

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

**Celebrate 61 years  
of the Cuban Revolution!**  
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 84/NO. 1 JANUARY 13, 2020

## SWP fighting 2020 platform points political road forward

As the Socialist Workers Party prepares to launch its 2020 campaign for president and vice president, the party has begun announcing a series of candidates for federal and state offices across the country (see page 3).

This is the SWP's fighting campaign platform to confront the economic, social and moral crisis caused by capitalism:

**UNIONS/FOR A LABOR PARTY** Support workers' struggles to organize to defend themselves, to use union power on behalf of ourselves and all working people. Workers need their own party, a labor party. *One union for all drivers* — taxi, Uber, Lyft, other app-based and car service drivers! Support farmworkers in their fight to organize unions and for safe working conditions.

**AMNESTY FOR ALL UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS** in the US, a life-and-death question for the unions to unite workers and cut across divisions the bosses use to drive down wages. For access to driver's licenses for all.

**JOBS** Fight for a federal government-financed public works program  
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## India protesters demand repeal of anti-Muslim act

New law makes religion the basis for citizenship



Reuters/Sivaram V

Rally in Kochi, India, Jan. 1 protests government moves to undercut united, secular state.

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Hundreds of thousands took to the streets across India protesting the push by the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to enforce a new Citizenship Amendment Act passed Dec. 11. The sectarian law makes religion the criterion for who will be offered Indian citizenship and openly dis-

criminates against Muslims.

It is a direct challenge to the secular tradition that has marked the country since massive post-World War II mobilizations wrested independence from British colonial rule.

The new law promulgated by Modi and his Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party fast-tracks citizenship for migrants from neighboring majority-Muslim countries — Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan. But only Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Zoroastri-

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## US hands off Iraq, Iran! Get out of the Middle East!

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Washington mounted airstrikes Dec. 29, targeting the Tehran-backed Kataeb Hezbollah militia, whose forces are part of Iraq's military — hitting three sites in Iraq and two in Syria, killing at least 25 militia members. Secretary of Defense Mark Esper warned that Washington may take "additional actions" in response to "bad behavior from militia groups or from Iran."

Washington said the strikes were retaliation for rocket attacks on an Iraqi army base near Kirkuk two days before that killed a U.S. contractor and wounded four U.S. soldiers. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, this was the 11th time over the past two months that U.S. troops in Iraq were targeted by rocket fire.

Kataeb Hezbollah was formed in 2003 at the initiative of the reactionary clerical regime in Iran after the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. It was one of the first

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## Solidarity crucial in striking Asarco workers' fight against union busting



United Steelworkers Local 937

Members of Machinists Local 933 from Raytheon missile plant in Tucson brought donations to Asarco picket line at Mission Mine Dec. 20. Copper miners strike began Oct. 13.

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

"It's about the solidarity, about everybody sticking together and staying together, outside of that it's community support, labor organization support," Karla Schumann, secretary-treasurer of Teamsters Local 104, said at the picket line outside Asarco's Mission Mine in Sahuarita, Arizona, Dec. 29.

She was speaking at an expanded picket line and dinner attended by 150 strikers and supporters to celebrate the holidays. Gifts to the children of striking copper workers were distributed Dec. 23.

Some 1,700 workers at four Asarco complexes in Arizona and its refinery in Amarillo, Texas, have been on

**Continued on page 3**

## Speak out against Jew-hatred after machete attack on Hanukkah in NY!

BY WILLIE COTTON

MONSEY, N.Y. — A violent attack at the Rockland County home of Rabbi Chaim Rottenberg during a Hanukkah celebration Dec. 28 seriously injured five people. The attacker barged into the event, held next to the rabbi's synagogue, with a machete and attacked dozens of those attending.

Some tried to defend themselves, throwing furniture at the attacker and forcing him to retreat. When Joseph Gluck confronted the assailant he screamed at Gluck, "Hey you, I'll get you." Gluck lured the attacker outside. Joseph Neumann who was stabbed multiple times remains in critical condition.

