contract now!" chants rang out at the front entrance.

Thanksgiving was "Day 50" for

striking Marriott Marquis workers here. Strikers organized a potluck turkey dinner and hung Christmas decorations up on the picket line. A Local 2 statement declared this was "a show of their resolve to strike during yet another holiday if Marriott refuses to make reasonable concessions at the bargaining table."

"It's remarkable that Marriott chose to keep their workers and their families on the street for Thanksgiving," Singh told KTVU Fox 2. "We're asking the richest hotel company in human history to treat their workers with human dignity."

Striking UNITE HERE Local 5 members in Hawaii held candlelight vigils outside hotels there Nov. 25 — the 49th day of the walkout. The housekeepers, maintenance, food and beverage, front desk and other workers voted the week prior to the vigils to reject the bosses' latest concession demands. Negotiations resumed Nov. 26.

"This is a bit bigger than us. This is the working class standing up to corporate greed," Sheraton Waikiki worker Jenny Johnson told Hawaii News Now at a special union-organized Thanksgiving potluck dinner Nov. 22. "We are not asking for astronomical things and this company makes hundreds of millions of dollars in profit."

Because of the length of the strike, Local 5 announced that strike benefits, which were \$300 a week when the strike began, would go up to \$500. Other help for strikers pressed by bills is available at the strike headquarters seven days a week.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



December 13, 1993

CLIFTON, New Jersey — Waving signs calling for the defense of free speech, 250 striking dyers, finishers, and printers, members of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, rallied in front of city hall here November 29 to protest criminal charges filed against seven workers for handing out strike literature.

More than 1,500 textile workers at 23 shops have been on strike since October 23. The owners insist on a higher co-payment for reduced medical coverage, ending free access to the plant by union representatives, and a no-strike pledge during the life of the contract. The employers are also trying to implement a deeper two-tier wage system.

Striker Lester Rome, who has worked four years at Signature Clothing Co., one of the struck facilities, said, "Out here I may not be getting a paycheck, but at least I'm fighting."



December 13, 1968

On Nov. 9, amid the rumble of crashing rocks, the clang of steel plate, and the roar of cement mixers, 78 miners were entombed in the Consolidated Coal Company's Consol No. 9 mine near James Fork, W. Va.

Ever since the railroads made possible the opening of the great coal fields in Appalachia, mine disasters have struck with terrible frequency. It took the worst disaster in history — in 1907 — which killed approximately 362 men to bring the Bureau of Mines into existence. But the only power of investigation it had was with the consent of the mine owner!

In 1941 the Coal Safety Act was amended. While the bureau won the right to inspect mines, it had no power to enforce its findings.

Now has come the latest tragedy. Still the government has done nothing except to announce that still another "hearing" has been called.



December 11, 1943

The northern monopolists and the southern bourbons have joined hands to perpetuate a new crime against the American people. They have moved to deprive ten million men of the armed forces and the merchant marine of their right to vote.

Ten million men, forcibly removed from their families and their homes and transported to every section of the globe to face hardships, danger and death, all presumably on behalf of "democracy," have thus themselves become one of the first casualties of democracy in the Second World War.

Congress is making a big mistake if it thinks it is dealing with just a lot of cannon fodder. Many of the soldiers are veterans of strike struggles. They may not be too concerned right now with voting for tweedle-dee or tweedle-dum in 1944, but they are very much concerned with their rights.

‘Yellow vests’ in France protest against ‘president of the rich’

BY PAMELA HOLMES

PARIS — In the latest in a series of demonstrations sweeping France, over 100,000 people — known as the “yellow vests” for the yellow reflective safety vests they wear — marched and blocked roads across the country Nov. 24. The ongoing mass protests of workers and some middle-class forces, especially in rural and working-class suburban areas, are protesting President Emmanuel Macron’s “green taxes” on fuel and other government attacks on their livelihoods.

They are outraged at the disdain of the rulers and their politicians for the increasing challenges they face amid today’s economic, social and moral crisis of capitalism.

The “yellow vest” movement began with a Nov. 17 nationwide protest of over a quarter of a million blockading traffic in more than 2,000 locations. Since then, two people have died, hit by panicked drivers, and hundreds have been injured in attacks by police and others. In Paris, Nov. 24, protesters trying to gather near the presidential Elysee Palace were repeatedly attacked by cops firing tear gas and water cannons.

