Welcome new readers! Help get out books, the ‘Militant’

BY JANET POST

The Militant extends a warm welcome to the 1,208 readers who subscribed to the paper during the Socialist Workers Party Fall drive to win new readers that concluded Dec. 10. Party members also raised over $100,000 for the party’s annual fund drive and sold 1,592 books by SWP and other revolutionary working-class leaders, meeting each of the goals set during the drive in full and on time.

We offer a special welcome to the 28 workers behind bars who got or renewed their subscription. The fall campaign came on the heels of the victory by supporters of democratic rights against Florida prison authorities’ suppression of the Militant.

New readers will find the Militant a unique source of information about today’s labor struggles and a tool for building much-needed solidarity with these fights.

Holding up signs saying, “Read about CN rail strike for safety!” SWP members Tony Lane, Malcolm Jarrett and Ruth Robinett got a good response. Continued on page 3

Strikers hang tough in battle against Asarco

Solidarity crucial in fight against union busting

BY BETSEY STONE AND ELLIE GARCIA KEARNY, Ariz. — “This strike is about whether they can take away what earlier generations have fought for,” retired Asarco miner Susan Miller-Middaugh told these Militant worker-correspondents outside an IGA grocery store here after we stopped her to ask directions to the United Steelworkers union hall Dec. 8. “If they break this union, which is what they are trying to do, the workers will have no protection. They can be fired for any reason. There is no excuse for those who cross the picket line.”

Some 1,700 members of the Steelworkers, Teamsters and five other unions are in a bitter fight against copper giant Asarco. Workers have continued on page 8

See revolutionary Cuba for yourself:

Join International May Day brigade!

Members of International May Day brigade to Cuba join voluntary labor in Caimito, April 24, 2019. Brigade is organized in solidarity with Cuban Revolution, against U.S. rulers’ embargo.

BY SETH GALINSKY

The National Network on Cuba, a coalition of organizations that oppose the U.S. rulers’ economic war on Cuba, is inviting those who want to learn firsthand about the Cuban Revolution to join the U.S. delegation to the upcoming 15th International May Day Brigade of Voluntary Work and Solidarity With Cuba.

Last year 320 people from 21 countries, including 65 from the U.S., participated in the brigade, which is hosted by the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples. They worked side by side with Cuban farmers to prepare fields for planting, met leaders of mass people’s organizations, visited hospitals and schools, and met Continued on page 4

NATO summit reflects crisis of imperialist world ‘order’

BY TERRY EVANS

As they press every opening to take down Donald Trump before the 2020 elections, Democrats and the liberal press leapt on tapes of French President Emmanuel Macron, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and other government leaders making fun of the U.S. president at NATO’s 70th anniversary summit in the U.K. Dec. 3.

Joe Biden, front-runner for the Democrats’ presidential nomination, claimed Trump’s conduct there was damaging “America’s standing in the world.” The summit showed NATO “may not survive” if Trump is reelected, Max Boot moaned in the Washington Post. Liberals claim Trump is ripping the U.S.-dominated alliance apart.

The U.S. capitalist rulers put the North Atlantic Treaty Organization together in 1949 after Washington came out as top dog from the second imperialist world war. Their goal was continued on page 6

US gov’t weighs sending more troops into Mideast wars

BY ROY LANGERSEN

The administration of President Donald Trump is weighing a new deployment of thousands of troops and additional weaponry to the Middle East as it continues to battle for influence against the capitalist regime in Tehran. The Iranian rulers have taken advantage of the unraveling capitalist “order” in the region to expand their Continued on page 4

Militant’ sends holiday greetings to workers behind prison walls

The Militant sends New Year’s greetings to fellow workers behind bars. We pledge to continue to report the truth about the conditions you face and to fight to get to you news of the struggles of working people worldwide.

The U.S. rulers preside over the highest incarceration rate in the world, with almost 2.3 million behind bars and 4.5 million on parole or probation. Over 90% of those locked up were intimidated into signing plea bargains, waving the right to a jury trial, under threat that even harsher sentences would be imposed.

The “justice” system under capitalism is designed to break and demoralize workers and to serve as a warning to millions of other working people to submit Continued on page 9

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THE MILITANT INSIDE

Overseas Chinese and China’s growing weight in world politics

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 83 NO. 47 DECEMBER 23, 2019

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Copper workers on strike against assault by Asarco bosses picket Ray Mine in Arizona Dec. 9.

BY MATT BERRY

The U.S. rulers put the highest incarceration rate in the world, with almost 2.3 million behind bars and 4.5 million on parole or probation. Over 90% of those locked up were intimidated into signing plea bargains, waving the right to a jury trial, under threat that even harsher sentences would be imposed.

