Cease-fire can open political space in Israel and in Gaza

BY TERRY EVANS

A cease-fire agreement between the Israeli government and Hamas, the ruling Palestinian party in the Gaza Strip, was signed March 25, brokered by the Egyptian military-ruled government. It came after Hamas had fired rockets into Israel and Israeli Defense Forces retaliated with airstrikes on Gaza.

The exchange followed a year of provocative anti-Israel actions led by Hamas on the border that the Israeli rulers have responded to with deadly fire. Any steps to lessen military conflicts would create better conditions for working people in both Gaza and Israel.

Following the agreement, the Israeli government reopened border crossings into Gaza, letting in much needed food and fuel and extended the areas where Palestinian fishermen can go in the Mediterranean Sea. In exchange Hamas said it would keep marches it organizes away from the border fence with Israel and Israel.

Continued on page 6

SWP launches drive to expand reach of books and ‘Militant’

BY TERRY EVANS

To advance the work of the Socialist Workers Party in exchanging views and sharing experiences with workers, farmers, and other exploited producers, and laying the groundwork for working together, the party has launched a drive to expand the readership of revolutionary books and the Militant, and to reach broadly for contributions to the Militant Fighting Fund, running April 6-May 28.

Through discussions with workers and farmers on their doorsteps and at labor and other protests, party members will learn more about the conditions working people are facing and their thinking about what needs to be done. And they will find openings to introduce the party’s program and activities. They will travel out widely in cities, towns and along country roads.

“A revolutionary party uses every example of capitalist oppression to clarify how working people can overcome the efforts of the bosses and their political system to deepen their suffering,” noted SWP General Secretary Mary-Alice Waters.

Continued on page 3

New Jersey protest: ‘Driver’s license is a necessity for immigrant workers’

BY JENNY KING

BRIDGEPORT, N.J. — As part of a series of actions across the state over the last several years to demand the state government provide access to driver’s licenses for undocumented immigrants, this would be an advance for working-class unity.

New Jersey’s rulers have responded to with deadly fire. Any steps to lessen military conflicts would create better conditions for working people in both Gaza and Israel.

The march began and ended with testimony from participants on the impact of not being able to get driver’s licenses. Along with workers from Bridgeport, participants came from Red Bank, Elizabeth, Passaic, Perth Amboy, Lakewood, Vineland and other cities and towns.

“I’ve lived in Bridgeport for 30 years and it’s always the same story,” Marco Antonio Ibarra told the crowd. “It’s a business for the Bridgeport police.

Continued on page 4

Uber drivers fight bosses’ pay cuts across California

‘Uber and cab drivers need a union to fight back’

BY BERNIE SENTER

REDONDO BEACH, Calif. — Uber drivers held a 24-hour strike March 25 to demand the company reverse a 25 percent per mile pay cut it imposed on drivers in Los Angeles and parts of Orange counties. Two hundred of the striking Uber drivers were joined by drivers for Lyft to protest in front of Uber headquarters here. Protests were also held in San Francisco and San Diego against similar cuts.

“In 2015, I was making between $1.15 and $1.20 per mile,” driver Eisenstein said.

Two-year-long anti-Trump ‘Russia collusion’ witch hunt fizzes out

BY ROY LANDERSEN

High-level negotiations continue in the yearlong trade dispute between Beijing and Washington with both governments reporting progress toward an agreement. Any short-term reset of trading relations would ease tensions, but won’t resolve the rivalry between the two biggest players in the world capitalist economy. While Washington remains dominant, China’s rulers have a long view and see a future where they’re on top.

The U.S. imperialist rulers are using their waning — but still greater — economic and military preponderance to management down. They lionized Robert Mueller, a former head of the FBI political police who was appointed as special counsel by the assistant attorney general, fervently convinced he would find some bombshell that would bring Trump to his knees — and maybe to prison.

When Mueller finally submitted his report March 22, he was forced to admit there was no “collusion” between Trump and Moscow that led...
New Zealand rulers use mosque attacks to target political rights

BY FELICITY COGGAN
AUCKLAND, New Zealand — In the two weeks since a rightist lone wolf shooter killed 50 worshippers at two mosques in Christchurch, working people in their thousands have turned out to rallies and vigils, looking to express their opposition to racism and anti-Muslim bigotry. Close to $16 million New Zealand dollars ($10.9 million) has been donated to victims of the attack.