These unorganized workers, truck drivers, family farmers and small traders sometimes defiantly refer to themselves as “les beaufs” (red-necks). This is an acknowledgement that the ruling class, and its meritocratic upper-middle-class supporters, concentrated in Paris, have nothing but contempt for these provincial “deplorables.”

The workers call Macron — a former investment banker at Rothschild & Co — the “president of the rich.”

The movement has been denounced as populist or even fascist by much of the liberal news media and the Stalinist and Social Democratic left of bourgeois politics, seizing on the support for the protests by Marine Le Pen’s National Rally party and tiny numbers of ultraright provocateurs.

“Some journalists asked us to pick up stones so they could take photos

but we refused,” Kevin, a 30-year-old trainee nurse told the *Militant*. He is from Chateau-Thierry in the wine region of Champagne and came to the protest with friends. “We didn’t come here to smash things up but to make ourselves heard,” Kevin said.

“The media wants to represent us as vandals and supporters of the extreme right, but the vast majority have come like we have to demonstrate peacefully and independently of the political parties,” he said.

Kevin explained that he travels about 60 miles daily for his work in the Paris suburbs.

“Macron doesn’t listen to the people; he doesn’t respect us,” Kevin said. “The problem isn’t just the increase in fuel taxes, it’s more broadly a problem of purchasing power. All the prices go up but wages don’t.” One of his friends at the protest, an agricultural worker, earns 1,200 euros (\$1,370) a month. “You can’t live on that,” the friend said.

Rural areas have been hardest hit by the rise of e-commerce and huge retailing chains that have gutted many villages that once were centers of small business and social life. “The unions and the political parties don’t represent us,” Kevin told us — something many protesters raised with us. “We want to maintain our independence.”

After the cop attack in Paris, Sandrine, an unemployed worker, and Sedani, a computer worker in a high school, spoke to the *Militant*. They came as part of a busload of 56 people from Morbihan in Brittany. Sandrine and Sedani said they were stunned and outraged by the government’s heavy-handed response.

On the back of her vest, Sandrine had written: “We want to live and not just survive.”

The mobilizations by workers, farmers and small shopkeepers, with no centralized organization or leadership, have continued to vent their anger at a crisis, especially deep in the countryside, that capitalist politicians of all stripes have contributed to and



Serge D’ignazio

Working people protest down the Champs Elysees in Paris Nov. 24, part of over 100,000 demonstrating across France. “Yellow vests” protests hit onerous fuel tax, disdain by government.

have no resolution for.

The fuel tax is equivalent to 27 cents a gallon for diesel and slightly less on unleaded fuel. This comes on top of the \$7 per gallon for diesel in France, almost twice the price charged in the U.S.

The deeply unpopular increases were justified by Macron as a way to deter drivers from using fuels that emit emissions, which government officials and others blame for climate change. This mainly affects working people in outlying areas where they have to drive long distances to work.

More privileged professional and upper-middle-class layers in inner-city districts, the most vociferous backers of the “green” measures, are largely unaffected.

Speaking out in defense of his anti-working-class measures Nov. 27, the French president denounced the yellow vests as “thugs.” He went on to say the protests reflect the same “poison” that caused working people in the U.K. to vote for Brexit.

The yellow vest protests come after hundreds of thousands of rail and other government sector workers pro-

tested against government attacks earlier this year.

What ‘deplorables’ in France face

“It’s the straw that broke the camel’s back,” 24-year-old Kevin Meyer, who commutes to his job in a textile factory from Montferrier — a village in the foothills of the Pyrenees — told the *Wall Street Journal*. The “straw” he refers to was the new fuel taxes. “Life in rural areas is already difficult. There’s little work and all the shops are closing.”

A national meeting of yellow vest representatives Nov. 26 chose a delegation of eight spokespeople active in the protests to meet with Macron and Prime Minister Edouard Philippe. It was stressed they are “not leaders or decision-makers but messengers.”

Macron is right about one thing — these protests reflect some of the same things as Brexit, recent elections in Italy and elsewhere in the fracturing European Union. It isn’t some big move by workers to the right, but working people striving to find a way to fight back against the capitalist rulers, their political parties and state.

Sign up for May Day Cuba brigade

Continued from page 4
the Machado regime.

There were 290 participants from 31 countries on the 2018 brigade, including 74 from the United States. Meeting supporters of Cuba and exchanging experiences was one of the strengths of the experience. Most important was what participants learned about how to take the inspiration of its historic example back to fellow workers.

