

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

New book 'In Defense of the US Working Class' coming out  
— PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 83/NO. 3 JANUARY 21, 2019

## SWP wins a hearing in Kentucky coal country

BY JACQUIE HENDERSON

WHITESBURG, Ky. — Socialist Workers Party candidates and members are talking with working people in big cities, small towns and farming areas across the country. Everywhere

### SWP SPEAKS IN INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

they go they knock on doors and introduce the party, its program, the *Militant* and books by party leaders.

Amy Husk, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Kentucky governor, and campaign supporters knocked on doors here, a town of 2,000 in Letcher County, Jan. 4. Working people in this part of Kentucky have been hard hit by the closing of hundreds of coal mines over the last two decades. Once a union bastion, the last United Mine Workers-organized mine in the state closed in 2015.

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## US, Chinese rulers' trade talks continue amid rivalry

BY ROY LANDERSEN

U.S. and Chinese officials met in Beijing Jan. 7-9 for negotiations over the trade dispute between the rulers of the world's first and second largest economies. These are the first announced talks since President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping met at the G-20 summit in Argentina last month, agreeing on a pause in any new tariffs until March.

The trade confrontation between Washington and Beijing throws a spotlight on the sharpening rivalry between the waning but still dominant world power of U.S. imperialism, and the rising economic and military might of the Chinese rulers. Beijing has been hit hard by Washington's pressure, with increasing evidence of a flagging economy burdened by debt.

Chinese Vice President Liu He unexpectedly joined the talks, an expression of Beijing's desire to head off threatened new U.S. tariff increases from 10

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## Socialist Workers Party launches Texas campaign



Militant/George Chalmers

Alyson Kennedy, SWP candidate for Dallas mayor, introduces SWP to Jorge Méndez Jan. 8.

### 'We're going to campaign all throughout the state'

BY SETH GALINSKY

Supporters of the campaign of Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Dallas mayor, are planning two weeks of intensive campaigning Jan 12-26.

"We're going to go all over Texas," George Chalmers, who is organizing the campaigning, said by phone Jan. 8. As she campaigns, Kennedy explains that no movement to defend the interests of working people can be successful and take political power out of the hands of the capitalist class unless it unites in struggle those who labor in big cities, small towns and farm areas.

Supporters of the Socialist Work-  
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### Fight to extend right to vote for ex-prisoners!

The statement below was released Jan. 9 by Amy Husk, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor in Kentucky.

Former prisoners in Florida proudly asserted their newly won rights

### SWP STATEMENT

by lining up to register to vote Jan. 8. Working people across the country were inspired by the overwhelming victory last year after supporters gathered over 1 million signatures to put constitutional Amendment 4 on the ballot and won its passage by

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## Ex-prisoners turn out to register to vote in Florida rights victory



Sarasota Herald-Tribune via AP/Dan Wagner

Vietnam veteran Alan Rhyelle registers to vote Jan. 8 in Sarasota, Florida, one of more than a million ex-prisoners whose right to vote was restored by passage of Amendment 4 last year. He had been convicted of a felony in 2008 for growing marijuana for his personal use.

BY SETH GALINSKY

All across Florida former prisoners lined up to register to vote Jan. 8 — some getting there more than an hour before offices opened — as constitutional Amendment 4 took effect. It passed overwhelmingly last November, by 64.6 percent.

The amendment restored voting rights to more than a million people

statewide convicted of felonies once they've completed their sentence, including probation and fines. Still excluded are ex-prisoners convicted of murder or sex offenses.

"This day's a very big day for me," truck driver Carlos Beverley told WFSU radio in Leon County after registering. "It gives me the opportunity

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## LA teachers call for workers, parents, students to join strike rally on Jan. 14

BY LAURA GARZA

LOS ANGELES — Daily preparations for a Jan. 14 strike by 34,000 teachers here have intensified as the United Teachers Los Angeles union reaches out for support from parents, students and fellow union members. Negotiations with the school board continue.

Joanna Belson plans to be on the picket line with her children. "If they can't be taught by schoolteachers that day," Belson said, "they're going to have a real-life lesson on the picket lines and they're going to see how the real world works."

"We know there are tough decisions ahead for the more than 600,000 students and their families impacted by a strike," a front-page wraparound ad by the union in the Jan. 8 *Los Angeles Times* with an accompanying

poster states. "Having many parents and allies on the picket lines will be powerful and transformative."

The union has called for workers, students and parents to join teachers  
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### Inside

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- Celebration of 60th anniversary of Cuban Revolution 5

# Over half a million people in US have nowhere to live

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

As part of the economic upturn in the U.S., more than 550,000 working people were homeless last year, according to the Department of Housing and Urban Development. High rents and low wages account for what would seem to be a contradiction, but in fact is a reflection of the underlying capitalist crisis that affects working people today.

The gulf between the conditions of life for workers and working farmers and those enjoyed by the capitalists and their meritocratic enablers continues to widen.

Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell has insisted all year that the U.S. economy is almost “too good to be true.” Maybe that’s true for him. But in mid-December even he had to admit, “The benefits of this strong economy and sound financial system have not reached all Americans.”

Conditions of life facing working people certainly bear this out. Four in 10 adults say they don’t have enough savings to cover a \$400 emergency expense, Powell’s Federal Reserve reports. Some 4.8 million workers who want full-time employment are stuck in part-time jobs. Suicide rates are so high — 129 a day on average — that life expectancy is now declining in the U.S.

The actual figures for people with nowhere to live are probably much higher than the HUD report indicates since some cities like San Francisco didn’t choose to participate in the survey. Other areas did their “head count” only for one night in January 2018, tabulating those registered in shelters or who were

seen “unsheltered” on the streets.

On any given night in California, HUD said, 134,000 people are without housing, the most in any state. The state’s homeless population rose 13.7 percent between 2016 and 2017.

Since 2007 homelessness has increased by nearly 47 percent in New York. And in North Dakota, it has risen by over 70 percent.