The “justice” system under capitalism is designed to break and demoralize workers and to serve as a warning to millions of other working people to submit Continued on page 9
US life expectancy declines for three years in a row

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

One of the most gruesome results of the impact of the economic and social crisis of capitalism today is that life expectancy in the U.S. has fallen for three straight years. Since 2010, mortality rates for workers in their prime working years between 25 and 64 have increased in nearly every state, according to a Nov. 26 report by the Journal of the American Medical Association.

The main causes are opioid drug overdoses, which have killed some 250,000 people in recent years, as well as alcohol abuse and suicides. But the declining availability of quality and affordable health care for millions of workers has also led to more deaths from heart disease, strokes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and other medical conditions.

The entire working class is being affected, the New York Times reported the same day. While “the focus has been on the plight of white Americans in rural areas who were dying from so-called deaths of despair,” the paper said, the report shows “that the increased death rates among people in midlife extended to all racial and ethnic groups, and to suburbs and cities.”

Since 1959 life expectancy in the U.S. had increased from 69.9 to 78.9 years old. But in 2011 the lifespan stopped growing and, in 2014, started to decline, a trend that continued over the next two years. The states with the greatest increase in death rates among young and middle-aged adults — 20 percent and over — were New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont, West Virginia and Ohio.

The deaths were most concentrated in industrial areas where the loss of manufacturing jobs, and the closure of steel mills, auto plants and coal mines have uprooted the lives of working people and entire communities. Four states — Ohio, Pennsylvania, Kentucky and Indiana — accounted for fully one-third of the increased death rates.

“When something changed in the 1980s,” the report’s lead author Steven Woolf, told the Times, “this is when the growth in our life expectancy began to slow down compared to other wealthy nations.”

What “changed” is the capitalist rulers deepening offensive against the working class as they’ve sought to offload the deepening crisis of their system onto our backs. And this has been heightened by U.S. imperialism’s seemingly endless wars in Afghanistan and the Middle East and the number of workers who return home injured, facing the crisis in the Veterans Affairs department that mean months of delay in medical care.

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A magazine of Marxist politics and theory. 1934-present
Intercontinental Press
International news magazine 1963-86
Online at themilitant.com
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NY event discusses ‘Thomas Sankara’s Legacy Today’

NEW YORK — Some 100 people attended a program at the Harlem YMCA here Dec. 8 on “Thomas Sankara’s Legacy Today: Sankara Everywhere, Sankara Nowhere.” Speaking were Banning-Erwe soda Isore Dianda, a teacher; Inem Richardson, a Barnard College student and researcher; Isia Zoungrana, project coordinator; Stand for Life and Liberty; Dr. Bokaya Savalado, professor at City College of New York; and Peter Thierry, Socialist Workers Party. Paul Sankara, brother of Thomas Sankara, attended the meeting.

A wide-ranging discussion followed the presentations. Participants came from New York and northern New Jersey, as well as Boston, Montreal, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.

Thomas Sankara was the leader of the 1983-87 popular democratic revolution in the West African country of Burkina Faso. The revolutionary government organized millions of Burkina toilers in campaigns for land reform, to eliminate illiteracy and curable diseases, and to plant 10 million trees to stem destruction of the soil. It promoted self-sufficiency in food and clothing and drew women into social and political activity. It resisted French and U.S. imperialist pressures and collaborated with revolutionary Cuba.

Sankara was assassinated in 1987 in a counterrevolutionary coup. The International Committee of Sankara Annual Conference sponsored the event. The next issue will feature a full report.

— LEA SHERMAN

Protests in Chile demand end to gov’t attacks

Mass protests are rocking Chile today, as working people and youth demand an end to attacks on their living conditions in a country with the greatest class disparities in Latin America. The ‘Militant’ gives voice to the protesters, offers solidarity to their fight.

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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.

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

"Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lies not in the immediate result, but in the ever expanding union of the workers."

— Karl Marx and Frederick Engels

Written in 1848, the Communist Manifesto explains why communism is the line of march of the working class toward power, “springing from an existing class struggle, a historical movement growing on under our very eyes.”

order at: pathfinderpress.com

2 The Militant December 23, 2019
Help get out books, ‘Militant’

Continued from front page

from rail workers they spoke to at the Conway rail yard north of Pittsburgh Nov. 27. They sold one subscription to a rail unionist and six copies of the paper.

“We’re tracked and trained to work for big companies from an early age,” said Tatiana Nelson, a 20-year-old Walmart worker in Atlanta, who recently purchased the book Are They Rich? Because They’re Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes. In the book Barnes explains that under capitalism working-class schooling is organized for the “destruction of human solidarity, as the organization of a society based on class differentiation, where human beings in their late teens become units of production in the minds of personnel managers.”

