

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
**Cuban and Algerian revolutions:
 an intertwined history**
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 83/NO. 8 FEBRUARY 25, 2019

Rally protests attacks on abortion rights in Kentucky

BY JACQUIE HENDERSON

FRANKFORT, Ky. — More than 100 protesters gathered at the state Capitol here Feb. 7 to demonstrate in defense of a woman's right to choose abortion.

They were speaking out in opposition to a bill in the state legislature that would ban abortions from the moment a fetal heartbeat is detected, usually around six weeks into a pregnancy, as well as against other moves by the state government to further limit women's access to abortion.

The action was called by Planned Parenthood Advocates of Indiana and Kentucky, together with the American Civil Liberties Union of Kentucky.

"Abortion is not something a woman takes lightly. But this is my right as a woman. I get to decide!" Louisville poet and writer Hannah Drake told the crowd. "My womb, my choice, my reasons — I will not go back. This is about reproductive freedom and we will not go back."

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'Amnesty for immigrants in US, unify the working class' SWP takes campaign to workers' doorsteps



Militant photos: Top, George Chalmers; inset, Ned Measel
 Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Dallas mayor, speaks at Feb. 12 candidates' debate, campaigns at workers' doors throughout area.

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Dallas, turned in over 700 signatures and was told Feb. 7 that she was on the ballot.

Her supporters are taking advantage of this victory to reach more broadly,

knocking on doors in working-class neighborhoods in cities and small towns in the region. Some of those who've met Kennedy have joined on campaigning trips to help spread the word about the party's program.

After supporters of Kennedy's campaign went door to door to talk

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US troops, warplanes, bombs out of Korea now!

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un announced they've set Feb. 27-28 in Hanoi, Vietnam, for their second face-to-face summit meeting on denuclearization of Korea. Teams of U.S. and North Korean negotiators have been meeting to prepare the talks.

Stephen Biegun, the State Department's special representative for North Korea, returned to South Korea Feb. 8 after three days of discussions in Pyongyang. This was the longest disclosed visit by a U.S. government figure to North Korea since Trump took office. Trump and Kim's first summit took place in Singapore last June.

For more than 70 years the U.S. rulers have kept their boot on the neck of the Korean people. In 1945 Washington — with the complicity of the Stalinist regime in Moscow — divided Korea in half. U.S. troops occupied the South. They put down in blood a powerful revolutionary upsurge by workers and farmers and imposed the

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Baghdad book fair organizers: 'We won't be stopped by terror'



Thousands flocked to International Book Fair in Baghdad in February. At left is photo of Alaa Mashzoub, well-known Iraqi novelist who was murdered just days before start of book fair.

BY ÖGMUNDUR JÓNSSON

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Thousands of people here are flocking to the 46th Baghdad International Book Fair, which began Feb. 7, seeking out Iraqi and world literature, and books on everything from science and technology, languages and art, to religion, history, philosophy and politics. For years book fair organizers have fought to maintain the event in face of political repression, regional conflicts

and U.S. imperialist intervention.

These clashes include the 1980-88 war against neighboring Iran launched by Iraq's tyrannical Saddam Hussein regime, with the combined aims of crushing the 1979 revolution by Iranian workers, farmers, and youth, as well as occupying and annexing rich oil fields and strategic waterways and port facilities there. The war coincided with murder-

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Trump 'State of Union' talk touts jobs, hits 'endless war,' 'socialists'

BY TERRY EVANS

President Donald Trump scored gains against his opponents in both the Democratic and Republican parties with his Feb. 5 State of the Union

New York forum discusses political crisis in Venezuela, says US hands off!

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK — "There is a deep crisis in Venezuela today. Washington — from President Trump to the Democratic and Republican Party Congress — is trying to take advantage of it to oust the government of a sovereign nation," Socialist Workers Party leader Paul Mailhot told a Feb. 9 Militant Labor Forum here. It was titled, "Crisis in Venezuela: What way forward for working people?"

"Nothing good can come for working people out of what the U.S. government is doing in Venezuela. We must demand that Washington keep its hands off," said Mailhot.

But there is much more involved than

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address, touting the successes of his administration in both foreign and economic policy. In particular he aimed to skewer the Democrat's new, more prominent "socialist" wing.

"Great nations do not fight endless wars," he said. He pointed to plans to remove U.S. troops from Syria and reduce them in Afghanistan — despite the recent censure of these moves by a 68-23 bipartisan vote in the Republican-controlled Senate. Mitch McCon-

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—On the picket line, p. 8—

Chicago charter school teachers strike over pay, conditions

Junior doctors strike over work schedules in New Zealand

US troops out of Korea!

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brutal dictatorship of Syngman Rhee there.

After significant defeats at the hands of North Korean forces at the outset of the Korean War in 1950, U.S.-led forces drove toward the northern border with China. Massive U.S. bombing and widespread napalm attacks destroyed much of the country. But Korean workers and peasants, aided by Chinese volunteers, pushed U.S. forces back to the 38th parallel, leading to a stalemate in 1953. It was the first ever military defeat for U.S. imperialism. Washington and Pyongyang signed an armistice, but the U.S. government refused to sign a peace treaty ending the war, and has continued to do so ever since.

'For nuclear-free Korean Peninsula!'

"Working people should take the opportunity of this coming round of negotiations to press the U.S. rulers to sign a peace treaty and reach agreement with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on a Korea free of all nuclear weapons, of any origin, and take all practical steps to that end," Seth Galinsky, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Public Advocate in New York City, said in a statement Feb. 11.

"A world free of all nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction opens more favorable conditions for workers and farmers everywhere to combat the carnage produced by the capitalists' system of exploitation and oppression," Galinsky said. "For a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula! End all economic sanctions against the Korean people! Sign a peace treaty with the DPRK now!"

Even while the negotiations con-

tinue, Washington has maintained its punishing economic and financial sanctions against the North, sanctions that hit working people the hardest. Washington has insisted it will continue these sanctions until North Korean leaders destroy all their nuclear weapons and intercontinental ballistic missile capacity.

But Biegun told a select audience of Korea "experts" at a Stanford University talk before he left for Korea that while the U.S. government statement that "we will not lift sanctions until denuclearization is complete" is correct, "we didn't say we won't do anything until you do everything."

"President Trump is ready to end this war. It is over," Biegun said. "We are not going to invade North Korea. We are not seeking to topple the North Korean regime."

Biegun noted that Kim announced to the people of North Korea that he has decided to come to an agreement with Washington.

The talks and insistence by both Trump and Kim that they will reach



Reuters/Kim Hong-Ji

Woman reads ribbons urging peace and reunification of North and South Korea at Demilitarized Zone, May 24, 2018. President Trump and North Korean leader Kim are set to meet Feb. 27.

a denuclearization agreement have spurred a number of steps forward for working people on the peninsula. Meetings of family members separated by the two countries for decades have taken place. Discussions have begun between leaders in the North and South over joint rail projects to boost trade and travel. DPRK leaders have

taken steps to return to the U.S. the remains of soldiers offered up as cannon fodder by Washington during their bloody assault on Korea.