Many of those returning from the brigade organized to speak out, demanding Washington end its economic war against Cuba and that U.S. forces get out of Guantánamo, Cuban territory occupied by the U.S. for over a century.

Samir Hazboun, a member of the Socialist Workers Party in Louisville, Kentucky, who participated in the brigade last year, plans to go again. Hazboun told the *Militant* that he has already spoken with some workers and youth he knows around the country who are interested in joining him.

“The May Day brigade is an important opportunity for workers in the

U.S. to see the Cuban Revolution for ourselves and find out what it means for our fight against the ruling capitalist class here,” Hazboun said.

“There’s a reason the bosses tell us not to go to Cuba, and it isn’t because they care at all about our well-being!” he added. “It’s because letting us see what Cuban workers have done without a ruling class on their backs might put some big ideas in our heads about what a revolution here could accomplish.”

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Serge D’ignazio

Police in France harass “yellow vest” protester at demonstration in Paris Nov. 24. Cops assaulted demonstration with tear gas and water cannons, affecting thousands of protesters.

Join workers in struggle

Continued from front page
hatred, for women's right to choose abortion and for amnesty for undocumented workers in the 2018 midterm elections. Opportunities are wide open to continue the discussion in state and municipal elections set for 2019.

Battered by the crisis of capitalist rule today — from veterans returning from imperialism's wars abroad to workers facing low wages and unemployment, from the deterioration of public transportation and inadequate housing to attacks on political rights — working people are looking for ways to defend their interests.

That's also what lies behind the outcomes of the midterm elections, and why the crisis in the Democratic and Republican parties — the capitalist parties that have ruled for decades through their "lesser evil" shell game — will continue.

It's why the anti-Donald Trump hysteria of the liberals and middle-class left, and their "resistance" to his presidency, will continue. Their anger is aimed at the working people who they blame for keeping Trump in office, the so-called deplorables who they say are becoming increasingly reactionary, racist, xenophobic and anti-woman.

The Democrats took the majority in the House — nothing new, as it's common for the party not in the White House to make significant gains in midterm elections. Workers who voted for change and didn't get what they wanted feel compelled to vote for change again.

The Republicans increased their majority in the Senate. Trump remains the president, with candidates he backed winning election.

"The most striking feature of Tuesday's voting was the absence of a blue wave," Gabriel Schoenfeld, a former adviser to 2012 Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney, wrote in a Nov. 8 column in *USA Today*.

"Pundits and politicians can split it a million different ways, but the bottom line is that the electorate did not repudiate Trump," Schoenfeld whines. "Instead, it chose to normalize the grossly abnormal."

Schoenfeld charges that "Trump's fascist-style rallies" are proof that "thou-

sands of our fellow Americans" have been "lured into moral degradation."

No shift to the right

In fact, the elections confirm the opposite — there has *not* been a rise in racism, xenophobia, misogyny or any other form of ideological reaction among working people in the U.S. Working people are taking the moral high ground.

In Florida, liberals howled that the election of Trump-backed Ron DeSantis as governor of Florida was further proof workers are becoming rightists and racists. But those workers ensured that Amendment 4 to the state constitution, restoring voting rights to more than a million people convicted of felonies — over a third of them African-American — passed in a landslide with 64 percent in favor. The amendment won a majority of all but a handful of districts in the state, from Democrats and Republicans alike, regardless of race or nationality.

In Louisiana, an amendment requiring that finding someone guilty of a felony will require a unanimous jury — strengthening the right to be considered innocent until proven guilty — was also passed overwhelmingly. Louisiana had been one of the two states, the other being Oregon, that allowed conviction if just 10 out of 12 jurors agreed.

And within days of the elections President Trump announced his support for a bipartisan bill before Congress that would get rid of some of the most onerous and draconian "minimum sentences" and "three strikes" laws, first imposed during the Bill Clinton administration. The bill includes reductions in egregious sentences for crack cocaine, which have been used by cops and prosecutors to target Blacks. Working people would welcome any measure that lessens the vindictiveness of the capitalist rulers "justice" system.

The scorn for the working class expressed by Schoenfeld is nothing new. In April 2008 then-President Barack Obama, referring to workers in small towns and rural areas hard hit by the capitalist economic crisis, said, "They get bitter, they cling to guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren't like them or anti-immigrant sentiment or anti-trade sentiment as a way to explain their frustrations."