Nelson got the book and a subscription to the Militant from co-worker Lisa Potash, an SWP member, after Potash showed her articles in the paper about the bosses’ offensive in the retail industry and ongoing labor battles. Nelson told Potash that she had to leave college because of the high cost to her family.

Potash showed her articles in the paper. “It’s going to take a revolution to make real change,” Samantha Hanson said to SWP member Leroy Watson, right, talks to Joshoa Gantile on his doorstep in Hometown, Illinois, Dec. 8. SWP says workers need to build a labor party to defend our class interests.

Books on revolutionary politics offered during the drive explain how workers and their allies will be transformed through such struggles and become capable of taking power into our own hands.

Efforts to expand the readership of the Militant and books on revolutionary politics do not end with the conclusion of the fall drive, but will continue as Socialist Workers Party candidates for office get their campaigns underway for 2020. The Militant is an irreplaceable tool for learning what can be done to advance the struggles of working people today.

To join efforts to get the paper around, get in touch with a branch of the Socialist Workers Party or Communist League listed on page 8.

Special offer on new book

The Turn to Industry: Forging a Proletarian Party

Explains the working-class program, composition, and course of conduct of the only kind of party worthy of the revolutionary epoch.

The only kind of party that can recognize the most revolutionary fact of this epoch — the worth of working people, and our power to change society when we organize and act against the capitalist class in all its economic, social, and political forms.

This book is about building such a party in the United States and in other capitalist countries around the world.

— Jack Barnes, National Secretary of the Socialist Workers Party

Special offer: $12 — or $10 with Militant subscription

pathfinderpress.com

Socialist Workers
Party Fund Drive

Oct. 5 - Dec. 10 (Final chart)

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Books on revolutionary politics of -

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Total

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Saved quota

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**Should Be $100,000**

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**Total**

1,097,120

1,175,159

**1,373,159**

**$1,100,1,125,250**
US weighs troops to Mideast

Continued from front page

military and political reach in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Gaza and Yemen.

Meanwhile, anti-government protests in Iraq, Lebanon and inside Iran itself has faced brutal assaults from those governments as well as counterrevolutions by paramilitary forces organized by the clerical regime in Iran.

Even as its dominance in the region weakens, Washington continues to define its imperialist interests and to strike at its foes. The U.S. rulers’ military maneuvers and economic sanctions against Tehran continue, weighing heaviest on working people there. At exactly the same time, President Trump says he wants to withdraw U.S. forces from the region, but finds he can’t.

The Dec. 4 Wall Street Journal reported that up to 14,000 more U.S. troops could be sent to the region, which would double the number sent since the start of a troop buildup in May.

The Pentagon has reestablished a major air base in Saudi Arabia for the first troop deployment, showed majority sentiment against the government crackdown. One of the key demands of the actions is for direct elections for the chief executive and the legislative council by universal suffrage, instead of appointment by a Beijing-dominated committee. Other demands are for an inquiry into the police repression and the dropping of all charges against over 6,000 arrested protesters.

This popular movement is a serious political obstacle for Chinese President Xi Jinping as he seeks to tighten Beijing’s rule over the former British colony. The Chinese rulers are worried the sustained mass actions for political liberties in this Asian financial hub will become an example for workers and youth attracted to their struggles on the mainland.

ROY LANDERSEN

Mass protest advances Hong Kong political rights fight

Protesters in Hong Kong hold up five fingers as a sign of continued support for their five demands Dec. 8 in the largest action for greater political rights in months. Others carried large banners such as “Free Hong Kong.” The Civil Human Rights Front, which organized the march, said that some 800,000 people participated. Hundreds of marshals were organized to ensure there were no provocations during the protest.

The demonstration was the first to receive police permission since 1.7 million March 18. The semi-autonomous city government, with the backing of the regime in Beijing, has been denying permits for larger protests while using riot police, tear gas and water cannons to break up smaller “illegal” ones. Confrontational tactics against the cops by a small minority has played into the hands of the authorities as well.

Two weeks previously, a landslide win for “pro-democracy” candidates in local council elections, in effect a referendum on mass support for the movement, showed majority sentiment against the government crackdown. One of the key demands of the actions is for direct elections for the chief executive and the legislative council by universal suffrage, instead of appointment by a Beijing-dominated committee. Other demands are for an inquiry into the police repression and the dropping of all charges against over 6,000 arrested protesters.

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ROY LANDERSEN

Join the International May Day brigade to Cuba!

Brigade members will take part in the May Day parade in Havana May 1. Along with learning about the revolution, they will participate in the million-dollar international workers day march in Havana May 1.

Cuba, is $725. Applications are due May 1. The demonstration was the first to receive police permission since 1.7 million March 18. The semi-autonomous city government, with the backing of the regime in Beijing, has been denying permits for larger protests while using riot police, tear gas and water cannons to break up smaller “illegal” ones. Confrontational tactics against the cops by a small minority has played into the hands of the authorities as well.

