

# THE MILITANT

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**'In US, unlike in Cuba, farmers can lose their land'**  
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 83/NO. 4 JANUARY 28, 2019

## Join May Day brigade to see Cuba's revolution

BY JANET POST

Workers, farmers and young people from around the world have been invited by the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP) to join the 14th May Day International Volunteer Work Brigade in Solidarity with Cuba, set for April 21-May 5.

"It feels like a real learning opportunity," Adam Faust, a home improvement worker and artist in Atlanta, told Samir Hazboun, a member of the Socialist Workers Party in Louisville, Kentucky. Faust and Hazboun have both signed up to go on the brigade. "I want to share what reality is for people here in the U.S. to counter the stereotype of America being a place that's paved in gold," Faust said.

"I tell young people interested in the brigade to check out the new Pathfinder book *In Defense of the US Working Class*," said Hazboun. "It features a talk given by Mary-Alice  
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## Amnesty for all immigrant workers, unite working class!

BY ROY LANDERSEN

The capitalist rulers in the U.S. and the Democratic and Republican parties that serve their interests agree that immigration policy should be built on the needs of the bosses. They turn the spigot on when the bosses need workers, and turn it down when production in factories and agriculture falls. The use of immigrant workers without papers is a key part of the mix, allowing the employers to sow division among workers, which they use to push down wages and attack the conditions of all.

Tactical differences in the ruling class over the pace of immigration, refracted through liberal Democrats' never-ending "resistance" that is aimed at bringing down the Donald Trump presidency, have led to sharp divisions in Washington and a partial shutdown of the federal government. One thing they all agree on is that many government workers should  
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## SWP takes working-class campaign all across Texas



Militant/Paul Mailhot

Alyson Kennedy, SWP candidate for Dallas mayor, and campaign supporter Samir Hazboun show on maps where they will campaign around the state as they also get on ballot in Dallas.

### 'Take a map, stop in towns along the road and campaign'

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Members of the Socialist Workers Party and the Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom are knocking on workers' doors in cities, towns as well

### SWP SPEAKS IN INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

as farming and ranching areas far and wide. In many places, these efforts are being reinforced by Socialist Workers Party and Communist League candidates running for office and campaigning throughout the region.

They put their GPS devices in the glove compartment of their cars and  
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### SWP candidate wins support of 'forgotten, disrespected'

BY SAMIR HAZBOUN AND JEFF POWERS

DALLAS — Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Dallas Alyson Kennedy and her supporters are campaigning far and wide in Texas to defend the rights and living standards of working people. Her campaign is gaining the attention of those like Kathleen Moffet, a retired nurse, who "feel forgotten and disrespected" by those in government. "I like the way you talk!" she told Kennedy when the SWP candidate showed up at her doorstep to discuss what the party stands for.

Kennedy's campaign was featured on the front page of the metro section and website of the *Dallas Morning News* Jan. 14. Corbett Smith, the  
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## Thousands turn out to support striking Los Angeles teachers



Militant/Deborah Liatos

More than 30,000 members of teachers union and supporters march in Los Angeles Jan. 14, as strike begins demanding smaller classes, full-time nurses and librarians, and pay increase.

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

LOS ANGELES — More than 30,000 teachers, students, parents and other supporters joined a spirited march in driving rain here Jan. 14, the first day of a strike by 31,000 teachers. Thousands walked picket lines in front of schools where they work before and after the march. The teachers, members of United Teachers Los Angeles, have been working without a contract since the previous one expired in June 2017.

They are demanding the Los Angeles Unified School District reduce class sizes and hire more teachers and other school workers, including full-time librarians, nurses and counselors. They're fighting for a pay increase of 6.5 percent retroactive to a year earlier. School district officials have offered 6 percent, spread out over the first two years of a three-year contract.

Nearly 80 percent of the district's  
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## US rulers brag about how they'll use their military in Middle East

BY TERRY EVANS

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo used a nine-nation tour of the Middle East to attempt to shore up the U.S. rulers' alliances with a bloc of capitalist powers in the region, especially in targeting the regime in Tehran. He was seeking to protect U.S. imperialism's economic, political and military interests in the region at a time of ongoing conflict and shifting relations.

Pompeo defended the Donald Trump administration's planned withdrawal of 2,000 plus ground troops Washington has stationed in Syria. To do so, the U.S. administration is seeking to organize the rulers in Turkey to move into Syria and join  
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Bangladesh garment workers: 'Implement minimum wage raise'

# US brags about using military

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in safeguarding areas still outside the control of the Bashar al-Assad regime and its allies.

It is also searching for a way to prevent a deepening conflict between the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), Washington's former ally on the ground, and those same Turkish forces. The Kurdish fighters were decisive for Washington in their war to push back Islamic State, while keeping Assad and his allies in Moscow and Tehran from reconquering the areas being liberated, roughly a quarter of Syria, including its main oil fields.

At home, liberal Democratic Party leaders and other political adherents of the "resistance" against the presidency of Donald Trump have cried bloody murder at the administration's plan to withdraw. They insist on an indefinite and stepped-up U.S. military garrison in Syria.

## War in Syria drags on

The effects of the war in Syria — which has cost the lives of 350,000 Syrians and driven over half the country's population from their homes — drag on, as does the intervention of Washington, Moscow, Tehran, Ankara and other regional capitalist powers.

Many Syrian refugees in Lebanon were left to fend for themselves in flooded camps following severe winter storms Jan. 6, which left sewage seeping into tents and destroyed meager food supplies.

The Syrian regime maintains a tight siege around the Al-Rukban refugee camp near Syria's border with Jordan,

where six people died from starvation and a lack of medicine late last year.

The capitalist rulers of rival powers intervening in Syria's civil war remain indifferent to the deteriorating conditions inflicted on the country's toiling population.

## Washington seeks to withdraw forces

The U.S. government is pressing the Turkish rulers to back off from their threats to assault the YPG. Washington found it expedient to provide the YPG with arms to fight Islamic State. Ankara fears Kurdish rule in YPG-controlled territory will inspire the 15 million Kurds living in Turkey, who have waged a decades-long struggle against national oppression.

Trump has combined threats to "devastate" the Turkish economy if Ankara assaults the Syrian Kurds with negotiations with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan over the establishment of a 20-mile "safe zone" in northeast Syria. It would be patrolled by the Turkish army, leaving the YPG in political control over much of the rest of the area.

The bottom line is the administration's effort to withdraw is on hold. Any move to do so, the Pentagon says, is subject to "ground realities."

Administration spokespeople stress a withdrawal won't affect the ability of the U.S. to use military might in the Middle East if they choose to. "The absence of a couple thousand soldiers on the ground in Syria in no way materially diminishes the capacity of the United States of America and our amazing Armed Forces to deliver American power to accomplish our

## Ninth week of 'yellow vest' protests across France



Militant/Jean-Louis Salfati

PARIS — The size of the Saturday yellow vest demonstrations throughout France grew larger Jan. 12 over the previous couple of weeks. This is the ninth weekend of protests here since the movement of workers, petty proprietors, shopkeepers and others in smaller cities and towns and rural areas across France exploded Nov. 17.