After Trump won the 2016 election

Protests hit widespread gov't corruption, misrule in Haiti



PetroCaribe Challenge

Tens of thousands of people took to the streets across Haiti for several days and some went on strike starting Nov. 18, protesting government corruption and theft. The crisis of capitalist production, trade and jobs has hit hard in Haiti, one of the poorest nations in the world, after decades of U.S. imperialist exploitation. It was made even worse by the social calamity caused by a 2010 earthquake and Hurricane Matthew in 2016. Above, Nov. 18 protest in Port-au-Prince.

Massive protests, initiated by leaders of capitalist opposition parties, had swept the country a month earlier, after well-known filmmaker Gilbert Mirambeau Jr. and musician K-Lib sent out tweets demanding to know, "Where is the PetroCaribe money?" They were referring oil subsidies given to Haiti by the Venezuelan government. Many protesters call for the resignation of President Jovenel Moise.

The Haitian Senate carried out an investigation and charged that some \$3.8 billion of the subsidies were stolen.

In July protests raged across the country after the government raised fuel prices by up to 51 percent, under pressure from the International Monetary Fund. The government announced the hikes during a soccer match between Brazil and Belgium, hoping that a victory for Brazil, which most Haitians favored, would distract attention. Brazil lost.

Within hours, Moise was forced to rescind the price hikes. A week later he replaced Prime Minister Jack Guy Lafontant.

"The government does not understand the level of indignation of working people," Camille Chalmers, executive director of the Haitian Platform to Advocate Alternative Development, told the Militant in a phone interview from Port-au-Prince Nov. 26.

Chalmers said working people have been demanding an increase of the minimum wage from 335 gourdes (\$4.50) to 1,000 gourdes per day as they're wracked by spiraling inflation. A liter of milk costs \$3, out of the reach of most workers. The price of sugar and corn has gone up 30 percent since 2014.

"And in the 'free trade zone,' some of the companies don't pay even minimum wage," Chalmers said.

— SETH GALINSKY

Obama mused that "maybe we pushed too far. Maybe people just want to fall back into their tribe. ... Sometimes I wonder whether I was 10 or 20 years too early."

In case you had any doubts on what Obama was saying, *New York Times* columnist Maureen Dowd spelled it out. "We were constantly disappointing him," she writes. "He would tell us the right thing to do and then sigh and purse his lips when his instructions were not followed." She said what he meant was, "What if we were too good for these people?"

To the liberal pundits and meritocrats, working people are "grossly abnormal."

What about the 'socialists'?

The liberal and left media has focused on Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a member of the Democratic Socialists of America, and the youngest woman ever elected to Congress. Despite all the hype, her election, like that of a handful of other new "socialist" Democrats is no break with capitalist politics.

Ocasio-Cortez ran as a Democrat to promote a kinder form of capitalist rule. The excitement about her in the media is motivated by the same desire. Her Bernie Sanders-like program of Medicare insurance for all and other reform

schemes would do nothing to challenge capitalist exploitation and rule. She backs septuagenarian Nancy Pelosi "as the most progressive candidate for Speaker" of the House.

Neither the Democrats or Republicans of any stripe, nor their strife-riven parties, nor Donald Trump point a road forward for the working class and all victims of capitalist oppression.

SWP points road forward

That's why the Socialist Workers Party says working people need to break from the two parties of capitalist rule and embark on a road of independent struggle and working-class political action. The party will be fielding candidates in upcoming 2019 elections, including for governor of Kentucky; mayor of Chicago, Dallas and Philadelphia; for New York City Public Advocate; and more.

SWP candidates will explain why working people need to think socially and act politically, independent of the capitalist parties and state.

Joining in today's struggles, telling the truth about the crisis of capitalism, raising demands that can unite working people will point the way for workers to take political power out of the hands of the capitalist class.

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— Jack Barnes

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‘Socialism is next inevitable stage of social evolution’

Below is an excerpt from America’s Road to Socialism by James P. Cannon, one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for December. The book contains five talks presented at public forums by Cannon in 1952 and 1953 that describe the crisis of the capitalist system, the coming struggle by working people to take political power, and what a government of workers and farmers would do. Cannon, a founder of the Communist Party, was expelled from the CP in 1928 for his opposition to Stalinism and its overthrow of the revolutionary course of Vladimir Lenin and the Bolshevik Party under his leadership. Cannon served as national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party from its founding convention in 1938 until 1953. Copyright © 1975 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JAMES P. CANNON

Almost as soon as I was old enough to look around and see and think for myself, I rebelled against the poverty, injustice, and all-around crookedness of capitalism. I became a socialist and joined the movement when I was a boy, and have been working at it ever since.