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ROY LANDERSEN

The Militant December 23, 2019
Virginia transit workers strike for equal pay, workplace safety

LORTON, Va. — Some 130 Metro-bus workers from Amalgamated Transit from Local 689 at the Cinder Bed Road have been on strike since Oct. 24. They were briefly joined by nearly 600 Fairfax Connector workers, members of ATU Local 1764, who went on strike Dec. 5 for four days, facing some of the same issues before returning to work. The combined strikes impacted some 40,000 passengers in northern Virginia.

Both groups of workers are employed by Transdev, a French-owned multinational transit company, which operates in 200 cities in the U.S. and Canada. The Washington Area Metropolitan Transit Authority has contracted out services to Transdev to cut costs and weaken the union.

“Transdev is looking for equal pay for equal work,” Tharien Graham, a van driver, told the Militant. “We drive Metro buses but we make $12 less an hour than Metro workers.”

“As each day passes I go deeper in debt,” he added. “I have to use my credit card to pay my car and rent bills. And our health care deductable is $6,000. We have to stand up.”

After six weeks on strike here, spirit and determination of the workers remains strong. They keep up large picket lines at the Cinder Bed Road garage, and supporters bring firewood, coffee and food in solidarity.

“Safeguarding your pay and benefits is a condition on the picket line,” said ATU Local 689 driver Thoam Dufuy. “When you work split shifts — from 4:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. and then 2:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. — you’re not rested!”

The drivers got some international solidarity when French railway workers — many of whom also work for Transdev — went on strike Dec. 5 and joined some 800,000 workers and their allies protesting across the country. From the march in Paris, CGT Railway Federation International Director David Goébe sent a video of support to the ATU.

— Jeff Powers

French public hospital workers protest government cutbacks

PARIS — Some 10,000 public hospital workers conducted a one-day strike this week to protest government cutbacks. It is the first time, members of all medical professions — from nursing assistants to doctors — acted together. Similar protests took place in other cities.

Budget cutting has created what many people call “medical deserts,” especially in rural areas, midwife Caroline Rau said at the Militant rally. She pointed to the example of the number of maternity centers that have been closed. “There were 1,200 such centers in 1970,” she said. “Now there are only 540.”

Hospitals in Paris and other large cities are beginning to be affected as well. Five-to-seven-hour waiting time is now common in public hospital emergency rooms here, and there are two-to-three-month delays to see a specialist. The cutbacks have made it clear the government favors private, for-profit clinics.

Over 1 million people work in public hospitals in France. A second day of demonstrations has been called for Dec. 17.

— Nat London

Bus drivers in New Zealand fight for higher wages

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — In the week beginning Dec. 2, around half of all bus trips in Auckland became free to the public. More than 900 drivers employed by two of the city’s bus companies — NZ Bus and Go Bus — stopped collecting passenger fares as part of their ongoing campaign to win new contracts, higher wages and improved conditions.

Many drivers, members of New Zealand Tramways Union and FIRST Union, said the reception from riders was positive, with many saying “good luck,” as well as offering money and food. It’s the first time the unions have tried this tactic.

“I think it’s a brilliant idea,” Paul Al- bert, a driver and assistant Tramways Union delegate at Onehunga depot, told the Militant.

NZ Bus reacted Dec. 7 by issuing suspension notices to drivers as they turned up for work, locking them out. In response, drivers went to the union office and organized picketing at the gates of other bus companies that were still operating. On Dec. 9, 200 drivers staged a spirited rally outside the offices of Auckland Transport, a City Council organization that contracts all bus companies. They then marched through the central city.

NZ Bus drivers had voted overwhelm- ingly Nov. 28 to reject the company’s offer to raise wages by 38 cents an hour. Their unions are demanding an 8% wage increase for all bus workers.

— Terry Geggan, member Tramways Union at NZ Bus Onehunga

— Jeff Powers

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.

ON THE PICKET LINE

February 28, 1994

December 26, 2019

Airline food catering workers rally for higher pay, health care

SAN FRANCISCO — Hundreds of airline food and catering workers at 16 airports in 16 cities Nov. 26 in support of food catering workers fighting for higher pay and affordable health care coverage. The workers employed by LSG Sky Chefs and Gate Gourmet, are members of UNITE HERE.

Many workers who have worked at Sky Chefs for three years, told the Militant. “We pay $35 a week if you are single or $70 a week for a family for coverage and there still is a very big deductible.”

“The airlines are making billions and food. It’s the first time the unions have tried this tactic,” said the workers. “I think it’s a brilliant idea,” Paul Albert, a driver and assistant Tramways Union delegate at Onehunga depot, told the Militant.