According to police, there were 84,000 demonstrators in the streets across the country. This was despite the violence-baiting attacks against protesters by the government of President Emmanuel Macron.

The protests arose from growing anger at the actions of the Macron government that have made life increasingly difficult for working people. The yellow vests call Macron the "president of the rich." His public support has fallen, while support for the protesters remains high.

In Paris, protesters organized volunteer marshals to protect the protests from the cops and to avoid provocations by those seeking to incite violence.

"Macron has to stop ignoring us and realize how bad things are," construction worker William Lebrethon, 59, told Radio France Internationale during the march in Bourges. Signs included, "Macron resign!" and "France is angry!"

— DEREK JEFFERS

objectives anywhere in the world," Pompeo said Jan. 13.

In a speech at American University in Cairo Jan. 10, Pompeo said Washington and its allies are determined to "expel every last Iranian boot" from Syria. He said this remains Washington's strategic mission, and the withdrawal from Syria is just a "tactical change."

Washington's deployment of warplanes, bombs, missiles, the navy's Fifth Fleet, and tens of thousands of ground troops in bases around the Mideast is far and away the most powerful there.

Pompeo said there will be no U.S. reconstruction aid to Syria as long as Assad allows Tehran's forces to stay

in the country. He added Washington backs the Israeli rulers' continual airstrikes on these forces. The U.S. government's sanctions against Tehran continue to constrict the Iranian economy, weighing most heavily on working people there.

The U.S. rulers have intervened continuously in the Middle East over decades, convinced that the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 meant they had "won" the Cold War and could do as they pleased with no consequences.

But they were wrong. They've been enmeshed for decades in wars in Iraq and Syria, as well as in Afghanistan, and conflicts elsewhere in the region, unable to either establish stability for their interests or to get out.

# THE MILITANT

## Amazon workers: 'We're workers, not robots'

Moves by bosses to speed up work at Amazon warehouse in Shakopee, Minnesota, were met with a fighting response by workers, including many Somali immigrants. 'Militant' reports on workers' efforts to stand up for dignity and push back bosses' attacks on conditions.



Militant/David Rosenfeld

Amazon workers protest in Minnesota.

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

# 'Take a map, stop in each town'

Continued from front page instead use maps to follow the roads to town after town to stop and knock on doors. That's all part of campaigning and learning more about the conditions working people face today.

While campaigning door to door Jan. 13 in an apartment building on the east side of St. Paul, Minnesota, David Rosenfeld, SWP candidate for St. Paul City Council, introduced himself to Nathaniel Rogers. Rogers, an African-American worker, has to balance two jobs to get by — one in health care and the other in the food industry.

They discussed immigration and agreed the government uses this issue to try and divide working people and keep workers down. "I think it would be better for all workers to be legal," Rogers said, when Rosenfeld explained the SWP campaigns for amnesty for millions of workers here without the documents that U.S. rulers consider proper.

As many workers do at the end of doorstep discussions with SWP members, Rogers asked, "What do you want me to do?" Rosenfeld showed him the books that party members are campaigning with (see ad below) and the latest issue of the *Militant* newspaper. "The books we encourage people to read are not 'history books,'" Rosenfeld said. "They are written to help equip us with the lessons of past working-class struggles to prepare to build a movement of millions of working people.

"A movement that can take political power out of the hands of the capitalist rulers and run society in the interests of the vast majority," he said.

"I'm not much of a reader," Rogers told Rosenfeld, "but I want some of these." He got *The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record: Why Washington Fears Working People* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes, and a subscription to the *Militant*.

In the same area of St. Paul, campaign supporter Terrell Logan met Michael, originally from Liberia, who didn't want his last name used for job considerations. Michael is waiting to get a job until his work permit is renewed. "Trump's government is treating us unfairly," he said. "He is trying to make things tougher."

"What's important here is the growing numbers of workers who see immigrants as their fellow workers, neighbors and classmates," Logan said. "One example was a protest against police raids in O'Neill, a small town in Nebraska, last August, organized by local residents in support of workers rounded up by immigration police," he said.

Campaign supporters have joined Linda Harris, the Communist League candidate for the seat of Granville in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, in going door to door.

Granville is an electoral district in western Sydney, Australia. The NSW elections are March 23.

On Jan. 13, Harris and supporters knocked on working people's doors in Dapto, a suburb of Wollongong 60 miles south of Sydney. "I won't know until March if I still have a job or what hours I'll be given," Paul William, a school cleaner, told Harris at his doorstep.

William's bosses had just lost their government contract. "Permanent workers like me have to reapply for our jobs with the new company that won the contract. The casual workers have been told not to even bother applying; they've lost their jobs."

"The bosses use whatever means they can to drive down workers' wages and conditions," said Harris. "We need to organize and rebuild our unions to defend ourselves." She pointed to an article in the *Militant* on the yellow vest protesters in France, saying they were an example of the capabilities of working people to fight and make gains.

"I've been raising that we need a mass union meeting to discuss what is happening to us. More than 1,000 workers are affected," William said. He decided to get a subscription to the paper.

*Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?* by SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters and *It's the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the US 'Justice' System: The Cuban Five Talk About Their Lives*



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Communist League member Julie Crawford shows health care worker Olly Tuppen *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?* by Jack Barnes, in Basildon, Essex, near London, Jan. 12. "They're rich because of us!" said Tuppen. She also got a *Militant* subscription.

*Within the US Working Class* are two of the books on special with a subscription. They help explain why the Cuban Revolution shows how workers and farmers everywhere have the capacity to unite and make a socialist revolution.

Cuba is the one living example where workers and farmers fought successfully to take political power. And they've defended that conquest successfully for the last 60 years.

SWP members are working with others to build the April 21-May 5 International May Day brigade to Cuba. This annual brigade is an opportunity

for workers and young people to learn firsthand about the revolution and how it opened the door for a deep-going social transformation.

Readers are urged to keep sending in reports for this column, especially about the political back and forth of their discussions on workers' doorsteps and their reactions to the books and the *Militant*, as well as photos, to enrich the paper each week.

To join in or to find out more, contact the SWP or Communist League branch nearest you. (See directory on page 8.)

## Sudan toilers protest gov't attacks, years of wars

BY TERRY EVANS

In response to a rise in the price of bread, tens of thousands of working people have joined protests since mid-December in cities across Sudan. The price increases came on top of years of grinding hardships, civil war and political repression.

The government, which controls the cost of some basic necessities, tripled bread prices Dec. 19, sparking the demonstrations. Protesters have taken to the streets almost daily, unbowed by the government's imposition of a state of emergency and attacks on their actions. One popular slogan at the protests

is, "Freedom, peace and justice." And they're now demanding an end to President Omar Hassan al-Bashir's rule.

"We've been living without dignity," Aseel Abdo, a 25-year-old woman who participated in the protests, told the *Washington Post* Jan. 6.

The actions have drawn support from some trade unions and the country's bourgeois opposition parties. Inflation has risen 70 percent over the past year.