These steps have boosted renewal of sentiment for reunification of the country.

"Korea is one!" Galinsky said in his statement.

Readers help 'Militant' zero in on \$10,000 appeal

BY TERRY EVANS

"Keep up the good work!" George Blue from Michigan City, Indiana, wrote when he sent in a check for \$25 to the *Militant's* special winter appeal. "I first started reading the *Militant* in 1970 when I was in prison — in the belly of the beast," he said.

With \$8,132 collected and further contributions pledged, the paper looks forward to going over its \$10,000 appeal. This will help cover the *Mili-*

tant's operating expenses through the launching of its annual Militant Fighting Fund in the spring.

"Happy to help out," wrote Dan Coffman, a retired longshoreman from Washington state, when he sent in \$25. Coffman was president of Local 21 of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union during its hard-fought 2011 strike against EGT's union-busting effort in Longview.

"It's so important to get the truth out — First and Second amendment rights are under attack today," he said. The *Militant* explains why liberals' attacks on freedom of speech and the right to bear arms are a threat to rights the working class needs.

The appeal's success will make it possible for the *Militant* to continue providing readers with articles like the special features in this issue from Cuba and Iraq. The issue also contains material on how fighting toilers in Algeria overthrew French colonial rule in 1962 and established a workers and farmers government there,

opening the door to collaboration with the Cuban Revolution in extending solidarity and aid to fighters across Africa. Algeria is the country of honor at this year's Havana International Book Fair.

The on-the-scene article by Ogmundur Jonsson depicts the efforts to keep the Baghdad International Book Fair running in the face of wars, political repression and violent conflicts in Iraq over years. And it describes how thousands came to the book fair there this year to get their hands on a wide range of books. Volunteers at the Pathfinder Books stand found great interest in titles by Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, Thomas Sankara, leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and other revolutionaries.

There is still time to kick in to the appeal this week. You can use your credit card to contribute online at www.themilitant.com or send a check to the *Militant* at 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018. Help take us over the top!

THE MILITANT

Protest inhumane conditions in federal jails

Protesters mobilized at a federal jail in Brooklyn to protest inhuman conditions, forcing authorities to fix heat and hot water. The 'Militant' explains why all workers have a stake in the struggle of fellow workers behind bars against the indignities of the capitalist "justice" system.



Brklyner
Prisoners' families protest conditions at federal detention center in Brooklyn Feb. 2.

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The Militant

Vol. 83/No. 8

Closing news date: February 13, 2019

Editor: John Studer

Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Terry Evans, Seth Galinsky, Emma Johnson, Martin Koppel, Jacob Perasso, Brian Williams.

Published weekly except for one week in January, one week in June, one week in July, one week in September.

The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

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Website: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

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

'Amnesty for all immigants!'

Continued from front page

with workers they stopped at a Chili's restaurant in Dallas to get something to eat. They met Devion Linthecome-Darden, who works there as a waiter. Since the restaurant was slow, he joined their political discussion and decided to get involved in the campaign. He's since gone door-to-door campaigning for Kennedy in Dallas.

"I joined the campaign," he told SWP Dallas campaign manager George Chalmers, "because I feel like capitalism affects most people negatively, and the ones who benefit from it either don't care or they actively want to affect people negatively to benefit themselves more."

"This is a fundamental issue that needs to be addressed," he said.

He bought all six books advertised below, including the new book *In Defense of the US Working Class* by Socialist Workers Party leader Mary-Alice Waters. And he subscribed to the *Militant*.

Mathias Vazquez, a retail co-worker of one of the SWP campaigners, also volunteered to join the door-to-door campaigning and accompanied Kennedy to a recent candidates forum. Before moving to Dallas he was a veteran of the peasants' fight for land in Mexico.

Joseph, a young electrician, emailed Kennedy after he read an article about the SWP campaign in the *Dallas Morning News*. He had coffee with Kennedy and her campaign manager, subscribed to the *Militant* and bought *In Defense of the US Working Class* and *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes. He joined a door to door campaign team in northwest Dallas, and met a house cleaner attracted to the politics of the SWP campaign who decided to get a copy of *In Defense of the US Working Class*.

After campaigning, Joseph got two more books — *The Clintons' Anti-*

Working-Class Record; and *Are they Rich Because They're Smart?*

Kennedy, the only working-class candidate, debated Feb. 12 with veterans of the Dallas capitalist establishment who make up the rest of the mayoral candidates. Some 200 people attended the panel event at the Texas Theatre, sponsored by the League of United Latin American Citizens — one of the oldest and largest Latino organizations in the United States — and ECO Latino Radio.

Debate with capitalist opponents

When they were asked what each had to say about immigration, Kennedy replied that her campaign was fighting for amnesty for all those in the U.S. without papers the authorities consider sufficient. Amnesty is in the interests of the whole working class, she said, and would help workers build unity and solidarity to fight against attacks from the bosses and their government. It's a fight working people can win, she said.

Kennedy pointed to how millions of workers, mainly Mexicans but many others, went into the streets in 2006 and defeated the Sensenbrenner bill. The bill would have made it a crime for anyone to assist someone without papers. "In Dallas, half a million people demonstrated on May Day that year," she said.

The SWP candidate called for the conviction and jailing of Amber Guyger, the Dallas cop who killed Botham Jean last September in his apartment. "We have to keep protesting on this," she said to applause.

Sitting alongside several candidates who represent real estate or related business interests, Kennedy described how she meets workers while campaigning door to door. Many said that "as property taxes got too high, they were forced to sell out." And then, "real estate brokers moved in to build luxury apartments and houses and made a killing." As a Walmart worker getting \$11 an hour, Kennedy explained why a lot of people can't survive except by working two or three jobs. The SWP is part of the fight for at least a \$15 minimum wage, and more.

Kennedy said there was an alternative to the deprivations imposed on working people by the crisis of capitalism, and explained how workers and farmers in Cuba rose up and took political power into their own hands in 1959, making a socialist revolution that stands tall today. She invited people to join the May



Militant/Maggie Trowe

Seth Galinsky, SWP candidate for New York City Public Advocate, talks with restaurant worker Jason Bryant at his home in Cobleskill, New York, Feb. 2. Introducing the party to working people on their doorsteps and discussing how to defend working class is central activity of party.

Day International Volunteer Work Brigade to Cuba that runs from April 21 to May 5 to see the Cuban Revolution for themselves. After the meeting, four young African-Americans came up to meet her, saying, "Miss Kennedy, that was great!" Three of them have signed up for more information about going on the May Day brigade.

Linthecome-Darden, who SWP campaigners had met at Chili's earlier, also came to the debate to help with the campaign table there, displaying a range of books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries. He said that both he and his roommate, who works at the same restaurant, are interested in going on the May Day brigade.

She 'wants to start a revolution'

"Dallas Mayoral Candidate Alyson Kennedy Wants to Start the Revolution" was the headline of an interview published in the "Frontburner" column in the online and print publication, *D Magazine*.

Interviewer Shawn Shinneman explained Kennedy had also been the SWP's 2016 presidential candidate and in 2019 the party is "arranging

for candidates to run on its platform in 10 states."