But the Labour-led coalition headed by Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has taken advantage of the widespread working-class solidarity to rally political support behind the government and its banner of classless “national unity.” The capitalist rulers she speaks for have seized on the killings to threaten political rights, boost their police and spy agencies and step up censorship.

On March 29 the central government, Christchurch Council and some local Muslim and Maori organizations hosted a national “We Are One” service in Christchurch, attended by government delegations from Austra-

More than 250 detectives and other cops, including Australian police and FBI agents from the U.S., are investigating the shoot-

More than 250 detectives and other cops, including Australian police and FBI agents from the U.S., are investigating the shoot-

Build fighting alliance of workers, farmers

The ‘Militant’ covers fights by working farmers — from the solidarity among workers and farmers after Midwest flooding to fights by dairy and other family farmers against the capitalist squeeze by banks and agribusiness, which drives them deeper into debt and off the land.

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The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10008. Published by the China Labor Committee, 128 W. 10th Street, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10011. The Militant is fast-tracking moves to strengthen existing laws on “hate speech” and making hate crimes” illegal.

Free speech on the internet is being targeted. Ar-

develop a new policy on political rights.

Groups on the middle-

New Zealand Labour government is using rightist’s killing of 50 people at two mosques to expand use of their political police and target workers’ rights. Cops will now carry guns, including assault weapons, above.

Security Intelligence Service and the Government Communications Security Bureau — didn’t have Tarrant’s name on any watch lists in either New Zealand or Australia. Their goal is to strengthen the powers of the capitalist rulers’ political police.

Government attacks political rights

Amid a barrage of media columns blaming the massacre on “white” people and racism, guns or social media, the government is pushing to strengthen censorship. This atmosphere is stifling political discussion by working people.

Four days after the attack Ardern said she would never use Tarrant’s name. Auckland Mayor Phil Goff has called for the judge at his trial to silence Tarrant any time he “starts to rave about his ideology.”

Tarrant’s 74-page “manifesto,” posted online before the attack, has been banned by Chief Censor David Shanks, making those who possess, distrib-

United Kingdom: Send £26 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL on London, 5 Norman Road (first floor), Seven Sisters, London, N13 4ND, England.

Republic of Ireland and Continental Europe: Send $85 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL on London at above address.

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Northern Ireland: Send sterling £85 for one year to CL on London, 5 Norman Road (first floor), Seven Sisters, London, N13 4ND, England.

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Submissions to the Militant may be published in the newspaper in print and digital format. By submitting, authors represent that their submissions are original and consent to publication in this manner.

New International no. 12
Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun
by Jack Barnes

Canada, Can$7 • Caribbean and Latin America, US$10 • Continental Europe, £10 • Mili-

12 weeks of the Militant outside the U.S.: Australia, A$10 • United Kingdom, £3 • Canada, Can$7 • Caribbean and Latin America, US$10 • Continental Europe, £10 • France, 8 euros • New Zealand and the Pacific Islands, NZ$7 • All other areas, US$16 (Send payment to addresses listed in business information box).
SPW book, ‘Militant’ drive

Continued from front page

competition and divisions among us,” explains SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes in the introduction to the book Tribunes of the People and the Trade Unions, by Karl Marx, V.I. Lenin, Leon Trotsky, Farrell Dobbs and Barnes, which will go on sale in May, at a 20 percent discount during the drive. Their writings “show how we can work together in political actions, social protests, and solidarity activity in our common class interests,” Barnes adds.

The party aims to sell 1,050 books and the same number of Militant subscriptions, and to raise $115,000 for the fund.

Party members find growing interest in unions and workers’ battles. “I am interested in the union question for restaurant workers. We’re in the trenches everyday, it’s like a war,” Ashley Brown told SWP campaigners Rachelle Fruit and Lisa Potsch when they knocked on her door in Fayetteville, Georgia, March 27. After being injured working as a cook at a Jones Beach restaurant in New York, Brown recently moved back in with her mother.

To combat the employers disregard for safety “we need to fight for workers control,” Fruit explained, pointing to the bosses culpability in the recent Boeing air disasters.

Brown replied, “We’re the ones that drive, who ride in trains and planes. Why do we have to pay the price?”

Potsch said that she worked in a retail store where workers need a union. Organization is crucial, so we can unite and fight for our own class interests.