For months working people in Sudan have faced growing shortages of food, medicines and money, and long lines to get fuel.

Bashir has moved with force against

demonstrators. The army has been mobilized and security forces have fired on protesters. Many schools and universities are closed. The government says 24 people have been killed since the actions began, but Amnesty International estimates over 40. Numbers arrested are between 800 and 2,000.

Bashir fired his health minister Jan. 5, blaming him for the rise in the price of medicines. But protests have continued, extending for the first time to El-Fasher, the capital of North Darfur, Jan. 13.

### Decades of war

The rising discontent comes on top of the deadly effects on working people of the Sudanese rulers' wars. Bashir seized power in an 1989 coup, taking command in the bloody 1983-2005 civil war, which ended with the independence of South Sudan in 2011. As a result, the Sudanese rulers in the North lost control of most of the country's oil fields, deepening the economic crisis for toilers there. Since the war ended, Bashir's government has brutally repressed rebel groups in Darfur, and in the Blue Nile and South Kordofan regions.

Some 1.4 million people around the country are still unable to return to homes they fled during these conflicts.

The regime is trying to make alliances in the region. The Sudanese government has entered into an agreement with the Saudi monarchy to deploy troops to the Saudi-led coalition fighting Tehran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen. Bashir's government recently sought collaboration with Washington and the removal of Sudan from the U.S. rulers' list of terrorist governments. Khartoum joined with Washington to help police the Libyan border. Washington lifted economic sanctions against the regime in 2017.

**Books on special offer..**  
**Below: \$7 each, \$5 with subscription. Normally \$10.**



At left: \$15, \$10 with subscription. Normally \$20.

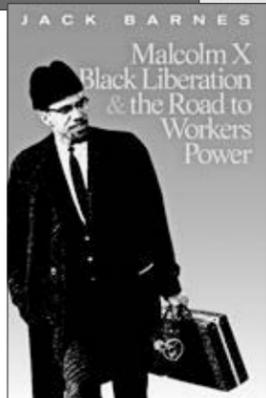
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## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### CANADA

#### Montreal

In Defense of the U.S. Working Class: Eyewitness Report from the SWP's Texas-Wide Campaign for Mayor of Dallas. Celebrate the publication of Pathfinder's newest book, *In Defense of the US Working Class* by Mary-Alice Waters. Sat., Feb. 2, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 7107 St. Denis, Room 204. Tel: (514) 272-5840.



# José Ramón Fernández's life reflects the strengths of the Cuban Revolution

BY SETH GALINSKY

Cuban revolutionary leader José Ramón Fernández died Jan. 6 at the age of 95. He commanded the main column of the revolutionary Cuban forces that repelled the CIA-organized invasion at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961 and later held a wide variety of leadership positions.

His personal history of discipline, honesty, tact and dedication to the revolutionary movement from the moment he joined with those fighting to overturn the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista speaks volumes about the strengths of the Cuban Revolution. And it helps explain why the U.S. capitalist rulers continue to fear its example.

Fernández, who rose to the rank of first lieutenant in the Cuban army before the revolution, was one of a number of army officials who rankled at the coup that brought Batista to power. Fernández recalled in a 1999 interview with the Cuban newspaper *Trabajadores* how he and others worked to convince fellow officers to join a conspiracy to overthrow Batista.

"We told them that the bloodstain and all the hatred of the people falls on us, even though we were not the ones who initiated the March 10 [coup]," he said, "nor were we backing by force any type of actions in favor of illegal activities such as smuggling, gambling, prostitution, vices in general, fraud, theft of the public treasury and all those blots on that society that were exacerbated with the coming to power of Batista."

The April 4, 1956, revolt against Batista by los puros — the pure ones as Fernández and the other anti-Batista army officers were known — failed. He was arrested, court-mar-

tialed and tortured. Eventually he was sent to the Isle of Pines where he met members of Fidel Castro's July 26 Movement and other opponents of the dictatorship.

He was won to the political perspectives of the July 26 Movement and helped them organize their own battalion within the prison, becoming their military instructor.

When news reached the prison that Batista had fled Cuba on Jan. 1, 1959, in the face of the advancing Rebel Army and revolutionary upsurge across the country, Fernández and other imprisoned July 26 Movement leaders took over the prison. They released the political prisoners and quickly assumed military and political command over the entire Isle of Pines.

Fernández flew to Havana the next day where Fidel Castro asked him to head up a school for cadets to train Cuba's new revolutionary armed forces. Fernández at first said no. He told Castro he had already gotten a new job as a manager of a sugar mill.

Fernández describes what happened next. "Fidel, a lot of times when he's thinking, he's like a moving volcano. He took a few steps, he stroked his beard and then he pointed



Granma  
José Ramón Fernández, center, and Fidel Castro, to his left, at Play Girón, April 1961. Fernández commanded main column that defeated U.S.-organized mercenary invasion there.

and said, 'You're right, you go off to the sugar mill and I'll go write a book about the Sierra and the revolution, and the revolution can go to hell,' and he just looks at me. I thought about it for a few seconds and replied, 'Where did you say you want me to go?'" Fernández never looked back.

He describes how he was assigned to lead the defense of the revolution at the Bay of Pigs. "Girón meant participating with my own hands in the defense of the revolution and socialism," he said. "It reinforced my conviction that my destiny had been

fused forever with the destiny of this heroic people."

Fernández held many leadership positions over the years. He served as a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party from 1975, vice minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces from 1968 to 1970, minister of education from 1972 to 1991, and vice president of the Council of Ministers from 1978 until his death. He served as president of the Cuban Olympic Committee from 1997 until October 2018, when he was elected honorary life president.

## Join May Day brigade to see Cuba's revolution

Continued from front page

Waters, a leader of the SWP, last year and remarks by other workers at an International May Day conference in Havana.

"It also features an aerial photo of the May Day march that helps you grasp what it looks like when hundreds of thousands of Cuban workers and youth turn out to show support for

their revolution." Taking part in the annual May Day parade is one of the high points on the brigade.

Joining these brigades is a unique opportunity to meet Cuban working people and discuss the impact of their revolution. And to discuss the struggles and political developments that brigade participants have been part of in their own countries. This year

marks the 60th anniversary of the triumph of the Cuban Revolution.

On Jan. 10, John Staggs, the SWP candidate for Philadelphia City Council, went to the Pennsylvania Farm Show in Harrisburg and spoke with some dairy farmers about the brigade. "They really understood why it would be interesting to be on the brigade," said Staggs.

After hearing about how the revolution transformed life for farmers there, one dairy farmer said he "would love to see a different way of doing things." Given farm responsibilities and a full-time job in the spring, he wasn't sure he could make the trip, but said he would consider it.

Brigade volunteers will be based at the Julio Antonio Mella camp 25 miles outside Havana and do volunteer labor at nearby farms. They will travel to the provinces of Havana, Artemisa, Villa Clara and Sancti Spiritus, visit museums and other sites to learn about the revolution's history, and join discussions with Cuban workers, farmers and members of mass organizations.

The U.S. contingent is being organized by the National Network on Cuba. Applications, which are open until March 15, are available at [www.nnoc.info](http://www.nnoc.info).