— Jeff Powers

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— Terry Geggan, member Tramways Union at NZ Bus Onehunga
Continued from front page

to prevent working people in Europe from turning to take power and to ad-

committee against revolutionary military operations wherever Washington

saw an opening. Its first action was
to mobilize troops for the U.S. war

in Korea.

When the French rulers decided the

military alliance was operating to the

advantage of Washington, not their own,

they pulled out in 1966, rejoin-

ing only in 1995.

From its founding 12 members,

NATO has grown to 29, all dedicated to

the preservation of capitalism.

President Trump and

Macron clashed at the meeting, reflecting the increasingly divergent interests of

the rival powers that make up the “al-

liance.” These conflicts were underway

long before Trump assumed the presi-

dency. Each member of NATO seems

advantage for its own ruling class

amid sharpening conflicts over mar-

kets and resources; unresolved wars

in the Middle East; Moscow’s mili-

tary intervention in the war in

Europe and Syria; and competition from

the rising Asian power in Beijing.

US rulers try to stem their decline

Like previous presidents, Trump

seeks to hold off Washington’s rela-

tive decline as the world’s dominant

imperial power, while its NATO “all-

lies” in Europe hope to continue to get

protection under Washington’s mili-

tary umbrella while they let their own

armed forces dwindle. And the U.S.

rulers are determined to prevent this.

Macron has bigger dreams. At the

summit he submitted his comment

last month that NATO is experienc-

ing “brain death.” He advocates EU

president to lay claim to.

French protests say ‘Hands off our pensions’!

PARIS — Unionists and other working people across France carried out

a one-day strike Dec. 5 and mounted sizable demonstrations in defense

of their pensions. The actions were centered among public service sector

workers in transportation, schools and public hospitals.

The mobilizations were called after French President Emmanuel Ma-

cron, well known for his arrogant and demeaning attitude toward work-

ers and their rights, announced government moves to revise the pension

system. The “reform” would mean a serious decrease in benefits for many

workers, raise the age to get maximum benefits and threaten early retire-

ment in rail and public transportation.

Macron’s meritocratic government has sought to impose a series of an-

ti-working-class measures, sparking last year’s mass yellow vest protests

and now this nationwide strike.

Close to a million people demonstrated nationally, including in Mar-

seille, above. The strike closed down 90% of rail traffic, 11 out of 16 Paris

subway lines and 20% of passenger flights. Public schools were closed.

Rail and public transportation unions said their strike would continue.

Some teachers also continued their strike.

A second one-day strike and series of demonstrations has been called

by almost all the union federations for Dec. 10.

France’s capitalist rulers are determined to strengthen their position

against U.S. competitors and in the EU.

By NAT LONDON

French protests say ‘Hands off our pensions!’

The real target of their witch hunt

is the working class, which they hold

responsible for electing the president.

They consider workers reactionary —

“white guys in diners,” according to

New York Times columnist Paul

Krugman, who are driven by “ani-

mosity toward immigrants.”

The House Judiciary Commit-

tee’s first hearing on articles of im-

peachment featured what they billed as

learned legal “experts” who accused

Trump. But this was quickly revealed to

be another partisan hit job. Three of

the four “experts” called by the Dem-

ocrats turned out to be fervent Demo-

crats themselves. Professor Pamela

Karlan is head of a liberal lawyers

group and has donated to Elizabeth

Warren’s campaign, as she did to Hill-

ary Clinton’s campaign in 2016.

All these “experts” did was bless

the articles of impeachment.

“We’re less aligned with American

immobilism will use its

weight to override the

disintegration of the

stability of the capitalist

social and eco-

nomic order.”

“Neither NATO, an

alliance born of the Cold

War, nor coali-
tions in 1990s under

UN or NATO fig leaves to

fight wars in the Gulf

or Yugoslavia, can serve ev-

ning purposes of U.S. imperial-

ism.”

Capitalism’s World Disorder

by Jack Barnes

U.S. imperial-

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promise the disintegration of the

stability of the capitalist social and eco-
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"Neither NATO, an

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fight wars in the Gulf or

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in New International no. 12

Capitalism’s Long Hot

Winter Has Begun

Despite German rulers having largest economy in Europe, not one of their six submarine was operational in 2018. Less than half their tanks, helicopters, fighter jets are usable. Mismatch between economic and military power will not survive deeper inter-imperialist conflicts.
Conference participants discuss impact of today’s Washington-Beijing tensions

BY PATRICK BROWN

GZHKOU, China — “Chinese Overseas and China: Through a Global Lens” was the theme of the 10th International Conference of ISSCO, the International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas, that took place at Jinan University here Nov. 8-11. Concern over fallout for the millions of Chinese living elsewhere around the globe from the sharpening economic and political confrontation — still in its early stages — pitting the governments of the United States and its imperialist allies against the People’s Republic of China was the thread that ran through both plenary sessions and over 50 panel discussions.