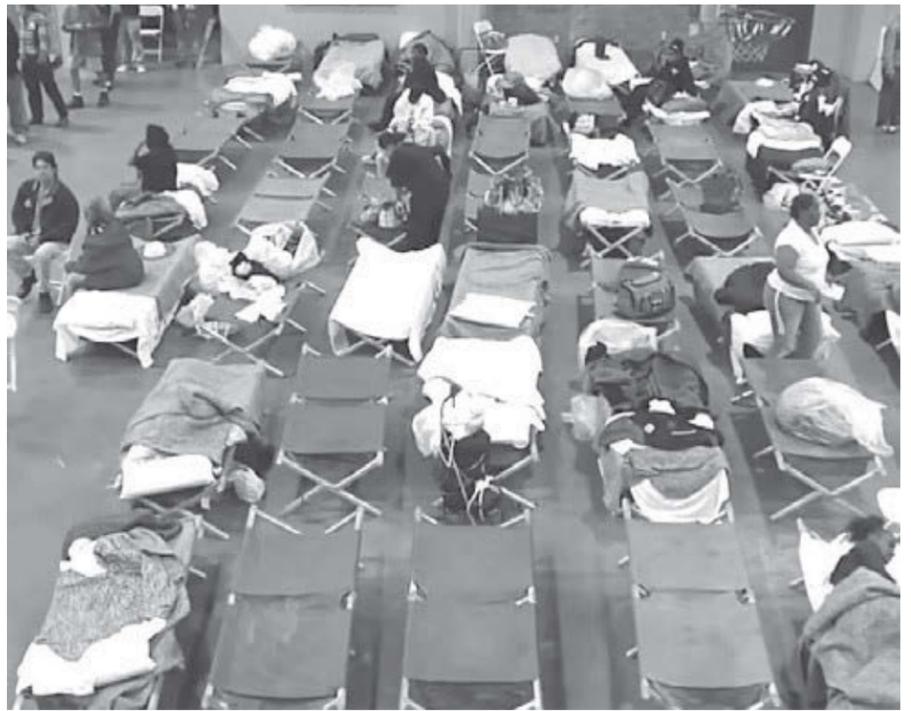
Families with children represented one-third of the total homeless population in 2018, according to the report. But in some areas it’s much higher.

In October 2018 family members comprised three-quarters of the 63,559 people sleeping each night in New York City’s shelter system, according to the Coalition for the Homeless. This doesn’t count the thousands who stay away from these shelters given the abysmal conditions that exist at many of them.

The number of those homeless who work either full-time, part-time or temporary jobs is rising. In Washington, D.C., a 2017 report says that 22 percent of homeless single adults and 25 percent of adults in homeless families there have jobs. A spokesperson from New York’s Department of Homeless Services told the press that 34 percent of families in the city’s homeless shelters include a working adult.

## ‘Ten years without heat’

And those able to gain access to low-rent public housing in New York City, sometimes after years of waiting, then confront deteriorating and dangerous living conditions. As landlord for nearly 400,000 people, the New York City



Homeless shelter in Los Angeles. California’s homeless population rose 13.7 percent from 2016 to 2017, as high rents and low wages drive hundreds of thousands of working people into shelters or to live on the street. Last year families made up one-third of total homeless population.

Housing Authority “has been accused of malfeasance, mismanagement and of mishandling the removal of lead paint and mold from its apartments,” the *New York Times* reported Dec. 19.

At one of the city’s units on Eagle Avenue in the South Bronx, residents have been without heat for the past decade, the *Times* says, as their complaints have been ignored.

“I haven’t had heat for 12 years,” pre-kindergarten teacher Wanda Agee told the paper. She and her husband Larry,

a hotel maintenance worker, have been living in that building since 1986. And they’re forced to pay onerous monthly electricity bills to power the several space heaters they have to use to get by.

Landlords in New York are legally required to maintain heat inside residential buildings of at least 68 degrees if the temperature outside falls below 55 degrees, and at least 62 degrees inside at night. But the city chooses not to enforce these laws at buildings owned by its housing authority.

## Half of adults have had family members thrown in jail

Another one of the reflections of the capitalist rulers’ crisis today and how it weighs on working people is the significant increase in the number of workers ground up in the U.S. criminal “justice” system. A recent study by Cornell University documents that nearly 50 percent of individuals over 18 years old in the U.S. have seen an immediate family member thrown into jail or prison for at least one night.

For Blacks and Native Americans the numbers are higher — 63 percent have had a family member behind bars. Overwhelmingly, those targeted by the U.S. rulers’ cops, prosecutors and prison officials are working people.

One in seven adults has had an immediate family member behind bars for a year or more; for one in 34 that relative has been imprisoned a decade or longer. Nearly one-third of Blacks have seen a close relative imprisoned for a year or more. Over 50 percent of workers who make \$25,000 a year or less have had a family member thrown behind bars.

The rulers show their disdain for workers behind bars in many ways. Many find themselves stuck in prisons far from family and friends. Less than half of those who have had a family member locked up for more than a year say they’ve never been able to visit them.

— BRIAN WILLIAMS

## THE MILITANT

### France: ‘Yellow vest’ actions press needs of toilers

Despite government concessions and a police crackdown, yellow vest protests continue in cities, towns and rural areas in France. The actions are a response to decades of squeeze by the capitalist rulers on living standards. The ‘Militant’ supports and covers this fight.



Vincent Feuray/ABACA/Sipa USA via AP Yellow vest protesters march in Rennes, France, Dec. 29. Sign says, “We fight for you.”

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant*’s views. These are expressed in editorials.

# SWP wins hearing in Ky.

Continued from front page

"I'm from the Socialist Workers Party and we're running a working-class campaign," Husk told those she met. "Both the Democrats and Republicans defend the interests of the rich. The bosses and the crisis of their capitalist system have wreaked carnage in working-class communities. Working people need to rebuild the labor movement and organize to fight against these attacks."

SWP campaigners learn firsthand about the conditions fellow workers, farmers, small proprietors and others face, from low pay, rising debts, inadequate housing and transportation, to the scourge of the opioid epidemic wracking working-class neighborhoods.

"I sure am glad to see you're running," said Martha Blair, 28, after Husk and fellow SWP member Samir Hazboun knocked on her door. "Nobody else is going around here talking about how things really are and asking people what we think!"

"Let me tell you, there are no opportunities in this area. The only jobs are mostly minimum-wage service jobs," she said. "I'm studying to be a cosmetologist and have signed up to get some work doing transcriptions at home. My husband is a radiology technician and he doesn't make enough money to live on."

"You're not alone," said Husk, a medical assistant in Louisville. "Millions of workers are unable to make ends meet. Health care workers do our best to give good treatment under difficult conditions, but the bosses don't care about us and they don't care about the patients that we take care of either."

"The bosses and their government try to get us to think that immigrant workers or workers who have been in prison deserve to be treated as second class," she said. "But this keeps us divided and hurts our ability to fight for all our rights."

"That's why my party defends the right of workers who've been behind bars to vote," Husk said. "Working people won this in Florida last fall. Kentucky is one of two states that denies this right for a lifetime to anyone who has been convicted of a felony. Our campaign calls for a fight to overturn this law."

"I agree with that, I've read about this fight and signed petitions online in support of it," Blair said.

Hazboun explained how workers and farmers in Cuba made a revolution in

1959 and began to uproot the system of oppression and exploitation they lived under. Workers in Cuba have reached out in solidarity with working people around the world ever since, despite unrelenting efforts by the U.S. rulers to overturn the revolution.

## May Day Brigade to Cuba

Husk invited Blair to consider going on the May Day International Volunteer Work Brigade to Cuba this spring to see the revolution herself. "I'd really like to do something like that," Blair said. She asked the SWP campaigners to return so she could purchase a *Militant* subscription when she gets some money and talk further about politics and the brigade.