Brigadistas will also participate in an international conference in solidarity with Cuba in Havana the day after the May Day march.

A \$650 fee covers all expenses in Cuba, including accommodation, meals and transportation. A \$150 deposit is required with the application, with the balance due by March 22. The round-trip airfare to Cuba is extra.

For more information contact [ICanGoToCuba@nnoc.info](mailto:ICanGoToCuba@nnoc.info).

## 'Cuban people know what they are defending'

The following excerpt is from testimony given by José Ramón Fernández before the People's Court of Havana, July 12, 1999. It's taken from the chapter "The Cuban People, Rifles in Hand, Were Convinced of Their Cause" in *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas*. Copyright © 2001 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by per-

mission. Pathfinder also published an interview with Fernández as part of the book *Making History: Interview with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces*.

BY JOSÉ RAMÓN FERNÁNDEZ

The men and women, the people who in early January 1959 cheered Fidel Castro in his triumphant tour of

nearly the entire island, were the same ones who on April 17, 1961 — convinced of their cause, rifles in hand, conscious of the declaration of the socialist character of our revolution — were determined to resist and repel the U.S. attack.

Over that brief period, the Revolution's work, and Fidel's words in particular, reached deeply into the hearts of the Cuban people, who identified with the ideas of national sovereignty, social justice, equality, and dignity. The Revolution had resolved the land question. It was taking sure, tangible steps to put an end to racial discrimination and the discrimination against women. It was assuring access by the masses to employment, education, health care, sports, and culture. The goal of eradicating all forms of corruption took hold in the collective consciousness, a concrete manifestation of the economic and social gains made in such a short period of time. ...

In this fight, the Cuban people knew what they were defending, and they did so with a sense of patriotism and revolutionary fervor. Their firm support of the Revolution and Fidel was a decisive factor in the lightning-quick victory over the mercenary invasion.

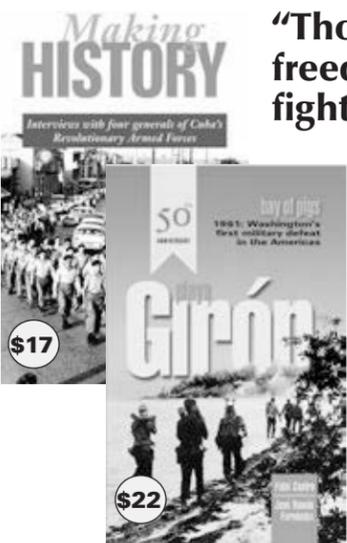
**"Those not willing to fight for the freedom of others will never be able to fight for their own" — Fidel Castro**

***Making History: Interviews with four generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces***

Through the stories of these four outstanding Cuban generals — including José Ramón Fernández — we can understand how the people of Cuba, as they struggle to build a new society, have held Washington at bay for 60 years.

***Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas***  
by Fidel Castro, José Ramón Fernández

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



# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

Are you involved in a union organizing drive or strike? Brought solidarity to fellow workers on the picket line? Let us know! Send articles, photos and letters to [themilitant@mac.com](mailto:themilitant@mac.com) or through our website, or mail them to 306 W. 37th St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

## Virginia teachers to rally Jan. 28 for public education funding

Virginia teachers are standing up and saying “Enough is enough!” to the decadeslong assault on public education by the state government. Virginia Educators United is building a statewide march and rally at the capitol in Richmond Jan. 28, to demand more state funds for the schools.

“The teachers don’t get enough help, not to mention they need more salary,” Mona Colvard, a therapeutic counselor in the Wise County public schools in rural southwestern Virginia, told the *Militant* Jan. 13 by phone. “We see kids every day that need one-on-one attention. School is important in their lives, and the funds aren’t there.”

Virginia Educators United members joined “bridge brigade” rallies on overpasses along Interstates 95 and 64 Jan. 8, where teachers and their supporters held up foam board with

Christmas lights spelling “Fund Our Schools.” “Walk-in” rallies are being organized at schools across the state Jan. 16 to reach out to students, parents and other school workers.

Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam’s 2019 budget proposal promises a \$268 million increase in education spending, including a 5 percent raise for teachers — which may or not be approved. Teachers’ pay in Virginia is 14 percent below the national average. The state government spends less per student than Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and West Virginia.

The teachers are demanding higher funding for public education, infrastructure, and pay for teachers and support staff. Virginia law allows local school districts to raise funds to supplement state money, meaning schools in wealthier areas have more and better paid school workers and supplies.

— Arlene Rubinstein

## Bangladesh garment workers: ‘Implement minimum wage raise’

Tens of thousands of garment workers have taken to the streets in Bangladesh over the past month, shutting down production. They are protesting the bosses’ refusal to fully implement a raise in the minimum wage that went into effect Dec. 1.

The government met the protests with brutal repression. One worker was killed and 50 injured Jan. 8 when cops used rubber bullets and tear gas to attack a demonstration of 5,000 in Dhaka, the capital. The next day cops in Savar, north of Dhaka, used water cannons to break up an action of 10,000. Workers blocking roads to press their demands clashed with riot cops on several occasions.

The raise in the minimum wage from 5,300 to 8,000 taka (\$63 to \$94) a month is the first since 2013. Workers are angry that the bosses have only given those at the absolute minimum the full raise. Workers who made over the old mini-

## Thousands of Bay Area teachers rally for school funds



Militant/Betsey Stone

OAKLAND, Calif. — Thousands of union teachers, parents and students from the Bay Area and beyond rallied here Jan. 12 demanding more money for education, pay increases for teachers and smaller class sizes.

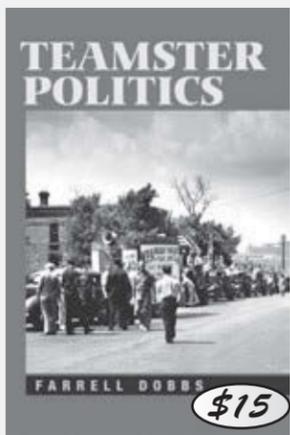
Many of the teachers were members of the Oakland Education Association, which has been in negotiations with school district officials that have dragged on for over 18 months. Many carried signs saying, “Ready to strike.”

“There is little or no money in Oakland for school supplies and other necessities,” said Karl Daku, who taught English here, but now teaches in Berkeley. “It breaks my heart to see the discrepancy between the districts.”

Teachers from Fremont, who are also in contract negotiations, picketed schools there Jan. 11 then drove to the Oakland rally the next day. “We want higher pay and better medical coverage,” Fremont English teacher Tiffany Stelle told the *Militant*.

“I think the majority of teachers in Fremont have two jobs now to make ends meet, just like I do,” said Maile Ferreiva, a school librarian there.

— BETSEY STONE



“Unionism and politics cannot be separated. Power generated at the trade-union level can be shattered by government blows. Workers must enter the political arena as an independent class force, with their own party.”