"We live in a class-divided society," Kennedy told the magazine, "an economic system, capitalism," that doesn't meet "the needs of the vast majority and never will meet the needs of the vast majority because it's a system that's based on making profits for a tiny minority. Our party is part of the fights by working people and has been for many years.

"We have confidence that in the coming years we're going to see bigger struggles by workers and farmers for our rights and to change our conditions," she continued. "We will build the kind of movement in this country that will take political power for our side, and reorganize and build a new kind of society. A society that's capable of meeting the needs of the vast majority."

The full interview can be viewed at: <https://www.prestonhollowpeople.com/2019/02/07/former-presidential-candidate-runs-for-dallas-mayor/>.

If you'd like to find out more about the SWP or get involved in the campaign, contact the party branch nearest you listed on page 5.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

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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 "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.

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Protest backs abortion rights

Continued from front page

Kate Miller, advocacy director for the Kentucky ACLU, told participants that there are several bills in the legislature that would restrict abortion rights. “These people who claim they want to protect human lives express no concern for the fact that the U.S. has the highest rate of maternal deaths in the developed world,” she said, “and that Black women die at double that rate.”

“I’m tired of being talked about like my only purpose on earth is as a vessel to reproduce,” Nichole Stipp from Planned Parenthood said. “If you’ve had enough, get out and change it. Go home and tell your story.”

Many of those at the protests shared experiences and exchanged ideas on how to fight to win the fundamental right of women to control their own bodies. Among them were Amy Husk, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of Kentucky, and a number of her campaign supporters.

How can we win?

Husk introduced herself to Annie Prestrud, an activist with the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice and the Kentucky Health Justice Network, who said she became radicalized as a teenager around the question of women’s right to choose abortion. “Abortion is really a question of health care just like any other medical procedure,” she said. Husk agreed, saying it’s a fight in the interests of the entire working class.

“Workers are facing worse and worse conditions today and we need to organize to fight against what the bosses and their government are doing to us, but we can’t do it if we’re divided,” Husk said. “The fight for women’s right to abortion is part of the fight to unify the working class.”

“Yes, capitalism isn’t working,” Prestrud said. She got a copy of *In Defense of the US Working Class* by SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters and said she wanted to hear more about the SWP campaign.

This reporter met Tracy Gregoire, a nurse who works in labor and delivery, and we discussed how to fight for abortion rights. “In too many places we have to appeal to ‘experts’ to say if you are ‘qualified’ to have an abor-

tion,” she said.

“Some of the challenge we face lies in weaknesses in the Supreme Court’s *Roe v. Wade* decision itself,” I said. “It doesn’t rest on fundamental constitutional rights of the woman, but on a doctor’s agreement and with restrictions based on the science at the time, which opened the door to anti-women’s-rights forces pushing back.

“Our right to abortion comes from the 14th Amendment to the Constitution, won out of the mighty second American Revolution in the war to abolish slavery,” I said. “That amendment made government interference with the rights of anyone in this country illegal, and guaranteed equal protection of the law to all. That should make it illegal for any government to interfere with the personal decisions of a woman.”

Upon meeting Husk, Gregoire said that she was concerned about those who support the legislators’ attacks on abortion rights because they personally don’t like the idea of abortion.

“When we knock on the door of workers who say they are personally opposed to abortion, we explain that



Militant/Ruth Harris

Amy Husk, SWP candidate for Kentucky governor, left, and supporter Jacquie Henderson, right, talk with Planned Parenthood interns Ruby Lestrange, center, and Kerrigan Young at Feb. 7 protest in Frankfort against government attacks on women’s right to choose abortion.

the point isn’t what you or I think about it, or whether we would ever have one. It’s that doctors and the government shouldn’t have the right to tell women what to do with their

bodies,” Husk said. “When they think about the fact that the government shouldn’t interfere with anyone’s personal choices, many are won over to support this right.”

Capitalist crisis blocks ‘affordable family formation’

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The capitalist economic crisis is increasingly dashing the hopes of many working people, and some among middle-class layers, that their children’s lives will be an improvement over their own. Low wages, mounting debts, and rising rents and housing prices have made forming one’s own family unaffordable for more and more working-class youth.

Under the ravages of dog-eat-dog capitalism, our families, whatever their problems, are ultimately the only institution that working people can turn to for help in dealing with health and housing crises. Today the number of young adults still living in their parents’ homes is the highest in 75 years. Fully a third of all young people — 24 million of those aged 18 to 34 — lived with their parents in 2015. More youth lived with their parents than with a spouse in 2016, the U.S. Census Bureau reports.

In a number of states the figures are higher. In Mississippi it’s 37 percent; Massachusetts, 38 percent; California and Florida, 39 percent; New York, 40 percent; and almost half in New Jersey, 46 percent.

In 2005, the majority of young adults in 35 states lived independently, in their own place. A decade later the number of states where the majority of young people lived on their own had fallen to just six.

One big factor affecting this is workers’ declining income. In 1975, one-quarter of young men had incomes below \$30,000 a year, measured in 2015 dollars. By 2016, the figure was 41 percent.

At the same time, student debt has ballooned. Between 1989 and 2013, the amount owed on student loans nearly tripled, from a median of \$6,000 to \$17,300. This has spurred many graduates to move back with their parents, putting off plans for marriage or raising children.

“In the 1970s, 8 in 10 people married by the time they turned 30,” the Census report said. “Today, not until the age of 45 have 8 in 10 people married.”

The U.S. birthrate hit a record low in

2017, marking years of steady decline. In fact, current childbirth statistics are 16 percent below the number needed for the U.S. population to stay even as older generations die out. The only thing that keeps the U.S. population growing is immigration.

The carnage being visited on young people by the crisis of capitalism today is having a big impact on their “choices” about how to live. There are more young adults today who live with their parents, other family members, are packed in with roommates, or live alone, the Census report said. “Over the past 40 years the proportion of young people who were living with a spouse fell by half, from 57 percent to 27 percent.”

‘Unaffordable family formation’

Large tech companies like Amazon are notorious for hiring new college graduates at crappy wages and pushing them to get places in gaggles. Describing how this leads to what he calls “unaffordable family formation,” Steve Sailer says in an *Unz Review* blog, “It helps them squeeze more out of workers: The firms like being in places too expensive to raise a family — families are distractions, at least in the short-run.”

And this process lets always greedy

landlords push rents in these areas up and up, forcing workers looking to raise a family to either give up their plans or move away.

So young people in their late 20s to early 30s employed at the company’s headquarters in Seattle end up living with gangs of roommates who face the same squeeze instead of forming a family and settling down.

The same situation will play out in Queens, New York, and Crystal City, Virginia, if Amazon moves forward with new satellite headquarters there.

For decades workers moved to big U.S. cities for jobs where they would earn more money than in rural areas, in steel plants in Chicago, shipbuilding yards in Oakland, oil refineries in Houston and auto assembly plants in Detroit. But this is no longer true. The bosses have attacked the unions, lowered pay, and moved all over the country. Over the past couple of decades “jobs like manufacturing and office work equalized between cities and rural areas,” wrote *Fortune* magazine Jan. 22. “Workers in these jobs can no longer get much of a pay bump by moving into town.”