Grafton Thomas, a 37-year-old African American, was arrested hours after the attack and pled not guilty to five counts of attempted murder and

**Continued on page 7**

## Liberals 'impeach' drive aims to stifle political voice of working people

BY TERRY EVANS

As "resistance"-obsessed liberals struggle to find ways to oust President Donald Trump, they are pushing to limit the political rights of millions of working people. A Dec. 20 *New York Times* headline described the problem they face as "The Tyranny of the 63 Million," targeting working people who voted for the president. These workers, as well as those who decided not to vote for either ruling-class party, were disgusted with the disdain in

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—On the picket line, p. 5—

Minnesota Teamsters walk out in support of UNFI strikers

Striking Kaiser workers demand more staffing for patient care

# Johnson says workers ‘lent’ him their votes to get UK out of EU

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON — Boris Johnson claimed his Conservative Party’s huge electoral victory, built on an overwhelming working-class vote, was the “starting gun being fired on what promises to be a fantastic year and a remarkable decade for our United Kingdom.” But claims that the instability that has wracked politics in the U.K. in recent years are over are a pipe dream. The weakness, heterogeneity and loss of nerve of the British ruling class was not the result of a two-year hung Parliament. It has been decades in the making as their military and economic forces decline amidst capitalism’s spreading world disorder.

Johnson thanked those who do not consider themselves “natural Tories” for “lending” him their vote following his promise to take the U.K. out of the European Union. Faced by the refusal by big business, the liberal media, capitalist politicians of all stripes, including Labour, and union leaders, to implement the 2016 referendum result to leave the EU, millions of workers responded to Johnson’s pledge to get out. “I voted Conservative because I wanted to get Brexit sorted, to get it over and done with. I’ve had enough of it,” John Wilkinson, 55, a worker at the Tulip meat factory in Manchester, told the *Militant*.

Whether Johnson is capable of turning these “lent” votes into a long-term shift in working-class political support is far from assured.

Johnson’s insistence on his “One Nation Conservatism” — a claim to

bring “rich and poor” together under the banner of “one nation” — is itself a recognition of the nervousness within the capitalist class about what’s brewing in the working class: the deep-seated anger, including the alienation from the entire capitalist political setup.

### Labour Party doesn’t defend labor

The Labour Party itself has been dealt a body blow for this very reason. Under the impact of the capitalist crisis and shifts within the party itself, working-class support has moved away from Labour in every election since 1997. Jeremy Corbyn, the Labour leader that led the electoral debacle, has followed the course begun by former Prime Minister Anthony Blair to transform Labour into a middle-class liberal big city party. Corbyn has spearheaded attacks on working-class consciousness under the banner of “identity politics.”

Workers looking for answers to deteriorating conditions of life and work, for jobs, health care and housing, and no more Grenfell Tower-style disasters, saw Corbyn’s bourgeois socialist Labour Party seek electoral support in more middle-class areas that had voted for the U.K. to remain in the EU.

Corbyn’s supporters then turned upon “stupid, backward” workers for rejecting Labour’s promotion of a “social Europe.” A section of the working class “deserted us,” Paul Mason wrote in the *New Statesman*. He claimed in the areas where Johnson took votes from Labour “there is now a toxic narrative of nativism and xenophobia.”



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Picket at Waterloo station, London, during December strike against South Western Railway in defense of guard jobs, safety for rail workers and passengers. Fight by workers to get UK out of EU took place against backdrop of deepening capitalist crisis, growing disdain of Labour Party.

Such sneering anti-working-class contempt, in the mold of Hillary Clinton’s depiction of Donald Trump supporters as “deplorables,” goes back years in the Labour Party.

In 2014 Emily Thornberry, now a candidate to replace Corbyn as leader, posted a picture of a worker’s home with an English flag and van outside, labeling the resident “white van man.” Four years earlier in the 2010 election, Prime Minister Gordon Brown was caught on TV complaining to his aides about why a lifelong Labour Party supporter — a “bigoted woman” in Brown’s invective — had been allowed to asked him about immigration.