— Farrell Dobbs

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

## —25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO—



January 31, 1994

Washington’s and London’s callous and calculated cover-up of the causes behind the bleeding gums, diarrhea, and depression suffered by thousands of veterans of the U.S.-led war against Iraq shows the brutal disregard of capitalist politicians for the lives and well-being of working people.

The latest snow job by the White House is part and parcel of the monstrous slaughter Washington and its allies carried out against the Iraqi people in 1991. At least 150,000 Iraqis were killed during the so-called Desert Storm. Tens of thousands more have died since as a result of a brutal embargo.

Now Washington tries to blame Baghdad for the scandal. But the fact that thousands of Gulf War vets were exposed to toxic substances without their knowledge and then lied to and denied medical care for almost three years cannot be laid at the feet of the Iraqi regime.



January 31, 1969

WASHINGTON, D.C. — When Derrick Alexander was wounded in Vietnam last November, he made up his mind to do whatever he could to end the war when he got back to the States, but he didn’t know just what to do.

A month later Alexander was shipped to Walter Reade Hospital in Washington. Listening to the news one night last week, he heard about the weekend antiwar mobilization. He decided to get out of his hospital bed to attend it.

His presence expressed the developing unity of GI and civilian antiwar activists, which was strongly reflected at the “counterinaugural” weekend.

Alexander took part in the GI workshop at the mobilization conference and spoke briefly at the rally preceding the “counterinaugural” march Jan. 19. Along with other active-duty GIs, Alexander led that march of 12,000 down Pennsylvania Ave. to the Capitol area.



January 29, 1944

Anti-Semitic attacks are on the increase. From New York, Boston, Baltimore and elsewhere come reports of beatings and knifings of Jews by Christian Fronters and other hoodlums. Instead of protecting the victims of these assaults, the police shield their attackers or remain indifferent to them.

The Los Angeles labor movement has provided an example of working class action against anti-Semitism, which is worth more than a thousand appeals to capitalist politicians. When a Jew-baiting gang in Douglas Aircraft Co’s Santa Monica plant circulated a filthy anti-Semitic leaflet, the UAW-CIO local immediately set to work to stop this poisonous propaganda. It drew up and distributed among its members a counter petition pointing out the evils of racial hatred and calling for unity of all union members against anti-Jewish and anti-Negro attacks.

## —CALENDAR—

### CONNECTICUT

#### Hartford

**Puerto Rico and Cuba: Two Wings of the Same Bird; Two Different Responses to Natural Disaster.** Tues., Jan. 29, Reception 5:30 p.m.; Program 6 p.m. *Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church, 79 New Park Ave. Tel: (860) 794-7384. Sponsored by Connecticut Puerto Rican Agenda, CICD Puerto Rican Parade Committee and Greater Hartford Coalition on Cuba.*

### ILLINOIS

#### Chicago

**Celebrate 60th Anniversary of the Cuban Revolution.** 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.*

### PENNSYLVANIA

#### Philadelphia

**Cuba 2019. Moonstone Poetry @ the Pub.** Includes discussion on the 2019 May Day International Volunteer Work Brigade to Cuba. Sun., Feb. 3, 2 p.m. *Fergie’s Pub, 1214 Sansom St. Tel: (215) 735-9600. Sponsored by Moonstone Arts Center.*

# SWP campaigns in Texas

**Continued from front page**  
reporter who interviewed Kennedy, noted she had been the SWP candidate for president of the United States in 2016. “When Kennedy offered her mayoral platform, the threads of her national campaign were still present,” he wrote. “She called for amnesty for the millions of undocumented workers in the country — something over which City Hall has little influence — while arguing that their status drives down wages for all working people. To address Dallas’ infrastructure needs, a massive government-financed jobs program ‘at union-scale wages’ is needed, she said. Such a program would help provide sufficient wages to address affordable-housing needs, Kennedy said.”

He noted that Kennedy “was part of the first wave of female coal miners in the U.S., joining the United Mine Workers in 1981 and working in mines in West Virginia, Alabama and Utah.” She “helped organize miners — many of them immigrants from Mexico — to fight for improved wages and safer working conditions.”

Supporters of the Socialist Workers Party from other states have come to Dallas to reach out to working people across Texas who, like other working people in cities, towns and on farms in the U.S., face worsening economic and social conditions. They are increasingly open to a discussion about the working class taking power and replacing the dog-eat-dog capitalist system.

“Yes I agree the rich control the system. They get richer and the poor get poorer,” Billy Walker, from South Dallas, told Kennedy. Walker was jailed for 10 years after taking a plea deal.

Many prisoners in Texas are incarcerated in facilities with no heat in the winter and no air-conditioning in the summer. Kennedy told Walker her campaign supports the fight by prisoners in Texas to improve their conditions. The SWP candidate also calls for abolition of the death penalty, still regularly used in Texas, and an end to prison censorship of books and other reading material. Walker and his wife both signed a petition to put Kennedy’s name on the ballot for the May election.

## SWP campaigns across Texas

As SWP supporters fan out, they’re getting a good response among working people wherever they go. Daisy Robinson, from Midlothian, a small town an hour south of Dallas, works at a Walmart store. Kennedy is also a Walmart worker.

“My husband and I came here from New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina in 2005. We had lost everything,” Robinson told Kennedy. In a wide-ranging discussion she asked the candidate about education in the schools, describing the difficulties her children are having with new standardized testing as the measure of learning.

“The education system under capitalism is used to teach children to be obedient and subservient,” Kennedy said. “Teachers who would like to see children and others get a better education and become more self-confident, are up against the character of what education for workers is supposed to accomplish for the rulers of this society.”

Kennedy told Robinson that her con-

cerns are a good reason to support the fights of teachers, like the strike taking place in Los Angeles, and to learn more about why a socialist revolution is needed. Robinson said she was getting a lot out of their conversation. “I think you should continue what you are doing. It’s important work and so educational,” Robinson said. She purchased a copy of *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record* by SWP leader Jack Barnes to get a better understanding about what working people are capable of in the fight for their own interests. She also got a subscription to the *Militant*.

The SWP campaigners give out a flyer that describes Kennedy’s life as a working-class fighter and her socialist program to everyone they meet. And they encourage them to get and read the books offered at special prices. (See ad on page 3.)

In Tyler, an industrial town 90 miles west of Dallas, socialist workers campaigning for Kennedy met Shawn Harris, a local barber and former U.S. Navy submariner. “Trump’s proposal to build a wall make no sense,” he said. “I see it as another way to divide people.”

SWP campaigner Susan LaMont told Harris the party is part of the fight to win amnesty for all undocumented workers in the U.S. in order to unify the working class, and for labor solidarity with workers’ struggles to better their lives and conditions in Mexico and Central America. “Democratic and Republican party politicians are not trying to address what workers

# 1,000s turn out to support LA teachers strike

**Continued from front page**  
over 600,000 students didn’t come to school on the first day of the strike. Many joined the march.

“Only 60 kids showed up today out of the approximately 500 who attend school here,” Jennifer Zelazny told the *Militant* as she and some 30 teachers picketed in front of Alta Loma Elementary School before heading to the rally. “Even those parents who brought their children to school say they support the strike. They have to work or depend on the meals.”