Help us go over the top in $115,000 Militant Fighting Fund

The Militant has set its annual Militant Fighting Fund at $115,000 to be raised by May 28. The fund is essential to meet the paper’s operating expenses; field reporting teams to cover developments in world politics; subsidize the price of introductory subscriptions to workers behind bars; and to maintain the paper’s website. The editors of the major daily’s are beholden to the capitalist rulers and fill their pages with “news” aimed at obscuring the source of the crisis workers and farmers face and to provide rationalizations for the rulers’ wars abroad, for which they are well paid by the bosses’ lucrative ad fees. In contrast, the Militant appeals for funds to the only reliable source possible — its working-class readership.

“Let us look forward to receiving contributions from those who have just started reading the paper, as well as from long-term readers. And we encourage you to kick in early to the fund drive, so we can start on a solid footing,” John Studer, the paper’s editor, said April 2.

You can contribute online at www.themilitant.com or mail checks made out to the Militant, to 306 West 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018. Help get the fund off to a flying start!

— TERRY EVANS

Campaign with the Socialist Workers Party candidates!

California
Dennis Reeder, Los Angeles City Council
Laura Garza, Los Angeles School Board
Joel Britton Mayor of San Francisco

Florida
Anthony Dabrow, Miami City Commissioner

Kentucky
Amy Huk, Governor

Minnesota
David Rosenfeld, St. Paul City Council

Nebraska
Joe Swanson, Mayor of Lincoln

New Jersey
Lea Sherman, State Assembly
Candace Wagner, State Assembly

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

Pennsylvania
Ursula Hohen, Mayor of Philadelphia
John Stagg, Philadelphia City Council
Malcolm Jarrett, Pittsburgh City Council

Texas
Alyson Kennedy, Mayor of Dallas

Washington
Henry Clay Dennison, Seattle City Council

Lea Sherman, left, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New Jersey State Assembly, talks to Susan Wright in her home in Frenchtown March 20. Wright bought a subscription to the Militant, four books by SWP leaders on special and contributed to the SWP campaign.

This is good for the working class, he explains, as it brings new experiences from workers’ struggles into our battles.

Five books are on special for half price with a subscription, featured in the ad on this page.

Party branches and sister Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the U.K. are discussing quotas for the sale of books and subscriptions, as well as for the Militant Fighting Fund. These quotas and progress in the drive will be covered weekly in the paper.

We urge readers to join us in this effort!

Books on special offer...

Below: $7 each, $5 with subscription. Normally $10.

NYC Council member Lea Sherman at a Militant book sale.

Pathfinder Press

415 Broadway, New York, NY 10013

For full catalog visit: pathfinderpress.com

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

See distributors on page 8 for full catalog visit: pathfinderpress.com

AMERICAN SOCIALISTS FOR A WORLD WITHOUT CAPITALISM

Join Socialist Workers Party campaigning in Pittsburgh! Party members and supporters will be knocking on doors in Pittsburgh and the region April 12-15 to meet workers and gather signatures to put SWP candidate Malcolm Jarrett on the ballot for City Council.

To get involved: phillaxwp@verizon.net or (412) 676-9831
Continued from front page

to his election, and no charges could be filed against him. This sharply in
fluence on “responsible” decision-
called them — and seek to restrict their
interests consider all working people
“deplorable” — as Hillary Clinton
calculations based on a dossier put up
“unspeakable.” Mueller, who called them — and seek to restrict their
influence on “responsible” decision-
making. That is, decisions that rein-
forcement capitalizes
Working people in city and coun-
trieside face a deep economic and so-
cial crisis today. In this context differ-
ent wings of the Democratic Party are seeking a platform that can garner sup-
port. But with an uptick in the economy
and the collapse of the Russia probe,
Trump looks like a good bet in 2020.

Some Democrats think the best hope is
to keep the witch hunt against Trump
growing, even though they have no facts to help them. Adam Schiff, chair of
the House Intelligence Committee, in-
sists that regardless of Mueller’s report,
there is “evidence of collusion,” and his
government is going to launch a big
investigation to get to the bottom of it.

Democrats search for a program
But most Democrats, like House
leader Nancy Pelosi, want to move on from
Russia to focus on domestic issues, like
health care and other issues, in hopes of re-
gaining the White House.

Continued from page 1

Continued from front page
They see that we are driving a car
with out-of-state plates and they stop
us because they know we won’t have a license.”

“We when go to court, there’s an in-
terpreter who claims he’s there to help us,” Ibarra said. Of course for a fee.

“Everyone of us came here to work
for the labor movement to take up the
challenge. But that’s a lie.

“Of us are working two full-
time jobs, some a full-time and a part-
time job,” he added. “Aren’t we wor-
tired of unjust tickets, of having to go
away to taxi companies,” she said.