“The rise of China and the West’s reaction to that rise” is putting the spotlight on overseas Chinese everywhere, stressed Peter Li, retired professor of sociology at the University of Saskatchewan as he closed the conference.

“Chinese overseas” includes both recent waves of emigrants, and those whose ancestors long ago put down roots and built new lives in other countries, combating discrimination and oppression in order to do so — conditions they still have to deal with today.

Three hundred people, including 80 student volunteers, attended the conference. About half hailed from mainland China. The rest came from 25 other countries and the Special Administrative Regions of the PRC, Hong Kong and Macau. English and Chinese were the official languages of the conference with plenary sessions and nearly half of the panels conducted in English.

ISSCO was founded in 1992, in the wake of the post-Cultural Revolution political course initiated by Chinese leader Deng Xioaping that opened China to foreign investment and capitalist enterprises. It became possible for Chinese academics living and working outside China to meet and collaborate with their peers in the PRC, bringing the study of Chinese overseas out of its neglected corner.

International conferences, held every three years since then, have taken place in Beijing, Hong Kong, Taipei, Singapore and elsewhere in Asia, as well as the United States, Denmark and Canada. A dozen smaller regional conferences have been organized as well, from New Zealand to Cuba, South Africa, Korea and beyond.

PRC’s growing muscle

The opening session of the conference focused on remarks of welcome from outgoing ISSCO President Tan Chee-Beng and the conference hosts the School of International Studies/Academy of Overseas Chinese Studies of Jinan University and the national Academy of Overseas Chinese Studies. They were followed by a “key-note forum” of five ISSCO leaders discussing the challenges faced by Chinese populations in five different regions of the world in light of the rising economic and military power of China.

“The relations between China and the Chinese overseas become more important as China rises in the world,” said Professor Lin Rupeng, the Communist Party secretary at Jinan University, in his welcoming remarks. “Academics,” he added forcefully, “have an important role to play in helping maintain the social stability of Hong Kong and Macau.”

There were no other references on the conference floor to the many months of protests in Hong Kong.

The panel that followed, one of the highlights of the conference, was chaired by Zhang Zhongqiang, dean of the School of International Studies/Academy of Overseas Chinese Studies. It was opened by Ling-Chi Wang, retired professor of Asian American and ethnic studies at the University of California in Berkeley, talking about Chinese in the U.S. He emphasized that the fast-growing Chinese American population has undergone enormous changes since 1965, when the U.S. government eliminated the last of the regulations that constituted a Chinese exclusion policy first enacted on a national level in 1882.

Before 1965 “95% of immigrants were from the Pearl River Delta in southern China,” said Wang, who co-founded ISSCO with Professor Wang Gung-Wu of the National University of Singapore. “Today, however, people of Chinese origin come from all provinces, as well as Taiwan, Vietnam and Hong Kong.”

Chinese ancestry notwithstanding, Wang stressed, Chinese-Americans are “not homogeneous. They’re extremely diverse and can’t be united on any China issue.”

Secondary migrations

Kee Pookong from Melbourne University spoke about the secondary immigration of “Chinese coming to Australia from Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia where their families have been assimilated for generations.” Today only 40% of Chinese Australians came directly from China, Kee said. He also noted the fears voiced by many Australians of China’s rising economic weight and said allegations concerning “Chinese influence in Australian politics have become a daily topic in the media.”

Longtime ISSCO leader Leo Suryadinata of Singapore’s Institute of Southeast Asian Studies called attention to the fact that “72% of the more than 30 million people of Chinese ethnicity who live in countries outside mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau ‘are located in Southeast Asia.’” They constitute more than 75% of the population of Singapore, and sizable minorities in Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and others.

The global picture was rounded out by Mette Thunoe from Aarhus University in Denmark speaking on Chinese immigration in Europe and Li Zelin from Peking University in China discussing Chinese emigration to Africa today, which is overwhelmingly individual Chinese entreprenuers seeking their fortunes.

Painting the picture of the diverse character of Chinese immigrant populations around the world brought home the fact that the overwhelming majority are not temporary “sojourners” who will one day return to their proud of their Chinese heritage, but are part of the permanent social and economic fabric of the countries where they and their families have settled.

Tension between China, imperialism

At the same time, as many of the conference panels documented, the growing tensions between China and the dominant imperialist powers mean that Chinese living abroad more often find themselves at odds with influential forces like Australia for the local consequences of Beijing’s policies. And more are coming under attack for that reason.