The main activity of the party is knocking on workers' doors and seeking ongoing political relationships and collaboration. Key to this is following the party and politics through the *Militant*, and especially in books by party leaders and other revolutionaries. These describe how capitalism works and what workers and farmers can do to transform themselves in struggle, like the Cuban people did, to take political power.

The party is featuring special offers on five books. (See ad, this page.)

"The recent rise of black lung disease among miners is one of the most vicious examples of how the bosses attack us," Husk said when she and Hazboun knocked on the door of Lydia Hall, a disabled worker. "They have no regard for our lives except to make money from our labor. They take no responsibility for care for those whose lives they destroy."



Militant/Jacquie Henderson  
Amy Husk, left, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Kentucky governor, talks with Martha Blair on her doorstep in Whitesburg, Kentucky, Jan. 4, about party's campaign and upcoming May Day Brigade to Cuba. Blair said she was interested in working on both.

"You've got that right!" Hall responded. Her father had been a union coal miner who fought for black lung benefits and safer working conditions. "My three sons were coal miners and one is still working." There's been a bit of an increase in mining in the area again, she said, but conditions in the mines are worse.

## How can I help?

"What can I do to help the campaign?" Hall asked. When Husk asked if she thought any of her neighbors would be interested in joining her for a meeting with the SWP candidate when party members come back to town, Hall said, "Just let me know. I'll support you in

any way I can. I know a lot of people here and I'll introduce you to them." She got a copy of the *Militant*.

Across the street SWP members met Jeannie Gibson. Her brother died from black lung disease. "He was only 56," Gibson said. "I have two other brothers who are miners. One has been fighting for benefits because of the disease. They've turned him down twice. He's real sick and he's still fighting."

"We have to fight for everything," said Husk. "Their system can't be fixed. We have to gain confidence through our unity in struggle to take the power out of the hands of the rulers. We can organize on the basis of human solidarity."

The SWP campaigners sold five copies of the *Militant*, a subscription and a copy of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes. They met with three people interested in more discussion about participating in the May Day brigade to Cuba and three others who exchanged contact information to continue discussions.

Running for more than a dozen municipal and state offices, SWP candidates are the only voice in the elections in defense of the interests of working people and all the oppressed.

If you're interested in more information about the party, the brigade, or in getting involved in going door-knocking with the SWP, contact the nearest party branch listed on page 4.



Militant/Jacquie Henderson  
"What can I do to help the campaign?" Lydia Hall asked Amy Husk and Samir Hazboun.

## — CALENDAR —

### Celebrate 60th Anniversary of the Cuban Revolution

#### Chicago

Speakers include Miguel Fraga, first secretary of the Cuban Embassy. Cultural performance by Kuumba Lynx. Information on May Day International Volunteer Work Brigade to Cuba. Sat., Jan. 26. Dinner, 6 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. Donation: \$10. *SEIU Union Hall, 2229 S. Halsted St. Tel: (312) 952-2618. Sponsored by the Chicago Cuba Coalition.*

#### Washington, D.C.

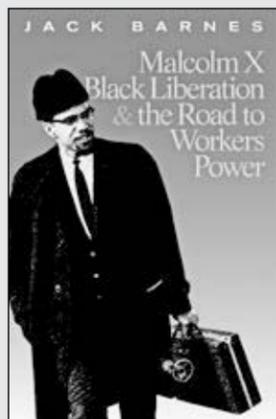
Speakers: Miguel Fraga, first secretary of the Cuban Embassy; Luis Rumbaut, Antonio Maceo Brigade; Omari Musa, DC Metro Coalition and Socialist Workers Party; WPFW radio host Mimi Machado. Fri., Jan. 18, 6:30 p.m. *St. Stephen Church, 1525 Newton St. NW. Tel.: (202) 503-9465. Sponsored by DC Metro Coalition in Solidarity with the Cuban Revolution.*

#### Vancouver, British Columbia

Speaker: Tania López Larroque, consul general of Cuba in Toronto. Sat. Jan. 19, 2 p.m. *Chilean Co-Op, 3390 School Ave. Sponsored by Canada Cuba Friendship Association.*

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**Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power** by Jack Barnes  
\$15. With subscription: \$10



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To subscribe or purchase books at these prices, contact Socialist Workers Party or Communist League branches listed on page 4.

# 'Yellow vest' protests respond as French gov't cracks down

BY HUGO WILS

LONDON — Yellow vest protesters in France have responded to government arrests, attacks and slanders by taking to the streets. Some 50,000 marched throughout France Jan. 5, according to the interior ministry — almost twice as many as the Saturday before. President Emmanuel Macron attacked them in a televised address as a “hateful mob” who target “journalists, Jews, foreigners and homosexuals.”

The yellow vests are a mainly rural and smaller town movement of workers, farmers and other small proprietors triggered by the crushing effects of the ongoing crisis of capitalism and attacks by the government aimed at making them pay for it. Their actions have forced some government concessions, but not enough to get demonstrators off the streets. Protests at toll booths, traffic circles and elsewhere continue to draw support from the majority of people, especially among the working class.

They view Macron, a former investment banker, as the president for the rich. His government has been “reforming” French laws and regulations to benefit the bosses and bankers. Next on his government’s agenda is to tighten regulations for unemployment pay and to cut thousands of public service workers.

The yellow vests continue to press for a higher minimum wage and other demands to ease the economic crunch on working people. And they have increas-

ingly called for Macron to resign.

Macron’s government has deployed thousands of cops in an attempt to quell the protests. The interior ministry has written to local police telling them to clear protesters off the traffic circles and occupied toll booths. More than 147,000 cops were mobilized across France on New Year’s Eve as protesters organized marches. Thousands assembled on the Champs Élysées in Paris.

The government has used the fact that anarchist antifa groups, known in France as “casseurs,” have used the yellow vest protests, especially in Paris, to attack property and people.

## ‘No to Macron and his smears’

“I’m here to declare my opposition to Macron, to say ‘no’ to the labor law and also because he talked of us as a ‘hateful mob,’” Florian Dupuis, a Paris public librarian, told *Militant* reporters at the demonstration in the capital. She sported a yellow vest with her union’s name, CGT, written on it.

A traffic circle in Dieppe, Normandy, that was visited by Communist League members from the U.K. last month, has been reoccupied by protesters after they’d been driven off by cops Dec. 16.

“But the police repression is rough and protesters are playing a game of cat



Serge D'Ignazio

Yellow vest protesters gather at a traffic circle south of Caen in northwest France, Dec. 31.

and mouse with the security forces,” yellow vest protester Arnold, 27, who asked that his last name not be published over concern of job victimization, told the *Militant*. “Many say they will not let go, they will continue, but the police harassment has discouraged some others.”