And housing and rental prices make “affordable family formation” somewhat easier outside the cities.

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Lea Sherman, State Assembly
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New York

Seth Galinsky, New York City Public Advocate
Samantha Hamlin, Mayor of Troy
Lawrence Quinn, Troy City Council

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 5 to contact party campaign office nearest you.

'We won't be stopped by terror'

Continued from front page

ous assaults against the oppressed Kurdish people in Iraq.

On top of that devastating war, which took hundreds of thousands of lives on both sides, there have been the 1990-91 and 2003 invasions by U.S. imperialist-led coalitions; repeated attacks on Kurdish uprisings for national rights; a 15-year-long terror campaign by al-Qaeda in Iraq and others, culminating in the 2014 collapse of the Iraqi army and seizure of large parts of the country by the reactionary Islamic State sect; and ongoing thuggish militia activity and attacks on Sunni and Kurdish areas by Iranian government-sponsored armed groups, above all Hashd al-Shaabi.

Mohammed Zaki Ahmed, one of the fair organizers and co-owner of Al-Aref publishing house, told the *Militant* that the company took over organizing the fair in 2012, together with the Iraqi Publishers Association. "In 2015 publishers were scared of coming and shipping was hard because of the war with Daesh. We couldn't do it," said Zaki. "But in 2016 we insisted on holding it. It was small, but we sent a message that we wouldn't be stopped by terrorism."

Fair has expanded since 2016

Since then, the fair has blossomed, he said. "The book fair in 2018 was the biggest in modern Iraqi history, and this year is one-third bigger. There are 15 Arab and 10 other foreign countries represented. Over 300 publishers are participating directly, with books from 700 publishers altogether."

In opening the book fair, Iraqi President Barham Salih condemned the as-

sassination days earlier of prominent novelist and writer Alaa Mashzoub. The fair itself has become a tribute to Mashzoub, whose portrait appears prominently in the hall's central square (see accompanying article).

Pathfinder Books in London is participating in the book fair for the first time. Volunteers staffing the booth from the U.K. and the U.S. have been received with appreciation by the many people, young and old, who are seeking lessons from working-class struggles around the world and from history, as they look for a way to rebuild their country and put an end to the devastating economic and social conditions faced by Iraqi working people.

As of Feb. 12, 798 Pathfinder books have been sold, including 200 of the six Pathfinder titles in Arabic translation. Books on working-class struggles and politics in the United States are in high demand. These include *Are They Rich Because They're Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning under Capitalism* and *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, both by Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes, as well as Pathfinder's most recent title, *In Defense of the US Working Class* by SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters.

Many head straight for titles on roots of women's oppression and the fight to end it, with *Is Biology Woman's Destiny?* by Evelyn Reed topping the list.

Issue no. 7 of *New International* magazine has generated a lot of interest. Its lead article, "Washington's Assault on Iraq: Opening Guns of World War III," by Jack Barnes, describes the SWP's



Militant/Pat Nixon

Catharina Tirsén discusses books by Socialist Workers Party leaders with Iraqi youth at Baghdad book fair Feb. 7. Event attracted thousands seeking reading after years of wars and repression.

working-class campaign opposing the 1990-91 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. It also describes the growing instability and conflicts between and within capitalist countries across the Middle East and worldwide coming out of the war.

Former soldiers visit booth

Former rank-and-file soldiers visiting the booth have been surprised and pleased to find that there are people in the U.S. and U.K. who get out the truth about the brutal slaughter organized by the U.S. rulers. Several said they or their fathers had been on the road from Kuwait to Basra in southern Iraq in February 1991 when tens of thousands fleeing soldiers and civilians were massacred in what Washington called a "turkey shoot." The Saddam Hussein dictatorship had invaded Kuwait and sent troops

into battle with no preparation to confront the U.S. rulers' military onslaught.

Another popular title is *The Jewish Question* by Abram Leon, which explains how anti-Semitism is bred by crisis-ridden capitalism. Leon puts forward a class-struggle road to end scapegoating and repeated persecution of Jews. There is also keen interest in a December 2017 statement circulated by the SWP, "For Recognition of a Palestinian State and of Israel."

For centuries, Iraq was home to a thriving Jewish community, but the majority left in 1948-52, when persecution organized by the Iraqi rulers was stepped up following the establishment of the state of Israel. All but a handful of Jews who had remained ended up leaving the country following the 1963 coup by Saddam's Baath Party, whose anti-working class "Arab socialism" included virulent Jew-hatred.

Like many others at the fair, Dina Al-Aoube, from Sulaymaniyah in Iraqi Kurdistan, was pleased to discuss the fight against anti-Semitism and the political course laid out in the SWP statement. "The Jews are very welcome to come back to Iraq," she told volunteers at the Pathfinder stand.

Others have said it was refreshing to hear a "different view," opposed to the anti-Jewish demagoguery peddled for decades by bourgeois governments and political forces in the Middle East. A handful of people at the fair have echoed those reactionary views.

The fair ends Feb. 18.

Iraqi protests condemn assassination of novelist

BY ÖGMUNDUR JÓNSSON

BAGHDAD, Iraq — There has been widespread outcry here after the Feb. 2 murder of prominent Iraqi writer and novelist Alaa Mashzoub. He was gunned down as he was bicycling home from a writers' gathering in his home city of Karbala. While police were quick to announce an investigation, so far no one has taken credit for the killing or been arrested.

Mashzoub was known for his opposition to foreign interference in Iraq and to the sectarian and corrupt politics in the country, as well as for his writings on the history of his home city, Karbala, which is one of Shiite Islam's holiest centers. Mashzoub has also written about Iraq's once-thriving community of Jews.

Mashzoub's coffin was carried along a busy street in Karbala the day after his death. That same day, writers and artists staged a sit-in in the city. Dozens joined a march Feb. 6 to Tahrir Square in central Baghdad called by the Union of Iraqi Writers, holding pictures of Mashzoub alongside Iraqi flags.

Shortly before his assassination, Mashzoub had spoken out against interference in Iraq by the cleric-dominated regime in Iran, pointing out that its first leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, spent 13 years of his exile in Karbala prior to the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Mashzoub was killed by 13 bullets, a fact noted by many here.

The killing has triggered a faction struggle within the Tehran-sponsored Hashd al-Shaabi militias. Aws al-Khafaji, a commander of one of its brigades, who is related to Mashzoub, was arrested by other Hashd al-Shaabi forces and

his headquarters ransacked after he said the killing was committed by "those who defend Iran in this country."

These events reflect an ongoing struggle for domination in Iraq between U.S. imperialism and the counterrevolutionary regime in neighboring Iran. The Iraqi government has balked at Washington's arrogant demands that it stop buying electricity and natural gas from Iran, its sole foreign supplier, to comply with U.S.-imposed sanctions. Baghdad fears that a disruption of power supplies would reignite working-class protests like those that shook the southern city

of Basra in 2018 over the lack of clean water and Iranian interference in the country. Alaa Mashzoub had taken part in those protests.