And in her presentation entitled “Calling in the Calvary: Chinese Overseas and Their Envisaged Role in the Belt and Road Initiative,” Mette Thunoe noted that Beijing policy is to enlist wealthy overseas Chinese to help overcome local opposition to the initiative. The BRI, as it is called, is built around Beijing providing billions of dollars in loans to governments around the world to finance Chinese state-supported construction companies to build ports, railroads and other strategic infrastructure projects along the millennia-old land and sea routes of Chinese traders.

For Beijing, said Thunoe, Chinese overseas are potential “agents for China’s foreign policy,” as well as sources of capital for economic development in China.

In one of several panels covering issues in the Philippines, Teresita Ang See of Manila’s Kaisa Heritage Center and Rommel Banlaoi of the Philippine Association for Chinese Studies, documented the backlash to the number of Chinese immigrants to the Philippines in recent years. Most, they said, find work with gambling cartels, especially online gambling, which is legal in the Philippines but not China. There is growing fear among Tsinoys, or Chinese-Filipinos, that they will become “collateral damage,” Ang See said, amid anger aimed at newer Chinese immigrants who are blamed for rising crime rates linked to gambling and drugs.

Still worse, said Banlaoi in their joint presentation, is the “great distrust” with which Chinese in the Philippines tend to be viewed as Beijing and Manila face off over territorial claims in the South China Sea.

When challenged that their presenta-
Asarco strikers hang tough

Continued from front page

been on strike since Oct. 13 at Asar-
co’s Ray Mine, a short drive north of
here, at another smelter complex in near-
by Hayden; at its Mission and Silver Bell
Mine complexes near Tucson and at
its refinery in Amarillo, Texas.

Arizona has been a center of bloody
battles between copper bosses and the
miners. Rico Lopez said they grew up in
this small town of 2,000 where
generation of family members fought
for the union and walked picket lines
as children. Both brothers said that
before the strike they had spent time
discussing with friends and workers
what had been won and defended through
the union, urging them not to cross
the picket line.

Solidarity crucial

Strikers welcomed the solidarity
from over 40 workers at the Walmart
outside of Oakland, California, who
wrote messages of support and en-
couragement next to their signatures
on the solidarity card. Some strik-
ers said they’ve gotten jobs at an
area Walmart to help see themselves
through the strike.

The strikers are buoyed up by
support they get in
Keeney and nearby
copper towns, where
almost everyone has a
family member on
one side or the other, there’s no
being union, knowing that you are
buoyed up by the
fellow strikers get assistance.

Not everyone sup-
ports the strike. “It’s polarized,” said
Richard Perez, an SX maintenance
worker at the mine. “I grew up here
being union, knowing that you are
on one side or the other, there’s no
in between.” Perez was volun-
teering at the Steelworkers union hall to help
fellow strikers get assistance.

The strikers need support, includ-
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re-inforce picket lines and donations to
strike funds and for Christmas. For
strikers at the Ray Mine and Hayden
Smelter in Kearney and Hayden, send
contributions and messages of sup-
port to USW Local 915, Strike As-
pistance, P.O. Box 550, Kearny, AZ
85137. For strikers at the Mission and
Silver Bell complexes outside of Tuc-
son, send donations to the Pima Area
Labor Federation Community Servic-
es via psyupal.ml/palcfundingserv-
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There is a long history of hard-fought copper mine battles in
Arizona. Above, state government sent guardsmen and troopers to
protect strikebreakers in 1983 strike against Phelps Dodge. Moreno
mine is now owned by Freeport-McMoRan, remaina nonunion.

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EDITORIAL

Holiday greetings to workers behind bars

Continued from front page

mit to the dictates of the bosses and their government. Prisoners are victims of solitary confinement and numerous other indignities daily. And 40% of those in prison are Black, even though African Americans are just 13% of the country’s population.

We hail the oft-repeated protests that forced the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals to block the execution of Rodney Reed, who has been on death row for over 20 years, framed up for a crime he didn’t commit. Opposition to the death penalty — a weapon of terror wielded against the working class under capitalism — continues to grow.

We call for the release of all remaining imprisoned Black Panthers Fred Hampton and Jalil Muntaqin in New York; of Leonard Pelletier, a Native American activist framed on murder charges and imprisoned for decades far from his family; and Mumia Abu-Jamal, who was railroaded into jail in Pennsylvania in 1982 and has had to fight to get the medical care he needs. And of all class-struggle and political prisoners worldwide.

We celebrate the release from prison in Russia of Ukrainian film director Oleg Sentsov, who was framed up after speaking out against Moscow’s seizure of Crimea in 2014. On his release this September Sentsov demanded freedom for all Ukrainian political prisoners held by the Vladimir Putin regime’s gulag.