In a widely publicized move, police Jan. 2 arrested Eric Drouet, a lorry driver from a suburb of Paris. He’s often interviewed in the press as one of the leaders of the yellow vests. He became widely known for posting videos on Facebook of him speaking from the seat of his truck, calling for protests against higher fuel taxes that

Macron threatened to impose.

His crime? Organizing an undeclared protest of a few dozen people to lay candles at the Champs Elysees for those injured or killed since the protests began. In Macron’s France it’s a crime if you call a protest without giving the government at least three days prior notice.

*Le Figaro*, owned by Dassault Group, the manufacturer of warplanes for the French air force, labeled Drouet a “violent extremist” because he supported the popular working-class Maidan uprising in Ukraine that overthrew the regime of Moscow-backed President Viktor Yanukovich in 2014.

## Albany DA drops charges against Ellazar Williams

BY JACOB PERASSO

ALBANY, N.Y. — Opponents of police brutality and cop frame-ups won an important victory here Jan. 9 when Albany County District Attorney David Soares announced he was dropping charges against 19-year-old Ellazar Williams. Williams, who is African-American, was shot in the back and paralyzed from the chest down as he was running away from police officer James Olsen Aug. 20.

The Center for Law and Justice, one of the groups that sponsored a petition drive to get the charges dropped, hosted a press conference after Soares’ announcement. “The DA didn’t do Ellazar Williams any favors by dropping the charges. There was no evidence to support them,” Alice Green, the center’s executive director, told the press.

“I think it was the more than 2,000 signatures we got from the community” said Jamaica Miles, state organizing director of Citizen Action, “that got DA Soares to drop the charges.” A county grand jury had cleared Olsen of any wrongdoing Dec. 14, following a 16-week investigation led by Soares. The investigative unit included at least six former employees of the Albany Police Department. Olsen is Caucasian.

Olsen told investigators that Williams charged at him carrying a hunting knife and he had to shoot to defend himself. Williams had been charged with menacing a police officer, a felony.

On Dec. 17, Williams’ attorney James Knox released a video clip that clearly shows Williams running away as Olsen shoots him in the back from a distance of 20 feet.

Even District Attorney Soares had to admit there was no indication Williams ran at the cops. “That was not the evidence that was presented to the grand jury,” he told the press Dec. 14.

Knox filed a lawsuit against Olsen and other cops, charging them with excessive force, false arrest and other charges. Olsen retired Jan. 4.

Williams’ companion Katia West spends most of her time taking care of him. She quit her two jobs to do so, organizing his medications, giving him shots, dressing his wounds and getting food. The cop’s bullet is still lodged in Williams’ spine.

They told the *Albany Times Union* they’ve gotten a lot of help from Alice Green and others who fought to get the charges against him dropped.

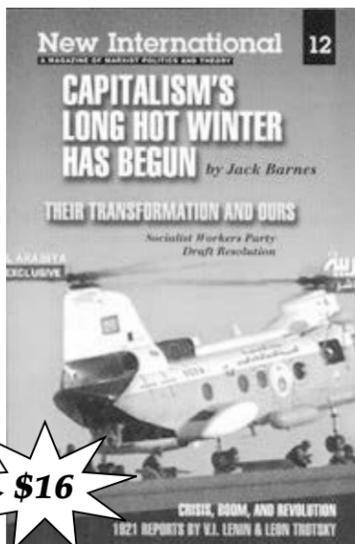
Williams and West are trying to get a motorized wheelchair, accessible housing and adequate food and medical supplies. With Green’s help, they’ve set up a fund: the Ellazar Williams Donation Account, SEFCU, 700 Patroon Creek Blvd., Albany, NY 12206.

The petition drive was supported by more than 10 organizations, including the Center for Law and Justice, the Albany NAACP, Capital Area Action Against Mass Incarceration, Citizens Action of New York and the Socialist Workers Party.

There have been a number of fights against police brutality in the area over the last couple of years. Protests were organized to respond to the 2017 shooting of Dahmeek McDonald and the police killing of Edson Thevenin in 2016 in Troy, New York, across the Hudson River from Albany.

In nearby Schenectady, cops were caught on video slamming Nicola Cottone’s head onto a bench while her hands were cuffed behind her back in 2016. Cottone won a \$360,000 settlement this past October.

## Recommended reading



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# LA teachers call Jan. 14 rally

Continued from front page  
in a 10 a.m. rally in front of City Hall on the first day of the strike.

The board has countered the union's strike preparations with attempts at last-ditch court orders to thwart a strike. The original strike date of Jan. 10 was postponed by the union to Jan. 14 because the school board claimed in court they weren't given the required 10-day strike notice. The union said Jan. 9 they'd win the case, but didn't want to allow the board to spread confusion.

The board has hired 400 scab teachers and are urging parents to cross picket lines to monitor students along with the 2,000 administrators that will attempt to keep the schools open. The old union contract expired in June 2017.

The board has also approved new policies to relax vetting requirements to allow volunteers to cross teacher picket lines and come into the schools.

The school board — which is headed by a millionaire former investment banker — claims it will go insolvent trying to meet the teachers' demands, regardless of how "worthy" they are.

The union answers by showing the board is sitting on a \$1.86 billion reserve.

## Teachers get labor support

The International Longshore and Warehouse Union is urging every member to adopt a school, "working with the picket captains on the strike lines to provide water, food, bodies to walk the picket line, shuttling folks, etc.," wrote Cathy Familathe, president of the ILWU Southern California District Council. The Los Angeles

County Federation of Labor has issued similar appeals.

Over a thousand union school representatives converged on the union headquarters Jan. 5 to get strike material and instructions for organizing picketing. Signs distributed by the union saying, "We Stand with LA Teachers," are springing up in houses around the area.

The union is pressing for a 6.5 percent pay increase. They are demanding hiring of more school nurses, counselors and librarians. Many schools only hire a nurse for one day a week, and there is one counselor for every 945 students.

Smaller class sizes are a key concern of teachers. "Right now I have classes with 40-41 students in them and I have a total of 233 students that I work with," Erica Huerta, a social studies teacher at Garfield High School, said.

"That's a lot of students to think about at one time. It's another one of the signs of disrespect from our district," said Huerta. "They're expecting us to do magic without giving us



United Teachers Los Angeles

Thousands of teachers and supporters rallied in Los Angeles Dec. 15 in preparation for strike for new contract. Contract expired in June 2017. Union is pressing for smaller class size, a 6.5 percent pay raise, and hiring of more school nurses, counselors and librarians.

the resources that we need and one of the resources is just time and energy with students."

Teachers say they draw inspiration from the round of teacher protests and strikes across the country last year,

from West Virginia to Colorado, Arizona to North Carolina.

To find out how you can aid the teachers and their fight for more resources for schools, visit [www.WeArePublicSchools.org](http://www.WeArePublicSchools.org).