Many Iraqi writers have spoken out against the assassination. "You really have to be a coward to fire a gun at someone who only has words and dreams," novelist Ahmed Saadawi, author of the internationally acclaimed *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, wrote on Facebook. "Shame on the murderers — and shame on the authorities if they don't find and bring them to justice immediately."

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Cuba and Algerian revolutions: an intertwined history

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL AND RÓGER CALERO

HAVANA — Algeria is the country of honor at this year's Havana International Book Fair, which opened here Feb. 7. Many of those attending the fair are curious to learn more about the culture and history of that North African nation. To meet this thirst for knowledge, the book fair program includes lectures, film showings, concerts, photo exhibits and a display of 200 works of Algerian literature, including special events at the Algerian pavilion.

The fair, which has drawn tens of thousands of visitors, will travel to every province over the coming two months. This giant annual festival, a reflection of Cuba's near-universal literacy and

REPORT FROM HAVANA INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR

culture of reading that begins with the youngest children, is the product of a deep-going socialist revolution. Workers and farmers here took power in 1959, overturned capitalist rule, and transformed social relations as well as themselves — and subsequent generations.

Speaking at the book fair's opening ceremony, Juan Rodríguez, president of the Cuban Book Institute, welcomed the Algerian delegation headed by Minister of Culture Azzedine Mihoubi, a prominent writer. Rodríguez also devoted part of his remarks to the close relations of mutual support developed between the Cuban and Algerian revolutions in the early 1960s — a history that is not well-known outside Cuba or by younger generations in Cuba today.

A photo display on “Cuba, Algeria, and the African freedom struggle” is one of the most popular features of the Pathfinder stand here, which carries several books that take up this subject.

Articles in the Cuban press coverage on the book fair have noted that the revolutionary struggles in Cuba and Algeria — thousands of miles apart — were intensifying simultaneously in the 1950s and early '60s. On July 26, 1953, revolutionaries led by Fidel Castro attacked the Moncada army barracks in Santiago de Cuba, initiating a popular revolutionary war against the Batista dictatorship. They triumphed five and a half years later, on Jan. 1, 1959.

In Algeria, the National Liberation Front (FLN) launched a mass struggle for independence from French colonial rule in 1954. Despite savage repression — more than a million people were killed and 300,000 children orphaned — the Algerian people defeated French imperialism. Independence was declared on July 3, 1962.

“At the same time that we were fighting in the mountains, the Algerians were fighting in the wilayas [provinces],” said Cuban leader Fidel Castro in a 2001 speech. He was quoted in a Feb. 7 article titled “Something Special Ties Us to Algeria” that appeared in the Cuban daily *Granma* on the opening day of the book fair.

Cuba backs Algeria independence

In June 1961, a year before Algeria won its independence and two years after the revolutionary victory here, Rodríguez explained at the inaugural event of the book fair, “Cuba was the only government in the Western Hemisphere to recognize the provisional government of the Algerian republic.”

Just a few months later, in December 1961, Havana sent a ship loaded with



At Havana International Book Fair, where Algeria is country of honor, Oscar Creach Wenclar browses books at Algeria pavilion Feb. 11. He was proud that his father was one of nearly 700 Cuban volunteers who went to Algeria in 1963 to help defend the newly independent nation against imperialist-backed invasion by Moroccan troops.

weapons to Algerian independence fighters. The ship returned with 76 wounded FLN combatants and 20 children from refugee camps, mostly war orphans. The Cuban leadership did so knowing this bold action might jeopardize its diplomatic and trade relations with Paris.

As the popular revolution deepened and Algerian capitalists sought to limit the advances of the toiling classes, a workers and farmers government was established, with FLN leader Ahmed Ben Bella at its head. It organized working people to take steps that increasingly encroached on the power and prerogatives of both the former French colonizers and Algeria's native landlords and capitalists.

Rodríguez explained that the Algerian government developed strong ties with Cuba. President Ben Bella, he said, “in a gesture of solidarity, visited our country on the eve of the October Crisis,” known outside of Cuba as the “Missile Crisis.” In October 1962 Washington was preparing to invade Cuba and brought the world to the brink of a nuclear conflict, but was blocked by the mobilization of Cuba's armed workers and farmers.

Ben Bella had gone to New York to address the United Nations as representative of the newly independent nation. Afterward he had met with U.S. President John F. Kennedy in Washington, who warned him not to visit Cuba. Ignoring the imperial threats, he flew straight to Havana.

“Algeria wished to emphasize publicly its total solidarity with the Cuban Revolution, especially at this difficult moment,” Ben Bella wrote years later, in an article reprinted in *Celebrating the Homecoming of Ernesto Che Guevara's Reinforcement Brigade to Cuba* by Pathfinder Press. “We arrived in Cuba on October 16 amid indescribable scenes of popular enthusiasm.” He was warmly received by Fidel Castro and other Cuban leaders.

Internationalist Cuban help

Rodríguez noted that Cuba's first volunteer medical mission abroad in its long history of internationalist solidarity “arrived in Algeria in May 1963. They were led by compañero José Ramón Machado Ventura, then minister of public health and today second secretary of the Cuban Communist Party.”

The initial group consisted of 55 doc-

tors, nurses, and technicians. Machado Ventura later remarked, “It was like a beggar offering his help, but we knew the Algerian people needed it even more than we did and that they deserved it.” At the time, Cuba's medical resources were severely stretched because half of its 6,000 doctors had emigrated to the United States after 1959.

The Algerian Revolution and its impact on popular struggles in Africa, worldwide

Printed below are two excerpts that give a picture of the workers and farmers government that emerged from the revolution in Algeria that in 1962 overthrew French colonial rule, its impact in France and the U.S., and its leaders' shoulder-to-shoulder collaboration with the Cuban Revolution. The first is from “On the Character of the Algerian Government,” a resolution drafted by Socialist Workers Party leader Joseph Hansen in 1964. The second is from SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters' “The Cuban Revolution Was Not Alone,” from Cuba and the Coming American Revolution by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes. The latter is copyright © 2001 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY JOSEPH HANSEN

An essentially bourgeois state apparatus was bequeathed to Algeria. A crisis in the leadership of the FLN (Front de Libération Nationale) came to a head July 1, 1962, ending after a few days

Rodríguez added that a few months later, in October 1963, the Algerian government asked for Cuba's help in repelling an invasion by the government of neighboring Morocco. The Moroccan monarchy and the imperialist powers were deeply concerned about the political shock waves of the Algerian Revolution that were spreading in the region.

into the old ownership relations in the industrial sector with the establishment of a public and state-controlled sector. Yet to be undertaken are the expropriation of the key oil and mineral sector, the banks and insurance companies, establishment of a monopoly of foreign trade, and the inauguration of effective counter measures to the monetary, financial, and commercial activities of foreign imperialism.

Among the most heartening signs in Algeria are (1) in foreign policy the establishment of friendly relations with Cuba, Yugoslavia, China, the Soviet Union, and other workers states with the possibility this opens up for substantial aid from these sources; (2) the active attitude of the government toward developing the colonial revolution in such areas as Angola and South Africa; (3) within Algeria the establishment of the institution of “self-management.” “Self management,” with its already demonstrated importance for the development of workers and peasants democracy, offers the brightest opening for the establishment of the institutions of a workers state. ...