And if I made a mistake, I can’t say I wasn’t warned. Quite a few practical people who were interested in my



Socialist Workers Party leader James P. Cannon speaks in New York after release from prison, May 1, 1945. Eighteen leaders of SWP and Minneapolis Teamsters were framed up for their opposition to the second imperialist world war and “conspiracy” to overthrow U.S. government.

welfare and thought I was marked for success in life began to shake their heads sadly when they heard me popping off on the street corners about socialism.

“It’s a fine idea, son, but it’ll never work,” I was told. “It’s against human nature.” “There always have been rich and poor and there always will be. Be a realist. Don’t waste your life on a utopian dream that can never be realized. If you want to get ahead in this world, you’ve got to be practical and look out for Number One.”

I mention this to show you that I know all the arguments against socialism. I heard them more than forty years ago. And I won’t say that I didn’t pay attention to them. I did. Especially the argument that socialism is a utopian dream that can never be realized. I was then, as I am now, inclined to realism, and I never saw any point in expending energy on impossible and unrealizable projects. The argument that socialism is not practical and not realizable worried me.

It was this troubled frame of mind that brought me, more than forty years ago, to an open forum such as this, conducted by the Socialist Educational Society in Kansas City. I went there in search of more detailed information about this thing called socialism, which had charmed me and

inspired me with its grand promise of the future society of secure peace and abundance for all; a society based on equality, solidarity, and comradeship.

It was at that forum that I got my introduction to the ideas of Marx and Engels, the ideas of scientific socialism. From the discussions of that forum and the further study inspired by them, I became acquainted with Marx’s analysis of capitalism, and his sweeping assertion that socialism is not only a good idea, but is the next inevitable stage of social evolution; that the further development of capitalism cannot lead to anything else but its downfall and the socialist reorganization of society.

That did it. That settled all my youthful doubts about practicality and realizability of the idea. It convinced me theoretically, and that is the firmest conviction there is, that all the forces of history were working on my side, on the side of socialism, and that all I had to do was lend a hand, along with others, to help the historic process along.

Compared to the privilege of participating in this magnificent historical mission, all the so-called practical concerns of life and the possible material rewards of conformity seemed trivial to me more than forty years ago, and they still do. I have never

changed my mind about this question in all the intervening years. That was not because of dogmatic obstinacy, but simply because I saw no good reason to change my mind.

I have always been willing to listen to anybody who would undertake to explain or make an argument against socialism from a realistic, practical point of view. As I went along I continued to hear those arguments, and still hear them if I cock my ear in the direction of the most noise.

Every theory must be submitted to the test of events. That applies to the theory of Marxism, just as Marx ruthlessly applied it to all other theories. If I grew stronger in my socialist convictions as the years passed by, it was because it appeared to me that the development of events was confirming in life the analysis and predictions of Marx.

It was Marx himself who said that no social system can be superseded until it has exhausted its progressive capacities. If capitalism is capable of further progressive development on a world scale, and is therefore invulnerable against any attempts to change it in a radical manner, then there is not much point in arguing that socialism would be a better system.

But on the other hand, if capitalism has lost its progressive character and become reactionary, has ceased to grow and expand and develop the productive forces of the people, upon which all human welfare is based; if it has entered into its period of decline and decay—then the optimistic defenders of capitalism are in the wrong. They are the real utopians of the present day.

The issue, then, goes to the evidence, to the facts. Let us rest the case on this solid foundation of reality, and go to the facts as they have been unfolded in the great events of the past half century. If we look with clear eyes at what has already happened, we may get a good hint of what is going to happen. If we can see enough in these events to indicate a historical trend, then we can be fairly sure of what the ultimate outcome will be. It is by this method and from this point of view that I propose to discuss the international prospects of capitalism and socialism tonight. ...

December

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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8

The Militant December 10, 2018

Workers seek road out of capitalist crisis

Continued from front page

Workers have also heard about the important victory for voting rights for ex-prisoners in Florida. There are calls now for similar moves in Kentucky, Iowa and New Jersey. Many want to help advance these fights.