## NY event celebrates 60th anniversary of Cuban Revolution

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

NEW YORK — Peter Thierjung, chairperson of the New York Socialist Workers Party, began the short program at a spirited celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution here Jan. 5 by quoting Raúl Castro, first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba.

"No one can deny that the revolution that was born that January 1st has not had a minute's calm over 60 years," Castro had said at a Jan. 1 rally in Santiago de Cuba, the day that the revolution triumphed in 1959. "We have seen 12 U.S. administrations that have not ceased in the effort to force a regime change in Cuba."

Though it's 60 years, "the revolution has not aged, it is still young," continued Castro. "The new generations have the duty to ensure that the Cuban Revolution is forever a revolution of young people, and at the same time, a socialist

revolution of the humble, by the humble, and for the humble."

The event, sponsored by the SWP in New York and Northern New Jersey, drew over 60 people for the talks and an evening of fine food, discussion and celebration. Present were special guests Counselor Jorge Peña and First Secretary Rolando Vergara from the Cuban Mission to the U.N., and participants from Albany, Philadelphia, and New Haven, Connecticut.

Thierjung invited everyone present to join in fighting against the U.S. capitalist rulers' ongoing economic and political attacks against the Cuban Revolution.

Samantha Hamlin, a Walmart worker and member of the SWP in Albany, told those at the gathering the impact that participating in the International May Day Brigade to Cuba last year had on her.

"May Day has a different feel when you're in a place where workers have

power," she said. "My experiences on the brigade convinced me to join the SWP. Socialist revolution in the U.S. is possible and we can build a movement for the working class to take political power here."

She urged those in attendance to sign up for this year's April 21-May 5 brigade. Participants will learn about the history of the Cuban Revolution and challenges facing workers and farmers there today.

Osborne Hart, SWP candidate for mayor of Philadelphia, told the celebration that he came to the SWP "because of the inspiration of the Cuban Revolution and what workers and peasants accomplished there." Hart described how the party gets out widely to meet with working people "on porches and at farmhouses" to discuss how we can fight to defend ourselves from the attacks by the bosses and their government. And the example set by Cuban workers and farmers.

Peña thanked those present for their solidarity with Cuba's revolution.

Participants contributed over \$2,800 to support the ongoing work of the Socialist Workers Party.

### Richmond, Virginia

Join Virginia Educators  
United March and Rally

Mon., Jan. 28, 11 a.m.

Gather at VCU-Monroe Park  
620 W. Main St.

March to state Capitol

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



January 24, 1994

SEATTLE — A head-on collision between Burlington Northern and Union Pacific freight trains Nov. 11 killed five workers near Kelso, Washington. The northbound UP train was preparing to switch over to a parallel main track to allow the BN train to continue southward.

A number of safety systems, designed to prevent precisely this sort of accident, already exist. One device is called an Automatic Train Stop. Another system uses cab signals, an instrument on the engines themselves to warn the crew of upcoming signals.

For 16 years the NTSB [National Transportation Safety Board] has strongly recommended that the bosses install such safety systems, which might have prevented the Kelso collision.

But instead the railroads, with the approval of the Federal Railway Administration, have dismantled the existing systems in order to cut costs.



January 24, 1969

HAVANA — A million Cubans gathered in the Plaza de la Revolución here Jan. 2 to celebrate the 10th anniversary of their revolution. They heard an assessment by Fidel Castro of the first 10 years of the revolution — the progress made and the continuing problems. And they greeted with tremendous enthusiasm his prediction of the great accomplishments that lie ahead.

Central honors at the demonstration went to the exemplary workers whose revolutionary dedication have spurred production in the face of difficulties.

Everywhere in Cuba the results of a decade of massive mobilization of revolutionary manpower are evident. All the training schools that were established by the revolution are now graduating classes of skilled technicians, doctors, engineers and scientists who are carrying out the task of rebuilding Cuba.



January 22, 1944

Roosevelt's War Manpower Commission and other federal agencies are helping to enforce decrees against millions of white and Negro agricultural workers which have their closest parallel in the measures employed against the Negro slaves before the Civil War.

Regulations are now in force which deny these terribly exploited workers the right to leave the areas where they have been employed, even when they are jobless, without release certificates from local county agents, who are spokesmen for the big landowners and growers.

The intent is to freeze these workers in fixed areas for the benefit of the rich planters and landowners who want a large reserve supply of starved and desperate labor that can be forced to work for starvation wages.

The treatment of the agricultural workers is a warning to the labor movement as a whole.

### Cuba and the Coming American Revolution

by Jack Barnes

This is a book about the example set by the people of Cuba that revolution is not only necessary — it can be made.

It's about the class struggle in the U.S., where the potential of workers and farmers are today as utterly discounted by the ruling powers as were those of the Cuban toilers. And just as wrongly. \$10

Also in Spanish, French, Farsi  
[pathfinderpress.com](http://pathfinderpress.com)



# SWP launches Texas campaign

Continued from front page  
ers Party from around the country are heading to Texas to help campaign.

“There’s rail lines that radiate out of Dallas all over the state,” Chalmers said. “And a lot of small towns dot the rail lines. We’re going to follow the rail tracks and knock on workers’ doors to introduce the party and its working-class program.”

“We’re going to talk to cattle ranchers, farmworkers, rail workers, truck drivers, U.S.-born workers and immigrants,” he said. “And as we do so, we’ll also go to working-class neighborhoods in every corner of Dallas to get the signatures we need to put Kennedy on the ballot.” She filed her candidacy Jan. 8.

“We’ll find out more about the conditions workers, farmers and small proprietors face and meet people who are interested in learning about the Socialist Workers Party,” Chalmers said. “Some will want to join.”

Like elsewhere in Texas and across the country, working people in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area are being hit hard by boss and government attacks as they try and boost profit rates amid an ongoing crisis of capitalist production and trade. “People get angry when we explain that at least 52 construction and other workers have been killed on the job here over the last two years,” Chalmers said.

Kennedy says not one worker should die on the job. Workers need to organize and fight to win control over conditions on the job to ensure that everything they do is done safely. When she worked as an underground coal miner, Kennedy explains, this was what the United Mine Workers union fought for and, at least for a period of time, won.

“Already some of Kennedy’s co-workers at Walmart are going to take petitions to sign people up to put her on the ballot,” Chalmers said. “We’re inviting people to help out, campaign with us, take flyers, take petitions, show their friends, relatives and co-workers the *Militant* and books by leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and about the example of the Cuban Revolution.”

The SWP is running over a dozen candidates in 10 states. “We aim to speak in the interests of all the exploited and oppressed,” SWP national campaign director John Studer told the *Militant*. “We explain working people need to build a movement of millions to fight to defend ourselves against the attacks of the bosses, their parties and their government, and to

organize to take political power into our own hands.”