“He says he can get the charge lowered
but that’s a lie. That’s a lie. They are criminals, that it’s the worst peo-
ple of our country who come here.

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Brunswick, said that “the current ad-
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And what’s wrong with that? Everyone who lives
here comes from immigrants who
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come from other place and have
enriched this country.

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time job,” he added. “Aren’t we wor-
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Lea Sherman, Socialist Workers
Party candidate for New Jersey State
Assembly, also addressed the march-
ers. “The bosses and their govern-
ment of Democrats and Republicans
divide us into American born and im-
migrant, men and women, Caucasian
and Black,” she said. “They blame immigrant, scapegoat immigrants.
They use this prejudice to make big
profits. Their ability to succeed in
keeping us fighting among ourselves
weaken the whole working class,
pushes us all down.

“This isn’t just an issue for immi-
grant workers. It is a working-class
issue for all of us,” she said.

That’s why the Socialist Workers
Party calls for amnesty for all im-
migrants, for driver’s licenses for all, for the labor movement to take up the
fight against deporting immigrant
workers, for unity among all workers.

The May 1 International Workers
Day march will start at 10 a.m. at 260
High St. in North Amboy. “We are
tired of unjust tickets, of having to go
to court, and tired of the danger that
at any moment we can be separated from
our families,” Couseha says on
its publicity for the march. “In New
Jersey, driving is not a luxury, it’s a
necessity and that’s why we are go-
ing to march on May 1 and demand
driver’s licenses once and for all.”

50 Years of Covert Operations in the US
by Larry Seigle, Farrell Dobbs, Steve Clark

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The Militant April 15, 2019

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4
Uber drivers fight pay cuts

Continued from front page

terphanie St. Juste, an organizer of the action, told Los Angeles Magazine, “Today, I’m making 50 percent of what they call us partners, but we’re not. They dictate everything.”

Uber and Lyft claim the drivers are independent contractors who turn the app on and off when it’s convenient, not employees. But most work full-time for the companies and driving is their main source of income.

They pay for the car, maintenance, insurance and their own gas, as well as all the tickets when the cops pull them over. But the companies decide the rates and rules. Drivers can be deactivated at any time at the whim of the bosses. Uber and Lyft don’t have to foot the bill for workers’ health insurance, retirement, unemployment or workers’ compensation.

The app-based companies have come up with complicated formulas — mileage rates, time rates, bonuses for not signing off at certain times of day, commissions, etc. — making it hard for drivers to know how much they are getting for each ride.

Rebecca Stuck-Martinez drives for Uber and Lyft in San Francisco and is an organizer with Gig Workers Rising.

Are you involved in a union organizing drive or strike? 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 hospital workers rally to protest short staffing, low pay

CHICAGO — Some 200 hospital workers and supporters held a rally outside Mt. Sinai Hospital here March 20 to press demands for higher wages, more staffing and to support nurses who are trying to organize a union.

Workers came from hospitals across the city and beyond.

Many Mt. Sinai workers joined the protest during their lunch breaks, including maintenance worker John Holman. “We are disappointed, underpaid, and mistrusted,” he told the Militant. “Maintenance and service workers are in the SEIU [Service Employees International Union], but the managers are not on the same page at the hospital need to come together. Our contract comes up in two weeks and we want a pay raise.

“The hospital you call a code blue when a patient’s life is in danger,” Kim Smith, a patient care technician at Northwestern Memorial Hospital, told the crowd. “We’re calling a code blue. The misplaced priorities of the hospitals are putting us in danger. We’re doing the work of two or three people because of short staffing. The hospital workers face a crisis every two weeks when we get paid and can’t meet our bills,” said Tonya Carter, who makes $13.53 an hour working in admissions at Mt. Sinai. “The company recently reduced our schedules by five hours each pay period, and I was already on the edge.” Carter said she had to give up her apartment and move in with a relative.

Joe Novak, a surgical trauma nurse with five years at Mt. Sinai, said that he’s part of the effort to unionize: “The health care workers pit workers against each other,” he said. “We’re working together to build this union.”

— Naomi Crane

Dennis Richter, Socialists Workers Party candidate for Los Angeles City Council, joins with Uber drivers in Redondo Beach, Calif., protest March 25 against bosses slashing their pay.

“Both Lyft and Uber are driving the wages down,” Nicole Moore, a part-time driver, told National Public Radio. “If you’re making $35 in six hours of driving, yeah, you have the independence to work an 18-hour day and barely make a living. There’s no independence in that.”