Many have friends or relatives who have been used as cannon fodder in U.S. imperialism's wars in Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq and elsewhere. Then they face the delays and bureaucracy of the Veterans Affairs system when they come back to the U.S.

They don't like the Immigration and Customs Enforcement cops' factory raids that sweep up their co-workers and neighbors. They're attracted to the SWP's demand for amnesty for the 11 million plus workers here without papers the rulers deem sufficient.

Many working people get angry at liberals like Hillary Clinton who call them "deplorables" or who seek to undermine our right to vote when we don't follow their more-educated "advice" on who to vote for.

This attitude of capitalist politicians and meritocrats toward working people isn't limited to the U.S. Witness the attacks by the French rulers on the "yellow vests" — farmers, truckers, other workers and small proprietors — protesting a steep increase in fuel taxes. French President Macron says this is the way to get "those kinds" of people to follow his "green" agenda. He calls them "thugs," contaminated with the same "poison" as British workers who voted for Brexit.

Working people in the U.S. agree wholeheartedly with the slogan one unemployed worker wore to the protest in Paris, "We want to live, not just survive."

When SWP members campaign on workers' doorsteps, strike picket lines and at protests, it's striking the interest we find among workers. It's another confirmation that liberals and those on the left who claim the

working class is increasingly reactionary are wrong.

The SWP will be fielding candidates in 2019 and taking the campaign door to door in working-class neighborhoods in cities, towns and rural areas. It will champion the struggles of the working class, speak out against assaults and indignities the capitalist rulers heap on us and point toward the need for workers to organize to take political power into our own hands.

The bosses' and bankers' thirst for profits from our labor means we face threats to life and limb on the factory floor and everywhere else. That's the lesson from the Camp Fire in California and the deadly results of Hurricanes Maria, Irma and Michael.

There is one country where a revolution by workers and farmers points to a different road — Cuba. Men and women from nowhere, led by Fidel Castro, Che Guevara and the July 26 Movement, overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship there in 1959. Working people were transformed in the process, on the road to becoming, as Che said, "new men and women" able to take control of their own destiny. They opened the socialist revolution in the Americas and set a political and moral example of international solidarity.

In Cuba no one is left to fend for themselves. Compare that to the United States where survivors of the California fires are stuffed into overcrowded, disease-ridden "shelters" or left to face the elements in a Walmart parking lot.

Workers, farmers, youth and others attracted to the working-class movement have a unique opportunity to see the revolution firsthand by signing up for next year's 14th May Day International Volunteer Work Brigade in Solidarity with Cuba April 22 to May 5.

Join the brigade. And then come home and use that experience to point to the example the Cuban Revolution has set for workers and farmers here.

Censorship in Kansas prisons

I want to thank you and everyone for making it possible for me to be part of the *Militant* newspaper and for fighting for all prisoners around the world. The prison I am in has been banning and censoring prisoners' newspapers, magazines, and books for no reason. If they deny the *Militant* then I will notify you and others about this.

A prisoner
Kansas

Can't even get a prison job

I am asking you to send me a subscription to the *Militant*. I don't have any money in here. I am in a special management unit and I can't even get a job. I have received the *Militant* before. I can't wait to get back to the issues that are relevant.

A prisoner
Arizona

The letters column is an open forum for a wide variety of viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Send your letters to themilitant@mac.com. Please keep your letters short. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

The Prisoners' Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the Militant and earmarked "Prisoners' Fund" to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018 or make a contribution directly through www.themilitant.com

'UK out now!' Brexit is best terrain for the workers to fight

Continued from front page

tectionist bloc known as the European Union for as long as possible.

The vote for Brexit in June 2016 was a protest, overwhelmingly by millions of workers, against the U.K. rulers' grinding assaults on living standards and job security, their seemingly endless wars abroad and attacks on rights at home.

It was also a reaction against the EU bureaucracy in Brussels, with its stifling regulations and red tape, and against the illusion of a transnational European state emerging from the bloc of the 28 EU member nations' rival capitalist governments. In reality, the EU functions as a way for Germany's capitalist class — the strongest in Europe — and to a lesser degree Paris to siphon wealth from the weaker powers in the bloc.

"The U.K. should get out of the EU now," Communist League leader Jonathan Silberman told the *Militant*. "The EU is a bosses club and den of thieves. It works to strengthen the more powerful ruling classes against their capitalist rivals, against working people at home and against workers and farmers in countries oppressed by imperialism.