Kennedy and other party members went knocking on workers’ doors in North Dallas Jan. 8. “We’re calling for all U.S. troops to get out of the Middle East and Afghanistan,” Kennedy told those they met. “Working people there need to fight to control their own destiny. The best way workers in the U.S. can help them find a road forward is to demand Washington get out now.”

Jorge Méndez, 22, a cook, was one of the people they met. “Life in the U.S. is better than in Mexico,” Méndez said. “The money here is low, but it’s still way more than in Mexico.”

That’s true, Kennedy said. “In fact, U.S. capitalists want immigrants without ‘proper’ work papers, so they can pay them less than U.S.-born workers and drive down wages of everyone,” she said. “Their government opens and closes the border based on the bosses’ need for labor. And they try to drive a wedge between immigrant and native-born workers to better exploit both and to point us away from our real problem — the capitalist rulers and their government.”

“The Socialist Workers Party fights for amnesty for the more than 11 million undocumented workers in the U.S. today,” she said. “That’s how we can build strong unions and unite the working class.”

They also spoke to dental student Barrett Andreson who said that the health care system is broken and has to be “fixed.”

Health care in the U.S. “is based on making profit,” Kennedy said, “not on keeping you healthy. We’re for universal, government-funded health care from cradle to grave, not health insurance. Insurance plans, like Obamacare, are structured to profit the medical and pharmaceutical industries, not get us taken care of.”

“The Cuban Revolution is an example of what is possible when working



Militant/Leroy Watson

Dan Fein, SWP candidate for mayor of Chicago, talks with bottled-water delivery driver Chris Hartzol Jan. 6. Fein is one of over a dozen SWP candidates in 10 states. “The companies these days are pushing us to work faster, but don’t increase our pay,” Hartzol said. “The way that I see it, it’s corporate America.” Fein replied, “It’s the dictatorship of capital.”

people make decisions based on human need not profit,” she said. “Working people there fought and took power. They transformed health care, education and other social needs into a human right. And they send doctors and other medical volunteers out wherever they’re needed, like they did in the fight against Ebola in Africa.”

Kennedy and her campaign are helping to build the April 21-May 5 International Volunteer Work Brigade to Cuba, where workers and youth can go see the Cuban Revolution for themselves.

Anyone interested in helping the SWP campaign in Texas should email the campaign at [dallasswp@gmail.com](mailto:dallasswp@gmail.com).

## Join May Day International Volunteer Work Brigade to Cuba April 21 - May 5

Meet Cuban working people; do voluntary farm work; join hundreds of thousands at Havana May Day.

Sponsor: Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP). U.S. contingent organized by National Network on Cuba.

**ICanGoToCuba@nnoc.info**  
Applications due by March 29



## SWP: Fight to extend right to vote for ex-prisoners!

Continued from front page  
a two-thirds majority. This restores the franchise to more than a million workers released from prison after serving time on felony convictions.

In their drive to strengthen their criminal “justice” system, the capitalist rulers have widely expanded what are defined as felonies to include convictions — or more often plea bargains — on minor theft or

drug charges. Across the country some 5 million former prisoners are denied the right to vote.

The Florida victory is a gain for all working people. It inspires people across the country to fight all the restrictions on the franchise for workers behind bars. The focus now is on Kentucky, where I’m campaigning for governor, and in Iowa, the last two states where severe restrictions on the voting rights of ex-prisoners still apply.

In Kentucky, the state constitution permanently bars workers with any past felony convictions — some 300,000 people — from voting. The only exceptions are by personal decision of the governor. This anti-working-class restriction disproportionately affects African-Americans. It bars one in five Blacks in the state from voting.

My party defends the right of all workers who’ve been behind bars to vote. Our campaign calls for a fight to overturn this law.

The Socialist Workers Party campaigns for class solidarity between workers behind bars and those outside. Prisons and the capitalist rul-

ers’ whole criminal “justice” system aren’t set up to dispense justice, but to intimidate and keep working people in their place.

As Ramón Labañino, one of the Cuban Five political prisoners kept in Washington’s jails for their defense of the Cuban Revolution for almost sixteen years, noted: “In the United States, imprisonment is a way of dehumanizing a human being. It’s a way of isolating you from society, including from your family.”

We are fighting to overturn efforts by prison authorities in Florida and elsewhere to censor the *Militant*. This fight is helping to set an example for the broader battle against prison censorship — of letters, papers, magazines and books. All workers behind bars need the right to read the literature of their choosing, to think for themselves.

Winning voting rights for all former prisoners is part of the fight to unify the working class, to bring us together as equals in the struggle to overturn capitalist oppression and exploitation.

Join us!

### Campaign with the Socialist Workers Party candidates!

#### Florida

Anthony Dutrow, Miami City Commission

#### Illinois

Dan Fein, Chicago Mayor

#### Kentucky

Amy Husk, Governor

#### Minnesota

David Rosenfeld, St. Paul City Council

#### Nebraska

Joe Swanson, Lincoln Mayor

#### New Jersey

Lea Sherman, State Assembly

Candace Wagner, State Assembly

#### New York

Seth Galinsky, New York City Public Advocate

#### Pennsylvania

Osborne Hart, Philadelphia Mayor

John Staggs, Philadelphia City Council

Malcolm Jarrett, Pittsburgh City Council

#### Texas

Alyson Kennedy, Dallas mayor

#### Washington

Henry Clay Dennison, Seattle City Council.

See directory on page 4 to contact party campaign office nearest you.

# New book 'In Defense of the US Working Class'

## SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters addresses: 'Can US workers make a socialist revolution?'

*In Defense of the US Working Class*, a new book by Mary-Alice Waters, is being released in January.

It features the talk by Waters at an international conference in Havana organized by the Cuban History Institute and the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC), the country's union federation. The April 24-26 gathering was part of the May Day events in 2018, including the May 1 marches of more than a million working people who mobilized in Havana and across Cuba to support their socialist revolution.

Waters is a member of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee and president of Pathfinder Press, publisher of the book. Her talk was first printed in the June 11 issue of the *Militant*. She has edited her presentation for publication in the new book.

Waters' talk was followed by a panel on the US class struggle titled, "From Clinton to Trump: How US working people are responding to the antilabor offensive of the bosses, their parties and their government."

As Pathfinder editor Martín Koppel explains in the preface, the members of the panel "were leaders and supporters of the Socialist Workers Party with years of experience in major industries and trade unions as well as on the land. They described the many intertwined forms of capitalist exploitation and oppression faced by working people in capitalist America."

More important, Koppel says, the panelists "explained how workers have fought back against [the] forty-year offensive by the employers and their government. They pointed especially to the teachers strike in West Virginia and the impetus it gave to a wave of strikes and protests by school personnel in the spring of 2018 that swept Oklahoma, Kentucky, Arizona, and other states."