After a hard-fought battle this year a victory has been won against Florida prison officials’ attempt to suppress the Militant. Broad support was won from organizations and individuals who sent letters of protest to prison authorities. Several of the Militant’s subscribers behind bars also stood up to prison authorities and filed grievances against the impunity of their subscriptions. As a result of the campaign, since mid-August no further issues of the paper have been suppressed.

As we’ve done in New York, New Jersey and Florida this year, we will continue to join in ongoing fights for the right of workers behind bars to get the papers and books of their choice.

Over 6 million people in the United States are prevented from voting by laws that attack the rights of former felons. After working people in Florida overwhelmingly passed Amendment 4 last year to restore voting rights to over a million former prisoners who have completed parole, state legislators imposed new restrictions forcing former felons to pay all outstanding court fees before they can exercise their constitutional rights. The fight to regain the right to vote continues here and in Kentucky, Iowa and other states.

We encourage workers behind bars to get subscriptions to the Militant and order books by Socialist Workers Party leaders and other revolutionary fighters published by Pathfinder Press. These titles contain the lessons of previous revolutionary battles and help arm us to build the party that is necessary to lead working people to fight for political power.

We ask readers of the paper to contribute to the Militant’s subscribers fund that makes it possible to offer reduced -price subscriptions to workers behind bars.

LETTERS

Cuba’s socialist revolution

Keep up the good work that you are doing, especially on Cuba to defend Cuba’s socialist revolution.

A prisoner, Florida

Could not put ‘Militant’ down

Thank you for sending me the Militant. When I received my first issue, I could not put it down. The article that touched me the most was on the Blackjewel miners. I am an Eastern Kentucky native. It reminded me of the struggles that many of my fellow Kentuckians, and Americans face every day.

A prisoner, California

Update on Brexit, Ireland

Thank you for providing me with the voice of the progressive left and update on issues like Brexit, Ireland, the U.K.

A prisoner, California

Understanding capitalism

The Militant has helped me understand how U.S. capitalism works.

A prisoner, Pennsylvania

Overseas Chinese and China’s growing weight in world politics

Continued from page 7

tion cast Beijing’s policies in too negative a light, Ang See noted that was the topic of the panel: “New Chinese Immigrants in the Philippines: Racial Conflicts and the Security Dilemma.”

Surveillance by Washington and Ottawa

In his keynote address to the closing session of the conference, Peter Li pointed to the increased surveillance of Chinese scientists, engineers, researchers and students working in the U.S. by the FBI, employers and university administrators.

Moreover, that number has risen to 70 medical schools are now under investigation over alleged “theft of intellectual property,” he reported, citing information published in the New York Times, the U.K. Guardian and other sources. Temple University physicist Xiaoxing Xi was one of several who have been arrested, charged with espionage, and then exonerated, Li said.

Increased surveillance is not limited to the U.S., however. Li also spoke of Dr. Xiangguo Qiu, who was removed from the infectious disease lab at the University of Manitoba in Canada in the midst of an investigation of her security clearance by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Her husband, Keding Cheng, and an unknown number of her students from China were under investigation at the same time.

There is growing concern, even “panic,” said Li, among immigrants from China employed in various scientific fields and information technol-
ogy. They fear things will get worse.

Following the closing ceremony, a Special General Meeting of ISSCO members elected a new board of directors and officers, naming Li Minghuan of the Academy of Overseas Chinese Studies of Jinan University the new president.

Student volunteers from Jinan University played a big part in ensuring the conference’s success. Among many other tasks, they helped oversee the busy courtyard of Jinan’s Main Teaching Building where several publishers, including the academic publisher Brill, Jinan University Press, the Kaifa Heritage Center and Pathfinder Press were provided space for tables stacked with hundreds of books for display and sale.

The steady traffic of students, teachers and conference participants kept the tables busy, and volunteers staffing the Pathfinder table reported that almost every one of the 140 books available was gone by the end of the conference. The best selling title, available in both English and Chinese, was Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution by Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, and Moisés Sio Wong.

A visit to the on-campus museum dedicated to the history of Jinan University was one of the conference high points. It provided a window into the history of the class struggle in China through the tumultuous years of the 20th century, starting with the bourgeois democratic revolution that brought down China’s last imperial dynasty in 1911. Among other important pieces of that history, the museum displays cast a spotlight on the founding of Jinan University in 1906 as part of the fight to extend education to the toiling masses of China, one of the driving forces of that revolutionary struggle.

Daylong tours to some of the great historical and cultural sites of Guangzhou, the port city at the heart of the Pearl River Delta, and the surrounding region concluded conference activities.

A coming issue of the Militant will feature the conference panel presentation by Socialist Workers Party-leader Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press, “Chinese Cubans in Cuba’s Revolutionary History and Relations Between China and Cuba Today.”