The appearance of a Workers and Peasants Government in Algeria is concrete evidence of the depth of the revolutionary process occurring there. It is of historic importance not only for Algeria and North Africa but for the whole African continent and the rest of the world.



Above, Ernesto Che Guevara with Algerian President Ahmed Ben Bella, right, at Algiers airport, April 1964. Ben Bella government collaborated with Guevara and other Cuban leaders to aid national liberation struggles in Africa. Left, supporters of National Liberation Front in Algeria rally in early 1960s.

The Cuban government responded by sending nearly 700 volunteer combatants to Algeria together with 22 tanks and other military equipment — Cuba's first large-scale internationalist military mission. That action deterred the Moroccan regime, which pulled its troops back from Algerian territory.

Aid to African freedom struggles

“It's not possible to write the history of these ties of brotherhood without



“Cuba, Algeria and the African Freedom Fight” was one of the most popular displays at Pathfinder Books stand at Havana book fair. Pathfinder publishes several titles that take up this theme, two of which are excerpted below.

mentioning the active presence in Algeria of the unforgettable Heroic Guerrilla, Ernesto Che Guevara,” Rodríguez said.

Guevara visited Algeria several times. Ben Bella's government collaborated with Che and other Cuban leaders to aid national liberation struggles in Africa, from the Congo to Angola. Algeria became an organizing center for anti-imperialist movements across the continent. The Ben Bella leadership, working closely with Havana, also provided aid to revolutionary groups fighting in Argentina and oth-

er South American countries.

In June 1965 the workers and farmers government headed by Ben Bella was overthrown in a counterrevolutionary coup led by Col. Houari Boumediene. The coup was publicly denounced by Fidel Castro.

Over the decades, the Cuban leadership has continued to provide internationalist solidarity to Algeria with no political strings attached, as it has to other nations across Africa and the world. Rodríguez reported that today “900 Cuban doctors and paramedics are serving in four cities in that sister country.”

NY meeting celebrates 60 years of Cuban Revolution



NEW YORK — Over 150 people attended a Feb. 8 celebration here of the 60th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution and a send-off for Cuban Ambassador to the United Nations Anayansi Rodríguez Camejo, at podium, who is returning to Cuba to assume responsibilities as deputy foreign minister.

The event was sponsored by the New York-New Jersey Cuba Sí Coalition. Manolo de los Santos, executive director of the People's Forum, welcomed everyone to their space in midtown Manhattan. “The Cuban Revolution is a living revolution,” said like Nahem on behalf of the coalition. “It continues to be a beacon for the oppressed and exploited who are the majority of humanity.”

Ambassador Rodríguez thanked participants for their support for Cuba's revolution and their defense against political and economic assaults from Washington. She said that Cuba stands against Washington's threats to Venezuela's sovereignty. In a long history of U.S. attacks on our revolution, she said, “we have always been able to count on solidarity from the American people.”

Paul Mailhot, Rachel Ibrahim and Gail Walker spoke about solidarity trips being organized to Cuba this year by the National Network on Cuba, the Venceremos Brigade and Pastors for Peace. “The best way to learn about the Cuban Revolution is to see it for yourself,” Mailhot said, urging people to take information on the April 21 – May 5 May Day Brigade and the other two brigades.

— SARA LOBMAN

Further reading on Cuba & Algeria



For a Workers and Farmers Government in the United States Includes “On the Character of the Algerian Government” by Joseph Hansen \$12 Celebrating the Homecoming of Ernesto Che Guevara's Reinforcement Brigade to Cuba Includes article by Ahmed Ben Bella \$12 Cuba and the Coming American Revolution by Jack Barnes, includes “The Cuban Revolution Was Not Alone” by Mary-Alice Waters \$10

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—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 or through our website, or mail them to 306 W. 37th St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Chicago charter school teachers strike over pay, conditions

CHICAGO — Some 175 members of the Chicago Teachers Union hit the picket lines at four schools here operated by Chicago International Charter School network Feb. 5. “The most important issues are class size and full staffing, as well as pay,” math teacher Melissa Olsen told the *Militant* on the picket line at Northtown High School.

Ellison High School “doesn’t even have a foreign language teacher. Students are learning from Rosetta Stone all year,” Olsen said. “Wrightwood only has one special education teacher” for an entire K-8 school.

“I’m supporting our teachers,” said Jorge Mejia, a freshman at Northtown, as he joined the picket line. “We need supplies, new computers, a better heating and cooling system.” The union says Chicago International Charter School management is sitting on \$36 million in public funds and refusing to put them to use in the schools.

“We can’t give the kids what they need because we’re not given the resources,” Austin Mallory, the physical education teacher at ChicagoQuest High School, said at a rally of 200 strikers and supporters outside the downtown headquarters of the charter school network the same day. “In the four years I’ve been there we’ve had no gymnasium. A portion of the library is used for PE class, but there’s no equipment and it’s not adequate.”

“Family health benefits are unaffordable,” said Mashanda Scott, a third grade teacher at Wrightwood. “I’m paying \$400 every two weeks, for a family of four.” Scott said she was moved by the support from parents that morning. “Some refused to cross our picket line, or joined us on the line. One took her kids in, came out and talked to us, then went back in and took them home.”

“The news reported that they offered us all of our demands,” said Ryan Walzer, a science teacher at Northtown. “This is not accurate. The press makes

the union look bad.”

This fight follows a successful strike by Chicago Teachers Union members at 15 schools in the Acero charter network in December.

— Naomi Craine

Junior doctors strike over work schedules in New Zealand

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Junior doctors — also known as Resident Medical Officers — picketed hospitals here Jan. 29-30 in their second nationwide strike in the last two weeks, fighting for safer working conditions. The action involved some 3,500 strikers.

The strikers included newly qualified doctors still training as well as those training to becoming specialists. Most work in public hospitals, with a few training to become family doctors.

After two strikes in 2017 the junior doctors union, the Resident Doctors’ Association, won a new contract with the District Health Boards that included reduced hours and a safer roster system. The contract allows them to work no more than 10 days at a stretch, no more than 16 hours a day and limits how many long days they can work per week. The health boards now want to weaken the union’s control over the new rosters.

“We know the strike means some surgery will have to be postponed, but we



Militant/Naomi Craine

Chicago Teachers Union members and supporters picket Chicago International Charter School headquarters Feb. 5, first day of strike at four charter schools over class size, pay, conditions.

had no option,” Anthony Walters, currently working in renal medicine, told the *Militant* on the picket line outside Auckland City Hospital. “In the long run it is better for patients to be looked after by someone well rested.” Emergency and life-preserving services were maintained during the strike.

About six months ago some junior doctors opposed to the new rosters, formed a breakaway union, the Specialty Trainees of New Zealand. They signed a contract with the District Health Boards to work 12 days without a break, hoping they could graduate faster.

“Under our contract my training will probably take about six months longer,” Prateek Vadgaankar, a general medicine specialist trainee, said on the picket line. “But would you rather be trained well or trained fast?”