At Dorsey High School teachers and others picketed in front of the school and then went to the rally together on public transportation.

Strike signs printed by the union and handmade signs and slogans written on umbrellas dotted the rain-soaked rally. Some carried signs or wore ponchos from other unions, including Service Employees International Union, International Longshore and Warehouse Union, National Union of Healthcare Workers and California Faculty Association. The Los Angeles County Federation of Labor is backing the strike.

## Widespread support for the strike

One group of parents set up a Facebook group called Parents Supporting Teachers. It has more than 10,000 members who share ideas for strike-day activities for children and offer their homes for bathroom breaks for picketers as well as other kinds of support.

In the face of widespread support for the union’s demands, district of-

## A 2016 presidential candidate is running for Dallas mayor

Alyson Kennedy, who was on ballots in seven states as the Socialist Workers Party candidate in the 2016 presidential election, said she wants to replace term-limited Mayor Mike Rawlings.

Kennedy and other members of her party collected signatures across Dallas over the weekend in hopes of getting her a spot on the ballot.

“When we get out and share our message, it resonates with a lot of people in our society right now,” Kennedy said. “And I think that’s because the system we have in place — at all levels of government — serves the needs of a tiny minority.”

In the 2016 election, Kennedy received 12,467 votes — approximately 0.01 percent of the national popular vote and less than half of the votes received by “None of these candidates,” an option only in Nevada.

Kennedy said she knows the faces similarly long odds in the Dallas mayoral race — which features seven other candidates, all of whom have greater personal wealth, deeper political connections or both.



Alyson Kennedy of the Socialist Workers Party was on

SWP campaign on front page of Dallas Morning News metro section, lead on website Jan. 16.

face there, or workers here,” she said. “They aim to defend the ability of the bosses to get cheaper labor and divide and attack all workers, not just those who come from other countries.”

Ayantu Aga, a young lab technician in Dallas, was also glad Socialist Workers Party campaigners had come to her door. Hilda Cuzco explained to Aga that the U.S. is ruled by a handful of wealthy capitalist families, and workers will need to make a socialist revolution in this country to prioritize the needs of the vast majority of the toiling population. “Yes, I believe that’s true,” Aga said, adding that “rich people run things in Ethiopia,

where my family comes from, too.” She bought a copy of the new book *In Defense of the US Working Class*, along with a *Militant* subscription.

During the first three days of campaigning in Texas, socialist campaigners have sold 25 books by leaders of the Socialist Workers Party, drawing the lessons from working-class struggles for today’s generations of fighters. Another 11 people bought subscriptions to the *Militant* and over 100 signed petitions to get Kennedy’s name on the ballot.

Further information about the campaign and how you can help is available by writing to dallasswpcampaign@gmail.com.

officials are now proposing to fund a librarian for every secondary school, an extra academic counselor for high schools and a full-time nurse for every elementary school. But they only guarantee it for one year, which union officials say won’t work.

School officials claim the district will be bankrupt if it meets the teachers’ demands, regardless of how “worthy” they are. The union answers by showing the district is sitting on a \$1.86 billion reserve.

“Class sizes have gone up a lot. Everyone thinks it’s the pay increase. That has a lot to do with it, but class size is the main thing,” Kevin Alfaro, a social studies teacher at Kennedy High School in Granada Hills, told the *Los Angeles Times*. His four advanced placement government classes have 40 or more students each.

While class sizes are also her number one concern, Marshall High physical education teacher Lin Joy Hom told the *Times* that she also wants every school to have a full-time nurse.

“I can’t tell a kid, ‘Don’t get hurt on Tuesday because there’s no nurse,’” she said. “We need a nurse every single day.”

The district has hired about 400 substitutes and reorganized 2,000 district staff to cross the picket lines and keep schools open during the strike.

Some strikers and supporters have taken initiatives to strengthen the walkout. Joel Laguna, a sixth grade history teacher at Thomas Starr King Middle School in the Silver Lake neighborhood, told NPR that 80 to 90

percent of Los Angeles students get free or reduced cost lunches.

“A lot of parents from the richer neighborhoods can keep their kids at home. They can hire babysitters,” he said. “On the other end, we have parents who work two, three jobs, right?” Not being able to get child care or the school-provided meals is “a serious challenge,” he said.

Laguna is working with other teachers at his school to make sure students can get food during the strike. When they are not on the picket line, “we’re going to be making bag lunches” students can pick up every day at the picket line, he said.

For ongoing information and to find out about strike support activities, contact [www.wearepublicschools.org](http://www.wearepublicschools.org).

## Campaign with the Socialist Workers Party candidates!

### California

Dennis Richter, Los Angeles City Council  
Laura Garza, Los Angeles School Board

### 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 8 to contact party campaign office nearest you.

# ‘In US, unlike Cuba, farmers can lose their land’

New book discusses how US working people are fighting back against bosses’ anti-labor offensive

*In Defense of the US Working Class*, a new book by Mary-Alice Waters, is now off the presses.

It features the talk by Waters at an April 24-26, 2018, international conference in Havana organized by the Cuban History Institute and the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC), the country’s union federation.

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 U.S. class struggle titled, “From Clinton to Trump: How US working people are responding to the anti-labor offensive of the bosses, their parties and their government.”

The panelists, leaders and supporters of the Socialist Workers Party with years of experience in industry and trade unions as well as on the land, explained how workers have fought back against the 40-year offensive by the employers and their government, Pathfinder editor Martin Koppel says in the book’s preface. “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 summaries of those remarks, as well as short biographies of the panelists. Last week the *Militant* printed those of Alyson Kennedy and Omari Musa. This week we feature the panel presentations by Willie Head and Jacob Perasso.

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**WILLIE HEAD.** Willie is a longtime family farmer from south Georgia, a veteran of the century and a half of battles by farmers who are Black to keep their land. For twelve years he served as vice-president of the People’s Tribunal in Valdosta, Georgia, a community organization that fought to bring to justice a policeman who beat to death a prisoner in custody whose hands were tied behind his back. Like most small farmers in the

US, throughout his life Willie has worked many nonfarm jobs, union and nonunion, to pay the bills and keep farming.

Head described the police violence and killings of African Americans in the rural South and the work of the Valdosta People’s Tribunal, which he called his “first frontline fight with the US court system.”

A century ago African American farmers owned more than 16 million acres of land in the US, he noted. Today that figure stands at 2.5 million acres. Head detailed the long court battle, begun in 1992, by more than twenty-five thousand farmers who are Black against the discrimination they face from banks, courts, and the federal government’s Department of Agriculture. All these forces bring pressure to bear on farmers who are Black to give up and sell their land. He described how a court ruling not only left farmers like himself who had “won” worse off than before, but also made them ineligible for any



Willie Head

Department of Agriculture loans or assistance.

Head described the kinds of jobs he had worked to survive, including one that involved a daily drive of a hundred eighty miles round trip to northern Florida, returning each night to take care of his livestock and crops. “Yes, in the United States, unlike Cuba, farmers can lose their land,” he told conference participants. “Drawing from the Cuban people and this revolution has impacted me greatly.”