*In Defense of the US Working Class* includes political summaries of those remarks, as well as short biographies of the panelists. Over the next three weeks, the *Militant* will run all six summaries.

The book concludes with the text of a Radio Havana Cuba broadcast, first

run in the *Militant* in 1981, describing the fighting history of coal miners and the United Mine Workers of America.

This week we feature the panel presentations by Alyson Kennedy and Omari Musa.

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**ALYSON KENNEDY.** Alyson is a 14-year veteran union coal miner. She was among the first wave of women who in the 1970s and '80s broke through the barriers that coal bosses used to exclude them from



Alyson Kennedy

underground mining jobs. She has been part of United Mine Workers battles in coal fields from West Virginia and Alabama to Utah. Alyson was the Socialist Workers Party candidate for president in 2016 and lives in Dallas, Texas, where she works at the international retail chain Walmart.

At the Havana conference, Kennedy highlighted some of the fighting history of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) including the successful struggle waged by the rank-and-file Miners for Democracy move-



Maykel Espinosa/Juventud Rebelde

Members of panel speaking on U.S. class struggle at International May Day conference in Havana, April 2018. From left, Willie Head, Omari Musa, Alyson Kennedy, Jacob Perasso, Mary-Alice Waters.

ment in the 1970s to win control of the union. The new union leadership then established the right of the ranks to vote on contracts. The strengthened union fought for and won union safety committees with the right to shut down production under dangerous conditions, and other key demands.

During the same years new federal equal-employment-opportunity laws obliged the coal bosses to allow women to work as underground miners. Kennedy explained how women miners learned to stand up to sexist harassment and other measures promoted by the coal bosses to drive them out of the mines, and how the women won union backing and support from fellow miners who were men. She described how the incorporation of women into the workforce strengthened the UMWA.

Kennedy also described the twenty-five thousand-strong mobilization of striking teachers and other school personnel in Oklahoma she had been part of three weeks earlier. In a state with no tradition of labor action like West Virginia's, teachers shut down the schools for nine days, winning a pay raise and increased school funding.

The Oklahoma strike was the strongest of the wave of teachers' actions that drew added energy from the example set by the West Virginia working class. Kennedy explained that, like teachers, many of her coworkers, as well as many customers, at Walmart work more than one job to survive.

They identified with and supported the teachers' fight.

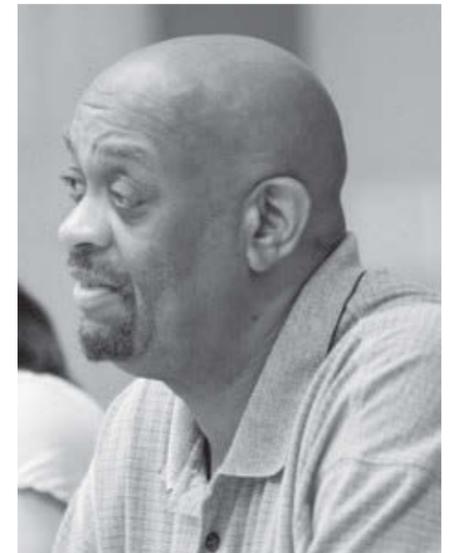


**OMARI MUSA.** Omari has worked for half a century in every kind of job, union and nonunion, from rail and oil to an ice cream factory, from California to Miami. He currently lives in Washington, DC, where he is employed by Walmart. He is a lifetime veteran of battles in defense of the rights of African Americans and a longtime national leader of the work to defend the Cuban Revolution, both inside and outside the labor movement.

Musa took up the assertions made by many liberals and radicals in the US that racism is on the rise and that most workers who are Caucasian — the majority of striking teachers in West Virginia and Oklahoma, for example — are reactionary. That's why Donald Trump, not Hillary Clinton, was elected president, they say.

Musa grew up in the deep South under Jim Crow conditions of institutional racial discrimination. He knows the difference between then and now, he said. He pointed to the "social revolution that has taken place in the US," the product of the mass, Black-led movement in the 1950s, '60s, and early '70s that destroyed those institutions of race segregation and profoundly changed the consciousness of working people, both Blacks and Caucasians.

"Today the workforce is more integrated than ever before, and it is harder than at any previous time in US history for the rulers to use racism to divide us," he said. "That social revolution



Omari Musa

strengthened us all."

Plenty of racial discrimination still exists, he underlined. Such divisions are a source of hundreds of billions in profit and will never be eliminated under capitalism. But racism and anti-Black violence are declining, not growing. "Provocations organized by white-supremacist groups, like the one in Charlottesville, Virginia, in August 2017 draw a few hundred, not thousands as they did only decades ago. Vicious mobs are no longer attacking Blacks in the streets and their homes." One week after the Charlottesville provocation during which one counter-demonstrator was killed, 40,000 people poured into the streets of Boston to repudiate the ultraright action.

Musa pointed to the example of African American football star Colin Kaepernick, who refused to stand during the playing of the national anthem as a protest against police killings and racist attacks. "He became a hero to millions — of all races."

### Special offer on new book \$5 through March 1

*"Without understanding the devastation of the lives of working-class families in regions like West Virginia, and the vast increase in class inequality since the 2008 crisis, you can't understand what's happening in the United States."*

— Mary-Alice Waters

**A GIANT HAS BEGUN TO STIR.** Hillary Clinton calls them "deplorables" who inhabit "backward" regions. But tens of thousands of teachers and school employees from West Virginia, Oklahoma, and beyond set an example in 2018 with their victorious strikes. Working people across Florida mobilized and won restoration of voting rights to more than one million former prisoners.



In defense of  
the US working  
class

MARY-Alice WATERS

[www.pathfinderpress.com](http://www.pathfinderpress.com)

# US, China trade talks continue

Continued from front page

to 25 percent on \$250 billion worth of imports from China. The U.S. rulers are demanding less Chinese government subsidization of export prices, an end to forced technology transfers for foreign firms investing in the Chinese market, and greater protections against intellectual property theft.

The new year started with the unexpected announcement by Apple of a projected fall in sales and profits, ascribed to a weakening of the Chinese economy. In a Jan. 2 press release, Apple Chief Executive Tim Cook wrote that the company had “anticipated some challenges in key emerging markets” but didn’t “foresee the magnitude of the economic deceleration, particularly in Greater China,” a reference that includes Hong Kong and Taiwan.

In fact, the U.S.-based tech giant faces stiff competition from Chinese companies in the world’s largest smartphone market. Stock markets in the U.S. and elsewhere wobbled and a brief “flash crash” affected many currencies, as capitalist speculators worried this development presaged a broader downturn.

A key part of Apple’s production and supply chain is based in China. In mid-December, temporary workers at Foxconn, a key Apple electronics supplier, took to the streets to demand payment on promised bonuses. Their protest was broken up by police, who beat several workers and arrested others.