Lyft, which reported losses of $911 million last year, became a publicly traded company issuing stock March 29. The company can become profitable only through further attacking the wages of its drivers.

“It’s really obvious,” driver Tyler Sandness told the Militant at the rally, that working people are being pushed to the margins. Productivity has expanded the last 20 years but we haven’t seen a dime of that profit. Wages have been stagnant since the ’90s.

Meanwhile, the conditions and debt most drivers face continue to take a toll.

In New York City 49-year-old Lyft driver Lu Tian Wu committed suicide in the back seat of his livery car March 23. He is at least the ninth taxi, livery or app-based driver to take their own life since November 2017.

Dennis Richter, Socialists Workers Party candidate for Los Angeles City Council, told participants at the rally, “What Uber and Lyft drivers need is a union, jointly with the cab drivers, to fight for a contract, wages, health care and employer responsibility for vehicle costs and upkeep.”

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— Naomi Crane

The Militant  April 15, 2019
Continued from front page

prevent the launching of incendiary kites that have burned farmland in southern Israel in recent months.

During these protests Hamas has urged participants to try and breach the border. When the Israel Defense Forces respond with lethal force, Hamas seeks to utilize the subse-
quent deaths to win support against Israel in bourgeois public opinion. Some 260 Palestinians have been killed and 7,000 wounded, mostly by Israeli sniper fire, since Hamas init-
iated the confrontations.

Four Palestinians were killed March 30, when over 40,000 gathered to mark the one-year anniversary of the weekly March of Return protests. Hamas operatives largely prevented marchers from approaching the bor-
der fence.

Hamas, with roots in the Muslim Brotherhood and on-again, off-again ally al-Qaeda, ruled in Gaza from 2007 to 2007. Hamas took con-
trol of Gaza in 2007. Since then it has fought three wars with Israel. Its stated goal is to drive all Jews out of Israel and Palestine.

But Hamas’ Jew-hatred, provocations and disdain for Palestinian lives have made it increasingly isolated. The group today faces unrest inside Gaza as it offsets the economic cri-

siss on working people. Youth unem-

ployment stands at 65 percent. The hardship facing workers and farmers is intensified by the blockade im-

posed by the governments of Israel and Egypt. After Hamas hiked taxes on food and cigarettes working people and youth protested the measures in several areas of Gaza March 14 and for days afterward.

Demonstrators carried signs that read, “Down with price hikes” and “I want to live in dignity” Cops dis-
persed protesters and arrested over 1,000 people.

Tehran orders attacks on Israel

The day the Israeli government and Hamas agreed upon the cease-fire, another rocket was fired from Gaza and struck Mishmeret, north of Tel Aviv, injuring seven people. Hamas and Egyptian officials say the attack was carried out by Palestinian Islamic Jihad based in Gaza, under orders from the Iranian government. In re-
cent years the rulers in Iran have de-

creased their funding of Hamas and boosted the coffers of Islamic Jihad, considering its leaders more compli-
ant in carrying out attacks on Israel in hopes of scuttling any peace deal between Hamas and Tel Aviv.

Tehran fears that any reduction in military tensions between Israel and Gaza will allow the Israeli rulers to focus more intently on their bombardment of military bases Tehran has established across neighboring Syria. The rulers in Iran took ad-

vantage of the brutal war conducted by Syr-

ian dictator Bashar al-

Assad to move forces into that country.

In the 1980s the Ira-

nian capitalists used their bombardment to consolidate their class rule and defeat strug-
gles by workers, farmers, women, Kurds and other oppressed nation-

alities that had opened up during the 1979 Iranian Revolution that over-

threw the U.S.-backed Shah. The Ira-
nian rulers have sought for decades to increase their clout across the region, extending abroad the counterrevo-

lution they carried through against working people at home.

Tehran’s intervention around the region is a deadly obstacle to working people advancing their interests. A statement by the Socialist Work-
ers Party National Committee issued in December 2017 explains that talks to recognize both Israel and an inde-

pendent Palestinian state “must rec-

ognize the right of Jews everywhere to take refuge in Israel in face of the global rise of Jew-hatred and anti-

Semitic violence, as well as the un-

conditional right of the dispossessed Palestinian people to a contiguous, sovereign homeland on territory … conquered and occupied by the Israeli government during the 1967 war.”

(The entire statement is available on the Militant’s website.)

President Donald Trump recog-

nized Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights March 21. The Israeli military has occupied the area since the end of the 1967 Six-Day War.