**JACOB PERASSO.** Jacob is a freight rail conductor and member of the SMART-TD union in one of the largest rail yards in the Northeast. He is a leader of the work of the Young Socialists in the US and internationally. He previously worked, among other jobs, in meatpacking plants in the Midwest, where he was involved in a number of union-organizing fights.

Perasso detailed the increasingly



Spouses and Families Against One Man Crews down to one worker. Bosses seek to increase profits by attacks on workers, farmers and their conditions.

dangerous conditions in the rail industry, as bosses reduce crew sizes, extend workdays up to twelve hours, scrimp on training, and demand that workers cut corners on safety. He pointed to the 2013 train derailment in the small town of Lac Mégantic, Quebec, just north of the US-Canada border, where a train loaded with highly flammable petroleum cargo exploded, killing forty-seven people. Especially significant was the refusal of a jury of local residents to convict the two workers the rail company tried to blame for the accident. As evidence of bosses’ disregard for safety came out, townspeople had no doubt who was responsible.

Perasso described the system of bonuses, wage differentials, and other incentives the employers use to divide the workforce and get some workers to even help promote increasingly dangerous conditions on the job. Despite such pressures, freight rail workers voted down a contract in 2014 that would have allowed the bosses to begin running one-person train crews. That slowed but didn’t stop the owners’ offensive.

He pointed to the necessity to transform the unions in the course

of struggles through which workers come to increasingly realize their own collective strength. “On the job we seek to explain the history that has brought the labor movement to where it is today,” Perasso said. “We explain the need to stop looking to the capitalist owners, their parties, their government, and their state. We need to chart a political course — a course of struggle — independent of them, defending the interests of the entire working class.”



Jacob Perasso

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“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 “deplorable” 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.



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

# Sankara: 'The future demands that women be liberated'

The excerpt below is from *Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle* by Thomas Sankara, one of *Pathfinder's Books of the Month* for January. Sankara led an uprising in 1983 to establish a popular revolutionary government in Burkina Faso, in West Africa. He had been won to communism and was inspired by the Cuban Revolution. Workers, peasants and youth were mobilized to carry out deep-going social measures in one of the poorest countries in the world, as well as to extend international solidarity. In 1987, Sankara was assassinated in a counterrevolutionary coup. Copyright © 1990 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Militant photos: Above, Marla Puziss; inset, Ernest Harsch. Committees for Defense of Revolution meet August 1985 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, above. After 1983 revolution working people, including women, built mass organizations to participate in running their country. Thomas Sankara speaks on International Women's Day, March 8, 1987, inset.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY THOMAS SANKARA

We undoubtedly owe a debt to dialectical materialism for having shed the greatest light on the problem of the conditions women face, allowing us to understand the exploitation of women as part of a general system of exploitation. Dialectical materialism defines human society not as a natural, unchanging fact, but as the exact opposite.

Humankind does not submit passively to the power of nature. It takes control over this power. This process is not an internal or subjective one. It takes place objectively in practice, once women

cease to be viewed as mere sexual beings, once we look beyond their biological functions and become conscious of their weight as an active social force. What's more, woman's consciousness of herself is not only a product of her sexuality. It reflects her position as determined by the economic structure of society, which in turn expresses the level reached by humankind in technological development and the relations between classes.

The importance of dialectical materialism lies in going beyond the inherent limits of biology, rejecting simplistic theories about our being slaves to the nature of our species, and, instead, placing facts in their social and economic context.

From the beginning of human history, man's mastering of nature has never been accomplished with his bare hands alone. The hand with the opposable thumb is extended by the tool, which increases the hand's power. It was thus not physical attributes alone — musculature or the capacity to give birth, for example — that determined the unequal status of men and women. Nor was it technological progress as such that institutionalized this inequality. In certain cases, in certain parts of the globe, women were able to eliminate the physical difference that separated them from men.

It was the transition from one form of society to another that served to institutionalize women's inequality. This inequality was produced by our own minds and intelligence in order to develop a concrete form of domination and exploitation. The social functions and roles to which women have been relegated ever since are a living reflection of this fact. Today, her childbearing functions and the social obligation to conform to models of elegance determined by men prevent any woman who might want to from developing a so-called male musculature.

For millennia, from the Paleolithic to the Bronze Age, relations between the sexes were, in the opinion of the most skilled paleontologists, positive and complementary in character. So it was for eight millennia. Relations were based on collaboration and interaction, in contrast to the patriarchy, where women's exclusion is a generalized characteristic of the modern historical era.

Frederick Engels not only traced the evolution of technology but also of the historic enslavement of women, which was born with the arrival of private property, owing to the transition from one mode of production to another, and from one form of social organization to another. ...

Humankind first knew slavery with

the advent of private property. Man, master of his slaves and of the land, also became the owner of the woman. This was the great historic defeat of the female sex. It came about with the upheaval in the division of labor, a result of new modes of production and a revolution in the means of production.

In this way, paternal right replaced maternal right. Property was now handed down from father to son, rather than as before from the woman to her clan. The patriarchal family made its appearance, founded on the sole and personal property of the father, who had become head of the family. Within this family the woman was oppressed. ...

Thus, throughout the ages and throughout different types of society, women suffered a sorry fate, in a continually reinforced position of inferiority to men. Though the inequality was expressed in many and varied ways, it continued to exist nevertheless.

In slave society, the male slave was looked upon as an animal, a means of production of goods and services. The woman, whatever her social rank, was crushed within her own class and outside of that class. This was the case even for women who belonged to the exploiting classes. In feudal society, women were kept in a state of absolute dependence on men, justified by their supposed physical and psychological weakness. Often seen as a defiled object and a primary agent of indiscretion, women, with a few rare exceptions, were kept out of places of worship. In capitalist society, the woman, already morally and socially persecuted, is also subjugated economically. Kept by the man if she does not work, she remains under a man's domination even when she works herself to death. We will never be able to paint an adequate picture of the misery women suffer, nor show too strongly that women share the misery of proletarians as a whole. ...

Comrades, the future demands that women be liberated, and the future, everywhere, brings revolutions. If we lose the fight to liberate women we will have lost all right to hope for a positive and superior transformation of our society. Our revolution will then no longer have any meaning. It is to wage this noble struggle that all of us, men and women, are summoned.

*January* **BOOKS OF THE MONTH**

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# Support Los Angeles teachers strike!

The following statement was issued Jan. 16 by Socialist Workers Party candidates Dennis Richter for City Council District 12 and Laura Garza for School Board in Los Angeles.

The strike by 31,000 teachers in Los Angeles is a battle being waged on behalf of all working people. The Socialist Workers Party will help get the truth out about this fight and urges much-needed solidarity with the union's struggle.

Join this union battle! Get to the picket lines and strike rallies, stand together with the teachers. Get messages of support from your co-workers and unions. Contribute to the strike fund.

The teachers are fighting to change deteriorating conditions that are familiar to millions around the country — oversized classes, few supplies, no libraries, cut-down gym and art programs, along with no full-time nurses or counselors. These conditions epitomize the class-based “education” system the capitalist rulers think workers deserve.