The revolt against Labour was also a rejection of this “wokeness.” Every time Labour attacked Johnson for an un-“politically correct” statement, the Conservative Party won more votes.

During the campaign Corbyn refused to apologize in a BBC interview for persistent anti-Semitic remarks by Labour leaders, an example of how Jew-hatred endures in capitalist politics today and won’t go away. Labour’s anti-Semitism was not a decisive factor in the election result. There has been a decline in anti-Semitism in the working class and many workers were repelled by Corbyn’s position.

None of this implies that the shift in votes to the Conservatives means workers are becoming more reactionary. The government will honor its com-

mitment for the U.K. to leave the EU’s political institutions on Jan. 31, but negotiations over trading relations with these rivals in the protectionist bloc have yet to begin. EU officials cast doubt on completing them in the 11-month “transition” period and make no secret of their plan to extract the most concessions possible. The new government will be effected in these negotiations by the U.K.’s long-term decline against its rivals.

The U.K.’s rulers have military bases around the world. But their armed forces have declined in strength, numbers and quality. The army totals 73,000 — down from 102,000 at the time of the 2003 Iraq war. The navy is less than half its 1990 size.

The economy has dropped to sixth in the world and growth has stagnated as profit rates and industrial investment fall. Without economic and military clout, the pound sterling is increasingly irrelevant as a reserve currency.

And the United Kingdom itself is under strain. Demands for a second Scottish independence vote immediately followed the Scottish National Party’s landslide electoral victory north of the border. And pressures toward a united Ireland are increasing. Johnson’s Brexit deal negotiated with Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar and the EU drew a customs line down the Irish Sea just as all-Ireland economic, social and cultural life is increasing.

# THE MILITANT

## Support rail workers’ fight for safety

Canadian National rail workers struck Nov. 19-26 against threats to their safety by bosses’ profit drive, demanding longer hours, reducing rest breaks and crew sizes. The *‘Militant’* supports all fights to defend safety not only for rail workers but also working people near tracks.



Transportation Safety Board of Canada  
Canadian Pacific oil train derailed, burned near Guernsey, Saskatchewan, Dec. 9.

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# Solidarity with Asarco strike

**Continued from front page**  
strike since Oct. 13. Solidarity has been key to the workers' determination to continue their fight.

National Teamsters union President James Hoffa joined the strikers at the Dec. 29 activities in Sahuarita. Union members and other workers from around the region continue to bring aid and join the picket lines.

The Asarco bosses imposed their "last, best and final" offer Dec. 2 and have refused any further negotiations since. Their offer included a wage freeze for most workers, freezes in pensions, huge increases in health insurance costs and elimination of protections for union activity on the job.

Due to the strike, Asarco shut down its Amarillo refinery and its smelter in Hayden, Arizona, but has kept up some mining with supervisors, non-union contractors and over 300 workers who have crossed the picket lines.

The copper giant has now begun advertising on its website to hire mine laborers, haul truck drivers, electricians, mechanics and other workers in a bid to replace striking workers and increase production.

A delegation of five members of United Steelworkers Local 675 in Los Angeles County, including workers from the Phillips 66 oil refinery and the Marathon oil refinery, brought solidarity to the Asarco strikers in Kearny, Arizona, Dec. 21.

"This is a struggle against an international company that operates on both sides of the border," David Campbell, secretary-treasurer of Local 675, who participated in the delegation, told the *Militant* by phone. "The strikers were appreciative that our local traveled so far to join the picket lines."

## 'Asarco out to smash union'

"Asarco is out to smash the union," Campbell said. "If the copper miners are smashed, other industries will be encouraged to do likewise."

"We brought \$900 from plant gate collections," he reported. "The local itself also contributed \$2,000, will continue to contribute \$1,000 a month to the strike and hopes to do more." He urged other union locals to follow their example.

Eli Green, a pipefitter at the Marathon oil refinery who was also on the delegation, said, "Most of the \$900 we raised came from a morning plant gate collection at Marathon. The balance came from cans located in departments in the refinery. We were out on strike 50 days in 2015. The solidarity we received helped us so much and lifted our spirits."