The Resident Doctors’ Association won support from the senior doctors union, the Association of Salaried Medical Specialists, and the New Zealand Nurses Organisation, which took strike action last year over working conditions. Junior doctors struck again Feb. 12-13 and plan a fourth strike later this month.

— Felicity Coggan

Manchester rally backs anti-gov’t protests in Sudan

BY ÓLÖF ANDRA PROPPÉ

MANCHESTER, England — Chanting “Freedom, peace and democracy,” “We support Sudan revolution,” and “Just fall, that’s all,” some 100 protesters gathered in Piccadilly Gardens here Feb. 3. They were mobilizing in support of demonstrations across Sudan that have continued since mid-December.

Sparked by a threefold rise in the price of bread by the Sudanese government, the protests come on top of years of grinding hardship and war. Tens of thousands have marched to demand the

end of the regime of President Omar Hassan al-Bashir.

Answering Bashir’s claim that the protesters mainly came from the country’s Darfur region, the crowd here chanted, “Al-Bashir you arrogant racist, we are all Darfur!”

This has also been a popular slogan in the demonstrations in Sudan. Many young protesters say the Bashir government can no longer use tribal and regional differences to divide the people.

Hugo Wils, Communist League can-

didate for Baguley ward in the upcoming Manchester City Council elections, addressed the protest. “The Communist League stands in solidarity with the people of Sudan rising up against the Omar al-Bashir dictatorship,” Wils said.

As the CL campaigns among working people across the U.K., he said, members will raise “the need for solidarity with the people rising up in Sudan.”

Bashir’s government has met the protests with brutality. Dozens have been killed and many injured or imprisoned. Osman Ebrahim, a student from Darfur, told Wils that government authorities claimed they were releasing all those arrested. But that isn’t the case, Ebrahim said, many remain in prison.

The Bashir regime uses its so-called public order law to imprison protesters and attack the population. Under this reactionary law, women are arrested for “indecent dressing and immoral behavior.” Hundreds demonstrated in Omdurman, Sudan, Feb. 10, in a rally for women detainees.

Some at the protest looked to the imperialist rulers in London and elsewhere to step in and help their fight, chanting, “U.K., UN take action now!”

“We cannot rely on the British government for help,” Wils told protesters. “Like the imperialist rulers in Washington, Paris and elsewhere, they’ve done nothing but plunder and bring devastation to Africa.”

He said working people need to follow the example of Thomas Sankara, who led the workers and peasants in Burkina Faso to take power and established a popular revolutionary government there from 1983 to 1987.

Protesters said they are planning ongoing weekly actions in support of the demonstrations in Sudan.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



February 28, 1994

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s decision to lift a moratorium on farm foreclosures will deal a devastating blow to thousands of working farmers. The labor movement should speak out against this move to protect the profits of the banks and other capitalists at the expense of small rural producers.

Capitalism creates problems for small farmers that go far beyond conjunctural crises caused by bad weather. When farmers have a good crop, the market works to drive down the price they receive for their produce. Either way, farmers are squeezed between high prices for equipment, fertilizer, and loans and the low price they receive from the large processors and food monopolies.

As part of building an alliance the labor movement can put forward concrete demands as a guaranteed living income plus production costs for all working farmers.



February 28, 1969

COLUMBIA, S.C. — The Ft. Jackson GIs United Against the War in Vietnam held a press conference here Feb. 15, in response to harassment by the Army brass and to build support for their right to discuss freely the Vietnam war within the Army.

GIs United, an informal grouping of Ft. Jackson servicemen, is circulating a petition addressed to the base commander requesting a meeting to discuss the Vietnam war.

Base officials issued a statement: “The Army does not recognize any collective bargaining unit representing members of the armed forces.”

GIs United responded issuing their own news release: “We have not asked to represent the GIs at Ft. Jackson in collective bargaining. We are asking the Army to provide facilities for GI’s to discuss the war, as is our constitutional right.”



February 26, 1944

The House Military Committee plans to open hearings on legislation providing for the establishment of a 5,000,000 man peacetime army. A bill calling for compulsory military or naval training for all males upon reaching the age of 17 has been introduced. [It] provides that after completion of one year’s training, every man would remain in a reserve force for ten years and during this period would be compelled to take further “refresher” courses under whatever conditions the President might prescribe.

As the plans of American Big Business for world domination have grown more ambitious, the size of the peacetime army has multiplied. In order to “police the world for the next hundred years” the brass hats want to keep the nation permanently militarized. This is the real prospect the capitalist rulers envision for the American people.

Join the Socialist Workers Party campaign!

The following statement was issued Feb. 13 by Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor in Philadelphia.

When President Donald Trump declared “America will never be a socialist country,” he was referring to the “socialism” presented today by Democrats such as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. Like fellow liberals, these “socialists” view working people with disdain and fear, as objects to be regulated, and controlled when necessary “for their own good,” as Ocasio-Cortez and her ilk attempt to manage the rule of the capitalist class. They seek to corral workers into the Democratic Party and the capitalist rulers’ two-party system.

Their solutions to the crisis workers and farmers face today are to strengthen and expand the capitalist government bureaucracy to carry out welfare programs to make our lives better. They strive to act for us — they know best — the opposite of mobilizing working people to fight for our class interests.

Their efforts to make capitalism “fairer” obscure the irreconcilable class interests of working people and the ruling capitalist families. The cops, courts and the state bureaucracy are organized to defend the entrenched interests of the capitalist ruling families.

Trump is right about one thing — workers despise the kind of government bureaucracy these “socialists”

glory in. They don’t want *more* government, but to get the government off our backs.

In his attack on “socialism,” Trump declared that Americans are “born free.” The truth is working people are born under the dictatorship of capital.

What the Socialist Workers Party joins workers in fighting for is something qualitatively different. It’s not words, or labels or a doctrine. It’s building a mighty movement of workers, farmers and others exploited and oppressed by capital to fight for our interests. It has to be organized independent of the bosses, their parties and their government, on a course to take political power out of the hands of the propertied rulers and to build a workers and farmers government.

The SWP campaign in 2019 is running against all those who say workers can find solutions in the capitalist parties. They present what is explained by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes in the book *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*:

“Only the conquest, and exercise of state power by the working class and expropriation of finance capital can lay the foundations for a world based not on exploitation, violence, racial discrimination, class-based pecking orders, and dog-eat-dog competition, but on solidarity among working people that encourages the creativity and recognition of the worth of every individual. ... A socialist world.” Join the SWP campaign!

NY forum discusses political crisis in Venezuela

Continued from front page

U.S. interference, he said. U.S. imperialism has only been able to make headway because of the course of the government led by Nicolás Maduro, and by Hugo Chávez before him. This has undermined the self-confidence, political consciousness and fighting spirit of working people whose struggles go back decades.

The U.S.-dominated oil industry in Venezuela was nationalized in 1976 during the government of Carlos Andrés Pérez, Mailhot said, a byproduct of a rising labor movement. In February 1989 a rebellion sparked by the attempt of the capitalist rulers to raise gasoline and fuel prices up to 80 percent was drowned in blood by the social-democratic government of Pérez.