"The EU helps obscures the real class realities here and in Europe," he said. "It is an obstacle to working-class solidarity — at home and abroad.

"A U.K. out of the EU would be good for workers here and internationally, strengthening our ability to fight against the bosses who exploit us," Silberman said, "and to chart a course to take political power out of their hands."

The U.K.'s membership in the EU is set to end March 29, 2019. May's agreement pays lip service to the widespread working-class sentiment to leave, while keeping many aspects of EU membership in a "transition period" that could go on indefinitely.

The U.K. would effectively remain part of the EU single market and customs union until EU officials agree it can withdraw. London would continue to observe a myriad of EU regulations and face obstacles securing trade agreements with non-EU governments.

London must decide before June 2020 whether to extend the transition period, under May's deal, or to re-enter a permanent customs union. May is seeking

to avoid different economic and political relations between Northern Ireland and the EU from the rest of the U.K., preventing a "hard border" with the Irish Republic. Britain's capitalist rulers fear a further loosening of their grip on Ireland — their former and longest-held colony — and even an eventual breakup of the United Kingdom. The Democratic Unionist Party in Northern Ireland, whose Members of Parliament May relies on for a parliamentary majority, opposed the deal.

Tensions, divisions in U.K. ruling parties

The debate over Brexit and May's plan have thrown into sharp relief the tensions and divisions within the capitalist class here and between and within its parties. Labour, Liberal Democrat, Scottish Nationalists and different wings of the Conservative Party oppose the "deal." Following a Nov. 14 cabinet meeting, seven government and senior Conservative Party officials resigned, including Brexit Secretary Dominic Raab. He said that under the agreement the U.K. would be "trapped" forever in the EU.

Boris Johnson, former foreign secretary, and rival to May for leadership in the party, said that her proposed deal would leave Britain "a vassal state" to the EU.

Jacob Rees-Mogg, who leads the European Research Group of 60 Conservative MPs, called for Members of Parliament to submit letters of no confidence in May, to force a new leadership election. But after a week, reportedly only half of the needed 48 "no confidence letters" had been submitted.

Meanwhile, calls for an entirely new vote on Brexit, what has been dubbed a "People's Vote," has strong backing from pro-EU middle-class layers, as well as politicians spread throughout all capitalist parties who want to completely overturn the result of the 2016 vote.

Some prominent capitalist spokespeople have come to May's support. Carolyn Fairbairn, secretary of the Confederation of British Industry, the main bosses' organization, said that the prime minister's proposal marked "hard-won progress." Mark Carney, director of the Bank of England, backed the deal.

Major pro-Conservative papers support it. The deal is "best for Britain," said the *Daily Express*. "Give it a chance," echoed the *Daily Mail*. The *Sunday Times*

Nov. 25 asked whether anyone really had "anything better" than the "unsatisfactory deal."

Both the Jeremy Corbyn-led Labour Party and Scottish National Party leader Nicola Sturgeon favor staying in the EU. Sturgeon said the SNP should work with Conservative MPs to secure their own "soft Brexit" deal through Parliament if May's deal doesn't win a majority.

May slogs on

May pressed ahead, meeting EU leaders Nov. 25 at a "summit" in Brussels, where they signed off on the agreement. The next step is a vote in the U.K. Parliament, in early December.

"I expect a yes vote and this is the deal on the table," Mark Rutte, the Dutch prime minister, said. "I don't think there's anything more."

Winning the vote is "looking challenging but a lot can change over the next two weeks," U.K. Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said.

The dominant ruling classes in Germany and France will cut the U.K. rulers no slack. They are seeking to keep the EU from being ripped apart at its seams while at the same time facing problems within their own borders. They fear Italy's new government will move to break with the EU as well, and are working to stop Rome from adopting a budget that moves in that direction.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has announced that she will be leaving politics as her party has nose-dived electorally. French President Emmanuel Macron faces plummeting ratings also, after he attacked the unions and now faces mass protests of "yellow vests" in the streets.

Workers and farmers in the U.K. are looking for ways to fight effectively against the blows they face from the growing crisis of capitalist rule.

"The working class struggle for emancipation will be fought out and won on the terrain of the capitalist nation state," Communist League leader Silberman said. "We need to advance upon a revolutionary course of struggle and break from the capitalist rulers and their parties to fight to establish a workers and farmers government."