Mexico City-based Grupo Mexico, which owns Asarco, is the third largest

copper mining company in the United States and the fourth largest in the world. The company brags that it produces copper more cheaply than any of its competitors.

Grupo Mexico hopes to keep it that way by busting the unions at Asarco. According to its 2019 third-quarter report, Asarco has been pushing to produce more "with a focus on human capital with the only goal being to recover and construct an operation that is sustainable in the long run."

The company says that it offered pay increases to "skilled workers," about a fourth of the workers. It doesn't mention that this means three-quarters of the workers would have no wage increase, on top of already going without a raise for nearly 10 years.

Any mine or factory worker, whether at U.S. or foreign-owned companies, knows exactly what Asarco bosses are talking about — speedup, cutting corners on safety, and pushing to widen divisions among workers and weaken their unions — all to jack up profits for the bosses.

Grupo Mexico and Asarco — just like U.S. mine bosses — are well known for their disregard for the safety of their workers and those who live near their mines. Two Asarco workers were killed after the vehicles they were in were crushed by massive mining vehicles



Pinal County Sheriff's Office

**Giant ore truck crushed Asarco mine worker Thomas Benavidez to death in 2010. Safety camera on truck could have prevented death, but Asarco like other mine bosses refuses to install them.**

used in the company's open pit mines, one in 2010 and the other in 2017.

In 2012, Asarco received 51 citations for safety violations at its Hayden copper concentrator operation alone, including 15 that were considered "significant and substantial" by the Mine Safety and Health Administration.

In 2014 Grupo Mexico's Buenavista del Cobre mine in Cananea, Mexico, flooded 40,000 cubic meters of toxic copper sulfate into the Sonora and Bacanuchi Rivers, poisoning the land and water.

More solidarity is needed. Spread the

word. Strike supporters are encouraged to visit the picket lines. For strikers at the Mission and Silver Bell complexes near Tucson, send contributions to the Pima Area Labor Federation Community Services via [paypal.me/palfcommunityservice](https://www.paypal.me/palfcommunityservice). Solidarity messages to the strike can be sent via [palfchair@gmail.com](mailto:palfchair@gmail.com). For strikers at the Ray Mine and Hayden Smelter, send contributions and messages to USW Local 915, Strike Assistance, P.O. Box 550, Kearny, AZ 85137. For strikers at the Amarillo refinery, send to USW Local 5613, 4230 Texas Hwy 136, Amarillo, TX 79108.

## Socialist Workers Party 2020 campaign platform

### Continued from front page

to put millions to work at union-scale wages building roads, bridges, hospitals, child care centers, mass transportation and quality affordable housing workers need. Set the minimum wage to allow workers to have a home and support a family.

**OPPOSE WASHINGTON'S WARS** US hands off Iran, Venezuela and Cuba. US troops out of Afghanistan, Korea, the Middle East. End US colonial rule in Puerto Rico.

**CUBA'S REVOLUTION — AN EXAMPLE** End the US rulers' economic war against Cuba; US out of Guantánamo. The Cuban Revolution in 1959 showed it is possible for workers and farmers to transform themselves in struggle, to take political power and uproot capitalist exploitation.

**HEALTH CARE FOR ALL** Fight for universal, government-guaranteed cradle-to-grave health care, and retirement income for all.

**ABORTION** Defend women's right to unrestricted access to family planning services, including the right to safe, secure abortions.

**ISRAEL & PALESTINE** For the recognition of Israel and of a contiguous

Palestinian state. For the right of Jews to return to Israel as a refuge in the face of capitalist crisis, Jew-hatred and murderous violence.

**WORKERS CONTROL OVER PRODUCTION & SAFETY** Capitalism's profit drive is the despoiler of nature and cause of unsafe working conditions. Workers and our unions must fight for workers control over production and safety in the factories, mines, railroads and all energy monopolies to protect those on the job and in nearby communities, and to control emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases to prevent the poisoning of the air, water and soil. Workers control over production to prevent disasters like the Boeing 737 MAX.