In 1992, then Lt. Col. Hugo Chávez was jailed after he led a failed attempt to overthrow the Pérez government. In the midst of a popular uprising in 1998, Chávez was elected president, with 700,000 supporters attending his final rally.

Trying to make capitalism serve the people

Mailhot recalled how at first Washington tried to work with Chávez and turn him into a reliable defender of their interests. When he visited New York in 1999, U.S. officials asked Chávez to bang the closing gavel at the New York Stock Exchange.

In response to the pressures of the mass movement of workers and farmers in Venezuela, Chávez was not the accommodating leader the U.S. rulers hoped. He presented himself as a strong leader, standing above the contending social classes, who could use his power to “serve the people.” His course was different to that taken by the July 26 Movement in Cuba under the leadership of Fidel Castro in their 1959 revolution — the revolutionary transformation of social relations by working people mobilized in their own class interests.

Mailhot pointed to a 2009 interview with Chávez, where he was asked about the differences between the Cuban Revolution and his perspectives for Venezuela. “Fidel is a communist. I am not,” Chávez responded. “Fidel is a Marxist-Leninist. I am not.” Chávez used income from Venezuela’s vast oil deposits to fund welfare programs. Chávez, and then his successor Maduro, used the government to try to regulate and manage capitalism, rather than mobilizing and leading working people to overturn capitalist relations and take their future into their own hands.

Chávez committed the ultimate crime in Washington’s eyes, however, by developing deep ties of solidarity with revolutionary Cuba. He turned to Cuba’s revolutionary government for help in a 2003 literacy drive. Cuba has sent tens of thousands of doctors to help provide care in working-class and remote rural

areas. Under the Chávez and Maduro governments, Venezuela has sent Cuba much-needed oil.

Working people in Venezuela were looking for a way to advance their struggles. At the November 2007 Venezuela International Book Fair, Mary-Alice Waters, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party and president of Pathfinder Press, was asked to open a panel discussion on “The United States: A Possible Revolution,” the book fair’s theme. It became a rolling five-day debate. (The record of this discussion is printed in *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?*)

Waters said that for workers and farmers in Venezuela, the overthrow of capitalist rule remains the central challenge. She said it was an “indisputable fact that what will be Venezuela’s equivalent of the mass insurrection of the toilers of Cuba that culminated in the Jan. 1, 1959, revolutionary triumph lies ahead of us, not behind.”

When oil prices were high some of the social contradictions were masked, but this course of Chávez and Maduro inevitably led to a worsening economic and political crisis.

Many workers today find their conditions of life all-consuming, and are demoralized. They spend hours in lines trying to find food and other necessities as massive inflation drives prices through the roof. Hunger is widespread. Medicine is scarce. Crime is rife. Millions have fled the country.

In these circumstances, the rallies called by the opposition-appointed president Juan Guaidó have brought out large crowds, larger than those called to support Maduro. And they’ve drawn participation from working-class neighborhoods. This situation in Venezuela today is dangerous — for working people there and for Cuba, Washington’s ultimate target.

Cuba has maintained its selfless solidarity with the Venezuelan people, Mailhot said. There remain tens of thousands of Cuban internationalist volunteers, including health workers and military advisers there. Cuba speaks out in defense of the sovereignty of the Venezuelan people against foreign interference.

The U.S. government and Guaidó — their chosen replacement for Maduro — are slandering and blaming Cuba for all violence in Venezuela.

“We have a responsibility to speak out and answer these lies,” Mailhot said. “At the same time learning the lessons of the Cuban Revolution, and taking actions that advance the independent organization, class-consciousness, self-confidence and discipline of working people are what is needed in Venezuela today. The Cuban Revolution shows what working people are capable of when they forge a revolutionary party and leadership through struggle.”

‘State of the Union’

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nell, Senate majority leader, sat in silence through Trump’s remarks on “endless wars,” as the president confirmed he would go ahead with the plans anyway.

The president listed the numbers of U.S. soldiers killed in these wars and highlighted talks between U.S. officials and the Taliban to end the Afghan conflict — a step his opponents denounce as surrender.

And he described his administration’s moves to reach an agreement with the leaders in North Korea for denuclearization and ratcheting down threats of confrontation there.

These moves are popular among working people, who are sick of decadeslong wars and what they do to the youth who are the rulers’ cannon fodder abroad.

Following the collapse of the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union, the U.S. rulers boasted they had won the Cold War and launched failed efforts to enforce their will in wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. Trump has broken with previous Democratic and Republican administrations, acknowledging that the U.S. rulers can’t win these conflicts, and should cut their losses. At the same time, he is boosting Washington’s military, seeking to hold off competition from Beijing and Moscow. And he is using economic pressure to curb the advance of the rulers in Iran.

Trump also took credit for the current capitalist economic recovery, rise in employment and boost in some workers’ wages. He stressed that gains in employment and wages had especially benefited industrial workers, African-Americans, Latinos and women.

He pointed to steps by his administration to reform prison sentencing laws that target working people, especially those that are Black.

While his moves to lower taxes on capitalist bosses did give a small boost to the anemic cyclical upturn today, storm clouds from massive debt mean an economic downturn looms. And the broader economic and moral crisis confronting working people — millions forced to work two or three jobs, growing indebtedness, the opioid addiction epidemic and declining life expectancy — continues to bear down.

Trump targets Democrats’ ‘socialism’

The president also said, “America will never be a socialist country.” He was addressing the “socialism” preached by a levy of Democrats elected in 2018.

He was pointing to Democrats like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez who seek to build the Democratic Party through a program of top-down regulations and vastly expanded state bureaucracy to impose on working people measures that are “good for them,” whether they like it or not. Most workers agree with Trump that this would be a disaster. They want to get government off their backs, not make it bigger and stronger.

A good example of the type of policies they are pushing is the “Green New Deal” they recently announced. Motivated in the name of fixing the environment, this “deal” would be a disaster for working people, much like French President Emmanuel Macron’s anti-working-class moves to jack up gas prices that led to the ongoing popular yellow vest protests.

The schema seeks to end all use of fossil fuels — and nuclear power — in 10 years, including the abolition of all air travel. People in the semicolonial world would be condemned to stagnation in the name of better conditions for the already developed. The measure even includes steps to eliminate cow farting, perhaps by eliminating cows. At the same time, Ocasio-Cortez isn’t in any hurry to take aim at U.S. imperialism’s military arsenal. She said she was the only member of the House to vote against the government budget, because it contains funds for the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement police. Otherwise, she said, she would have voted yes. That includes voting for all funds to build up the U.S. rulers’ military forces.

Trump’s offensive against the “socialist” wing of the Democrats will press party leaders to take their distance from their “socialist” brethren. House Majority Leader Nancy Pelosi said she has no plan to put the Green New Deal up for debate.

Counterposed to the pro-capitalist, anti-working-class big-government “socialism” of Ocasio-Cortez, the Socialist Workers Party points to the need for working people to organize and fight for their interests. And to chart a course to overturn capitalist rule, and run society in the interests of all.