Palestinians in Gaza City protesting rising prices, taxes were attacked by Hamas-led police, more than 1,000 were arrested.

Iraq protests win firing of governor in ferry disaster

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Thousands took to the streets in the Iraqi city of Mosul March 22, the day after an overcrowded ferry capsized in the Tigris River, killing more than 100 people. “Our demand is the gov-
ernor’s resignation,” a protester told Kurdistan 24 news station at the ac-
tion. “All officials must be dismissed,” another added.

Most of those who drowned were women and children, who were tak-
ing the boat to an amusement park on Um al-Akoub, the provincial governor, March 22. Victims had been celebrating New Year’s holiday.

Angry relatives of over 100 killed in sinking of ferry blocked road chanting “no to corruption” when Mosul’s governor arrived March 22. Victims had been celebrating New Year’s holiday.

For recognition of a Palestinian state and of Israel

• For repeal of U.S. Jerusalem Embassy Act

• For workers’ solidarity in Israel, Palestine, the world over

Socialist Workers Party statement

Road or download ready-to-print flyer at www.themilitant.com

Kurdistan debate on road to women’s emancipation

SULAYMANIYAH, Kurdistan Region, Iraq — Sixty people turned out here Mar. 30 for a lively discussion and debate on the struggle for wom-

en’s emancipation, hosted by two local youth groups, Terna and Nova.

Alyson Kennedy, the 2016 Socialist Workers Party’s candidate for presi-
dent of the United States and its candidate in this year’s election for mayor of Dallas, spoke on the roots of women’s oppression and a working-class road forward.

Kennedy drew on her past experience in coal miners’ battles and other social struggles, as well as her political work discussing the party’s pro-
gram and activity with working people in Dallas and surrounding towns and rural areas. She was joined by Dashi Nariman, who spoke about the challenges of the fight for women’s rights today in Kurdistan and Iraq.

Savan Ako, speaking above, welcomed meeting participants on behalf of the organizers. “We want to give a different reading on women’s issues than the ones before in south Kurdistan,” she said. “We believe that wom-

en’s emancipation can’t come true unless men and women work together on ending the capitalist system.”

— ÖGMUNDUR JÓNSSON

The Militant  April 15, 2019
Woodfox shines light on prison abuse, solitary confinement
Albert Woodfox, one of the Angola 3, on speaking tour after nearly 44 years in solitary

BY WILLIE COTTON
NEW YORK — Albert Woodfox spent nearly 44 years in solitary confinement in a 6-by-9-foot cell in Louisiana’s notorious Angola prison. He and fellow prisoners Herman Wallace and Robert King came into the sights of authorities there after organizing a chapter of the Black Panther Party and joining with fellow prisoners to fight against the brutal conditions they faced.

He won his freedom in 2016 and is now on a national speaking tour promoting his just released book Solitary: Unbroken by Four Decades in Solitary Confinement. His Story of Transformation and Hope. He is campaigning for an end to solitary confinement. (See ad this page.)

The tour and book expose the abusive conditions that exist in prisons across the country. And just as importantly, they highlight the example set by Woodfox and others who stand up to those abuses and express solidarity with others who assert their humanity. The tour is organized by his publisher, Grove Atlantic.

At a meeting of over 150 people at the Brooklyn Public Library March 27 he explained how the prison system is designed to “break a man’s spirit.” The authorities in Angola used racial segregation as their most effective way to control the prisoners and to keep inmates divided. To combat that, the three formed an organization and became known as the Angola 3. They never stopped or organized and fought.

King was released in 2001. Wallace died in October 2013, three days after his release. To confront their conditions, “we turned toward society, not away,” Woodfox said. “I became a voracious reader. I took every book they gave me in the cell.”

Newly elected Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis, who won with less than 50 percent of the vote, announced after the election that the legislature needed to pass “implementing language.” He hoped to restrict the effect of the amendment.

The amendment states that voting rights for those convicted of felonies are standing up to attempts to undermine a popular victory for the voting rights of ex-prisoners in Florida. Amendment 4 to the state Constitution, which passed by 64.6 percent last November, restores these rights to more than a million people released after serving time on felony convictions.

Some opponents of the proposed restrictions called the Republican-sponsored plan a “poll tax,” a reference to the days before the overthrow of Jim Crow segregation when Blacks and poor Caucasian workers were blocked from voting by a tax levied on anyone who wanted to cast a ballot. Under her court-approved restitution plan, she pays $100 a month.