“In the US today, under capitalism, the only future we can count on is one in which education will worsen — in which education will fuel rather than retard social differentiation,” Jack Barnes, Socialist Workers Party national secretary, explains in *Are They Rich*

*Because They're Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism.* “There will only be ‘education’ to squelch curiosity and creativity among the vast majority of youth, and to encourage escapism.”

The ruling rich are only interested in a learning system that inculcates discipline and rewards following orders. They have no interest in a working class that learns how to think, gains appreciation for culture and has a thirst for lifelong learning.

Fights by teachers are part of broader struggles of working people to take on the attacks on our wages and working conditions by the bosses and their government today. They aim to make us pay for the deep crisis of their capitalist system.

Organizing solidarity for all those who fight against the exploitation and attacks of the bosses and their government helps us learn who we really are and to start on conquering the road to our emancipation.

The rulers and those in the upper reaches of the middle class who run the government have their own school system. The purpose of their education is to give “the educated” a stake in thinking they're different, better than those who work all their lives. They learn the confidence to keep working people in line, constantly reminding us we are “deplorables,” as Hillary Clinton called us.

The ruling capitalist class doesn't need workers to be educated. That's why funding for schools, including the hiring of more teachers and other needed school personnel, is low on their priorities.

There is an alternative — the living example of the Cuban Revolution shows what is possible. Workers and farmers, with class values and priorities opposite to those taught by the dog-eat-dog capitalist system, took political power in 1959 and began using it to mobilize the toiling majority to meet their needs. In 1961 their revolutionary government organized some 100,000 young volunteers in literacy brigades to wipe out widespread illiteracy in a single year. This opened the door to widen access to culture and political life for working people, a step that was crucial for strengthening the revolution.

One educational step you can take this spring is to sign up for the May Day brigade to visit Cuba and meet and talk with workers, farmers and others there to learn about the revolution and how it has transformed their country and their lives.

“Explaining the communist approach to learning is part of preparing the working class for the greatest of all battles in the years ahead,” SWP leader Jack Barnes wrote, “the battle to throw off the self-image the rulers teach us, and to recognize that we are capable of taking power and organizing society.”



Militant/Bill Arth

Dennis Richter, SWP candidate for Los Angeles City Council District 12, joins picket line of California Cartage workers who are fighting for a union, Nov. 5, 2018.

## LETTERS

### Homelessness is ‘deplorable’

I really appreciated the article on homeless people in the Jan. 21 issue. I work part time with homeless folks in a day shelter. Several have jobs in fast food or as cooks, yet cannot afford a place to live. Some work on resumes that include skills in health care; some have college degrees. Some deal with addictions or have medical and mental health issues for which they have little access to remedy. Most regularly look for work. They encounter transportation issues that restrict their ability to take jobs.

The day shelter is only open from 8 a.m. to noon. With temperatures in the 20s and snow on the way, they wonder where to go until the overnight emergency shelter opens at 4 p.m. Many find respite in the public library, but it is not open on Sundays. It is a daily struggle to maintain dignity and a sense of self-respect, but for the most part they succeed.

These conditions are what is really “deplorable” in this country. Only in a socialist society such as Cuba will we see an end to this.

Barbara Greenway  
Millsboro, Delaware

### Snatching Native's babies

On Jan. 11, social workers and police descended on a hospital in Winnipeg in Manitoba province in Canada and snatched the newborn baby from the arms of a Native woman on the false charge that the woman was intoxicated when she arrived. Family members posted videos of the incident on Facebook. The *Toronto Globe and Mail*

reports that such “newborn apprehensions” occur on average once a day in the province, 90 percent involving Native people.

A week before, the Saskatchewan provincial government felt the need to issue an “apology” to survivors of the “Sixties Scoop” in which about 20,000 Native children, from the 1950s into the 1980s, were seized from their families and placed in non-Native foster homes with the aim of erasing their language, culture and family ties.

These events are not exceptions but reflect the oppression of Native people in Canada.

Al Cappe  
Montreal, Quebec

### ‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

The fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. Send a check or money order payable to the Militant, earmarked “Prisoners’ Fund” to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018. Or donate online at [www.themilitant.com](http://www.themilitant.com)

**The letters column is open forum for all viewpoints of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.**

# Fight for amnesty!

Continued from front page  
keep on working with no pay.

Working people have no interest in backing either side of this skirmish over the rulers’ need for cheap labor. Our focus should be fighting for amnesty for all those in the U.S. without papers the government considers “proper.” That is the road to unifying the working class, organizing workers into unions and fighting against the attacks of the bosses and their government.

And workers do have an interest in defending the rights of those from abroad who seek to apply for refugee status here because of fear of violence or persecution.

But calls by a layer of liberals and middle-class radicals to “open the borders” are nothing but utopian posturing meant to score points against their opponents in bourgeois politics, like Trump, but aren't intended to be implemented.

The Trump administration favors stronger controls on immigration and has been demanding Congress fund a bigger wall along the Mexican border to lower the number of people who come across without being processed. The Democrats shed crocodile tears for immigrants and use their majority in the House of Representatives to join in keeping the shutdown in effect.

The fact of the matter is that some of the most stringent restrictions on immigration were enacted under the Democrats. In 1996 then President William Clinton signed the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act. It expanded the powers of the immigration cops to round up and deport those charged with being “illegal” and authorized construction of the border wall. The hated la migra was built up, becoming the largest federal cop agency. Deportations rose to an all-time high in Clinton's last year in office.

Factory raids exploded under George W. Bush, but were brought to a halt after millions of immigrant workers went on strike and protested on May 1, 2006.

The first parts of a border wall were built near San Diego in 2000, under Clinton. It was expanded under George W. Bush and again under Barack Obama, covering more than 650 miles. “We have gone above and beyond what was requested,” Obama bragged in 2011. His efforts were backed 100 percent by the current Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi.

Obama dramatically expanded the “forced removals” of immigrants, which steeply increased the penalties of “illegal re-entry” into the U.S. And during his presidency the number of felony prosecutions on this charge averaged over 35,000 every year.

### The government ‘shutdown’

Millions of workers wouldn't miss the rulers' cops and jailers as well as the legions of federal regulators who cover everything workers have to apply for with red tape if much of the federal government shuts down forever. But that isn't going to happen.

Such shutdowns are carefully selective. They come into play when tactical divisions between the ruling parties allow federal budget allocations to run out with no new ones in place.

Exempt are all the repressive bodies of capitalist rule — the army, National Guard, border police, federal prison guards and the like. The boss class won't let these pillars of their rule lapse for even a minute.

Some federal mandates continue, including Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. But no one who becomes eligible can register for these programs.

What “shuts down” are many agencies and jobs that make payments to workers and others who need welfare benefits, food stamps, disaster relief and similar programs. Farmers can no longer get federal loans.

So far roughly 380,000 of the 2.1 million federal employees have been furloughed, and another 420,000 have been told to report to work but they won't get paid.

Democrats and Republicans blame each other for the shutdown, but they're both responsible. It's another example of the rulers' disdain for the crises working people face today.