Decades of export-driven expansion drew millions of peasants off the land to work in factories in cities and special “economic development zones” set up near ports and trade routes. Over time Chinese workers have won pay increases.

Factory output in China has started contracting. This is partly because rising wages have led bosses in many industries, like garment, to move elsewhere in Asia where workers get paid less.

The Chinese government has been pushing to shift the state-capitalist economy from reliance on export-oriented industrialization, which underpinned three decades of boom, to expanding the domestic market. But the growing contraction in production and pressure on trade have slowed things down.

Faced with economic uncertainties, as well as rising living costs hundreds of millions in China are spending less.

Yearly sales of cars by both foreign and domestic automakers fell for the first time in almost three decades. Government revenue from consumption taxes plummeted by two-thirds at the end of last year.

Pressure from Washington’s tariffs has accelerated these developments.

## Growing debt load

The Chinese government’s debt load, largely the result of years of government stimulus, has climbed to \$34 trillion. A new crisis can turn these loan “assets” of banks, in China and worldwide, into their opposite as bankruptcies mount.

The Chinese rulers’ problems fit with the challenges facing the capitalist moguls worldwide. Their total global debt burden has ballooned to nearly \$250 trillion — up from \$173 trillion at the time of the 2008 global financial crisis. This feeds the gyrations in stock markets, as fears of a new debt-fed capitalist downturn eat away at investors’ confidence.

Beijing had begun to tighten credit in an effort to rein in the debt. But with production heading downward, the rul-



Reuters/Sue-Lin Wong

College students hold banners in solidarity with workers arrested for fighting for independent union in Shenzhen, China, in August 2018. Labor protests are growing throughout country.

ers there have shifted gears, announcing \$125 billion in infrastructure spending, mainly on big rail projects, hoping to stimulate manufacturing again.

And they feel increased pressure to reach some kind of agreement with Washington.

Stock markets turned upward Jan. 9

as the Washington-Beijing trade talks were extended for a third day. President Trump tweeted that the talks were “going very well!” Only time will tell whether the two countries’ rulers have engineered a temporary respite in their ongoing struggle over who will emerge as top dog.

# Beijing forces a million Uighurs into ‘re-education’ camps

BY ROY LANDERSEN

For the last two years, the Chinese rulers have systematically organized the indefinite detention of over a million Uighurs, a Turkic-speaking Muslim ethnic minority who live mainly in Xinjiang, a huge region of northwest China bordering Central Asia, in what authorities call “vocational training centers.”

Now the government has begun imposing of a system of forced labor in a growing number of these camps. Surrounded by high barbed-wire fences and guard towers, some detention facilities include factories where Uighurs are compelled to toil at low-or no pay.

For centuries the Uighurs have lived in villages around oases in the lower slopes and valleys of this mountainous desert region, mainly as farmers relying on small-scale agriculture. Today they number some 12 million, many living in dire poverty.

The Uighurs have faced discrimination and cultural and religious persecution for decades. Beginning in early 2017, speaking Uighur or saying Muslim prayers became grounds for internment.

For “re-education,” Uighurs are forced to undergo indoctrination sessions, sing hymns praising the Chinese Communist Party and write essays of self-criticism.

Learning Mandarin is mandatory. Men are often forced to shave their beards, women are prevented from wearing veils. And all are forbidden to fast during Ramadan. Solitary confinement, beatings and torture are not uncommon for those who buck the military-style discipline.

After they “graduate” from the indoctrination centers, the detainees are sent to what many Uighurs call “black factories,” known for their harsh conditions.

They effectively perform prison labor in small-scale manufacturing for capitalist bosses making textiles, clothes, shoes, carpets and other commodities.

This social engineering began as concentration camps alongside aggressive security sweeps and arrests of Uighur “separatists” after some violent incidents.

Beijing has fostered large-scale immigration into the region of Han Chinese, the dominant ethnic group in the country, who now make up 40 percent of the population. This has added to Uighur complaints of discrimination and marginalization by Chinese authorities.

# Florida ex-prisoners register to vote

Continued from front page

nity to feel free again.”

Former prisoner Desmond Meade, president of the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition that campaigned for the amendment, told the press that as far as he knows no ex-prisoners were turned away at elections offices Jan. 8. He was one of the first to register in Orlando.

Its passage was a gain for all working people and inspired others across the country to fight restrictions on the franchise for workers who’ve been thrown behind bars.

Before the amendment passed former prisoners had to wait five years before they could even apply to have their voting rights restored, and then had to wait while the governor made the decision, yea or nay.

Florida Governor-elect Ron DeSantis — who took office Jan. 8 as well — opposed the amendment. He said last month that voting rights couldn’t be restored until the state legislature enacts “implementing language,” provoking an outcry. The next legislative session doesn’t begin until March 5.

The amendment passed because of overwhelming support from working people of all races and political perspectives. They know that the so-called criminal justice system is stacked against workers, especially those who are Black. They don’t think

that prisoners should be treated as less than human, nor continue to be punished after they’ve served their sentences. And they don’t take kindly to anyone trying to gut or delay their vote for the amendment.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Florida, LatinoJustice PRLDEF, the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition and the League of Women Voters of Florida sent a letter to Florida Secretary of State Ken Detzner after DeSantis said he might try to put off implementation. The measure’s “language is specific and unambiguous,” they said.

“The amendment was written deliberately to not have the involvement of the legislature or the governor. It’s self-executing,” Melba Pearson, interim executive director of the ACLU of Florida, told the *Militant* in a Dec. 17 phone interview. “We are encouraging everyone who has had a felony conviction and has completed their sentence to register to vote.”

Some liberals had argued that the amendment, which needed 60 percent to pass, would never make it in Florida because workers who back Republicans like DeSantis, or Donald Trump, are reactionary and racist and wouldn’t vote for it. They were wrong. And far more people voted for Amendment 4 than voted for DeSantis, who won with just over 49.6 percent of the vote.

## LETTERS

### The prison newspaper train

I was reading your newspaper that another inmate had. He got transferred and I would like to keep reading it.

I especially enjoy reading of the struggling working class, the Cuban Revolution and international world affairs.

A prisoner  
Florida

### Solitary confinement = torture

I’ve been locked down in the Restricted Housing Unit (i.e., solitary confinement) for approximately 59 months and counting. My oppressors are trying to break my warrior spirit, so that I can be counted amongst the broken. They will never break my spirit or resolve as a man! A few good brothers and I have started our New Year 2019 off with a hunger strike to shine light on our oppressive conditions.

The Ninth Circuit Court ruled in

Ashker v. Brown in 2015 that any inmate who has spent more than 27 months in any form of solitary confinement constitutes torture.

A young brother informed me about the *Militant* newspaper. Those of us who are conscious enjoy good food for thought, especially food we can meditate on while in the devil’s playground, aka Restricted Housing Unit. Please place me on your subscription list.

A prisoner  
Pennsylvania

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