If the Senate plan is signed into law, she won’t be eligible to vote for 190 years. Some opponents of the proposed restrictions called the Republican-sponsored plan a “poll tax,” a reference to the days before the overthrow of Jim Crow segregation when Blacks and poor Caucasian workers were blocked from voting by a tax levied on anyone who wanted to cast a ballot. Under her court-approved restitution plan, she pays $100 a month.

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The Militant
April 15, 2019
Fidel: ‘Without Che’s ideas, communism can’t be built’

Che Guevara leading voluntary work in Cuba, early 1960s. “In this period of the building of socialism we can see the new man and woman being born,” Che said. This process continually develops, he said, “hand in hand with the development of new economic forms.”

the shoddiness and mediocrity that is precisely the negation of Che’s ideas, his revolutionary thought, his style, his spirit, and his example. I really believe, and I say it with great satisfaction, that if Che were sitting in this chair, he would feel jubilant. He would be happy about what we are doing these days, just like he would have felt very unhappy during that unstable period, that disgraceful period of building socialism in which there began to prevail a sea of ideas, of mechanisms, of bad habits, which would have caused Che to feel profound and terrible bitterness. [Applause]

For example, voluntary work, the brainchild of Che and one of the best of his revolution, his style, his example. That voluntary work was not even being run around and do things in a disorganized way. The bureaucrat’s view, the technocrat’s view that voluntary work was neither basic nor essential gained more and more ground. The idea was that voluntary work was kind of silly, a waste of time, that problems had to be solved with overtime, with more and more overtime, and this while the regular workday was not even being usefully exploited. We had fallen into the bog of bureaucracy, of overthrowing, of work norms that were out of date, the bog of deceit, of untruth. We’d fallen into a whole host of bad habits that Che would have been really appalled at.

Che would have been appalled if he’d been told that money was becoming man’s concern, man’s fundamental motivation. He who warned us so much against that would have been appalled. Work shifts were being shortened and millions of hours of overtime reported; the mentality of our workers was being corrupted and men were increasingly being motivated by the pesos on their minds. Che would have been appalled for he knew that communism could never be attained if benevolent socialist, that to follow along those paths would mean eventually to forget all ideas of solidarity and even internationalism. To follow those paths would imply never developing a new man and a new society.

Those paths I repeat — and Che knew it very well — would never lead us to building real socialism, as a first and transitional stage to communism. Dar says, and transitional stage to communism. Dar says, and transitional stage to communism.

But don’t think that Che was naive, an idealist, or someone out of touch with reality. Che understood and took reality into consideration. But Che believed in man. And if we don’t believe in man, if we think that man is an incorrigible little animal, capable of ad

vancing only if you feed him grass or tempt him with a carrot or whip him with a stick — anybody who believes this methodology will never be a revolutionary; anybody who believes this, anybody convinced of this will never be a socialist; anybody who believes this, anybody convinced of this will never be a communist. [Applause]

Our revolution is an experiment of what Fidel and Che intended. Our revolution started from scratch, from nothing. We did not have a single weapon, we did not have a penny, even the men who started the war were unknown, and yet we confronted all that might, we confronted their hundreds of millions of pesos, we confronted the technological, we confronted the revolution triumphed because we believed in man. Not only was victory made possible, but so was the fomenting and getting this far, only a short way off from celebrating the twenty-ninth anniversary of the triumph of the revolution. How could we have done all this if we had not had faith in man? …

…

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Fidel: ‘Without Che’s ideas, communism can’t be built’

The exception below is from Social-ism and Man in Cuba by Ernesto Che Guevara and Fidel Castro. The French edition is one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for April. The piece is from “Che’s Ideas Are Absolutely Relevant Today,” an Oct. 8, 1987, speech by Castro commemorating the 20th anniversary of Guevara’s death. In 1959 the Cuban Revolution opened the socialist revolution in the Americas, initiating a new era of Marxist revolution and inspiring a new generation of revolutionary-minded youth worldwide. In the mid-1980s, Castro led a rectification process in Cuba to rectify this deviation from the spirit of solidarity and even internationalism. The piece is from the Month for April. The piece is from Pathfinder’s Books of Guevara and Fidel Castro. The French edition is one of Pathfinder’s Books of Socialism and Man in Cuba by Ernesto Che Guevara, Fidel Castro. The French edition is one of Pathfinder’s Books of "Socialism and Man in Cuba by Ernesto Che Guevara, Fidel Castro." To build communism it is necessary to simultaneously construct new material foundations, to build the new man.

To build communism it is necessary to simultaneously construct new material foundations, to build the new man. Socialist revolution, financial panic, political turmoil, police brutality and mass murder are all the hallmarks of capitalism. [Applause]

Soldier of the Cuban Revolution
From the Cane Fields of Oriente to Orient- al of the Revolutionary Armed Forces by Jack Barnes
Social devastation, financial panic, political turmoil, police brutality and mass murder are all the hallmarks of capitalism. [Applause]

Capitalism’s World Disorder
Working-Class Politics at the Millennium by Farrell Dobbs, George Novack
Social devastation, financial panic, political turmoil, police brutality and mass murder are all the hallmarks of capitalism. [Applause]

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Social devastation, financial panic, political turmoil, police brutality and mass murder are all the hallmarks of capitalism. [Applause]
The capitalist rulers’ so-called criminal justice system and its prisons have absolutely nothing to do with “rehabilitation.” They have everything to do with breaking the spirit of those caught up in it and sending a message to all working people to “stay in our place.”

But as the crisis of the capitalist system intensifies, the state becomes ever more fear the working class, and the glimmers they see of labor and social explosions coming in the future. That’s why there are more prisoners in the U.S. than anywhere else in the world.

And that’s why you hear current and former prisoners say “we are fighting for dignity behind bars.”

But the capitalist rulers and their prison bosses underestimates us. When Woodfox won his freedom after nearly 44 years of solitary confinement, he was proud, unbroken and determined to get the truth. That’s what he’s doing, touring around the country and promoting his new book about prison conditions and the fight for dignity behind bars. I urge you to go hear him or read the book. I did and it was well worth it. 

Prisoners are a growing in the reproduction of the social relations, values, and “business practices” of the dog-eat-dog capitalist world that have spawned the US “justice” system,” Socialists Workers Party leader Mary-Alice Waters explains in her introduction to “It’s the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the US Justice System.”

Shifting in economic relationship of forces

The U.S.-China trade rivalry is part of greater shifts in the relationship of forces among competing capitalist nations worldwide.

The combined economic activity of capitalist economies in Asia will be so big by 2023 that of the rest of the world in sheer size. By some measures, China, with over four times the population of the United States, will soon surpass the U.S. as the world’s largest economy, India has displaced Japan and Germany to be number three. India by 2023 is expected to replace Russia at number six. The shifts in economic relationship of forces are already being felt around the European Union. The European Commission, the bureaucracy that supposedly unites and rules over the rival European capitalist powers, issued a statement March 22 branding Germany as a “systemic rival.”

The Trump administration has been pressuring European governments not to allow China’s largest tech company, Huawei, to bid on their new 5G wireless and technology infrastructure projects, on the grounds of national security.

French President Emmanuel Macron claimed March 22 that “the time of European naiveté is ended,” saying that China “took advantage of our divisions.” He called for European rules to effectively “bash the door down to protect their interests against Beijing.”

But the fact is that rather than greater unity, the EU operates to the advantage of the more powerful capitalist powers — especially Berlin and a lesser degree Paris — sucking wealth out of the weaker southern and other states.

A recent visit to Europe by Chinese President Xi to promote the Belt and Road project there shows these divisions, as each ruling class on the continent pursues its own national interests more openly.

The Chinese leader signed a memorandum with the captain rulers to create an international “Belt and Road” initiative. Rome is the first of the larger European countries to break ranks to join the Chinese initiative, following 13 central and eastern European nations, as well as Belgium and the Netherlands.

The initiative is a series of vast infrastructure projects linking the markets of Eurasia by land and sea. The name is a nice sounding phrase meant to suggest Beijing’s push to expand investment and influence, and, if government’s can’t pay, to seize ports and properties abroad. Washington has raised the alarm over Belt and Road being used to extend Chinese power and capitalism — as well as creating a “debt trap.”

Xi met March 26 with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Macron and European Commission President Jean Claude Juncker.

Merkel said the initiative was an “important” project for the German rulers too, stressing their economic “interdependence” with China. Duisburg in the Ruhr Valley already functions as the Belt and Road terminal for northern European trade. Macron is happy for European-based Airbus — a joint project led by French, German and Spanish capital — to conclude a multibillion euro deal for Chinese airlines to buy 300 of its planes. The Beijing-based lenders could over their ground 737 MAX jets made this easier.

One Macron supporter told the English-language online Asia Times March 27 that “Europe had been “28 different policies” — a country cannot expect each other to attract investment.” Unity against Chinese economic penetration in Europe appears to have gone out the window.