**"JUSTICE" SYSTEM** Fight against police brutality, racist discrimination and the entire capitalist injustice system with its frame-ups, "plea bargains," onerous bail and outrageous prison sentences, all of which disproportionately hit workers who are Black. For the right to vote for ex-prisoners and all workers behind bars.

**POLITICAL RIGHTS** Defend democratic rights — the right to vote, to free speech and assembly and to bear

arms, under attack from Democrats and Republicans alike. Stop FBI and other government spying, harassment and disruption.

**PRISONER RIGHTS** End solitary confinement. End suppression of the *Militant*, books and newspapers by prison authorities. Abolish the death penalty, an anti-working-class weapon in the hands of the rulers.

**FARMERS — WORKERS ALLIES ON THE LAND** To put a halt to farm foreclosures, bankruptcies and skyrocketing rural debt, we demand nationalization of the land. This puts the soil at the service of the farmers who till it, as opposed to control by the banks and landlords. We demand the government guarantee farmers their costs of production, including their living expenses.

*Working people must organize and act independent of the ruling capitalists and break from their political parties — the Democrats and Republicans. For a labor party and a movement of millions to fight for these demands along a course to replace the rule of the exploitative capitalist class with a workers and farmers government.*

*Join the Socialist Workers Party campaign!*

## 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 name 'revolutionary' in the imperialist 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, Socialist Workers Party

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## Campaign with the Socialist Workers Party candidates!

### Illinois

Naomi Craine, U.S. Senate

### Kentucky

Maggie Trowe, U.S. Senate

### Minnesota

David Rosenfeld, U.S. Congress, 5th Dist.

### New Jersey

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Candace Wagner, U.S. Congress, 8th Dist.

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Ruth Robinett, U.S. Congress, 14th Dist.

### Texas

Gerardo Sánchez, U.S. Senate

### Washington, D.C.

James Harris, Delegate to U.S. Congress

### Washington state

Clay Dennison, Governor

See directory on page 8 to contact party campaign office nearest you.

*The Turn to Industry*  
Forging a  
Proletarian Party

JACK BARNES

**\$12**

# India protests

**Continued from front page**  
ans, Jains and Christians can qualify, not Muslims. And it excludes persecuted minorities, especially Muslims, from nearby non-Muslim majority countries like Sri Lanka, China and Myanmar.

Those ruling capitalist families that Modi represents seek to strengthen their ability to exploit India's over 1.3 billion people and better position themselves to compete with Beijing and other rivals.

It goes along with a reactionary new National Registry of Citizens to be implemented across the country forcing everyone to produce documented proof of citizenship. A similar move in Assam province in August stripped citizenship from nearly 1.9 million people, most of them Muslims. Several hundred have been arrested and thrown into detention camps.

Protests over the new law began at two historically Muslim universities near the capital, New Delhi. Police attacked the students there Dec. 15, firing tear gas and beating them. Scores were injured and several maimed. This triggered broader protests from both Muslim and non-Muslim areas.

Tens of thousands more students erupted in protest at other campuses. Days later, many gathered in New Delhi holding signs like "No to CAA" and "No to citizenship based on religion." Solidarity events also took place among Indian students abroad from Britain to the U.S.

"This act now puts India's social fabric under threat," Shrey Kapoor, a Harvard student from India, told the *Financial Times*. "Violence against defenseless students was the tipping point for me."

Protesters at rallies began to fly India's flag and quote its constitution as emblems of secular equality. Muslims have been joined by significant numbers of other faiths. Dalits, the community at the bottom of the still common Hindu hierarchical caste system, also joined.

At least 26 people, mostly Muslims, have been killed by cop attacks across the country, mainly in the most populous state of Uttar Pradesh, governed by the BJP. Thousands have been detained there.

The government used a British colonial-era law to impose sweeping re-

## Harry Villegas (Pombo): Fought at side of Che Guevara

Cuban revolutionary leader Harry Villegas died Dec. 29 in Havana, after engaging in more than six decades of struggle against capitalist exploitation, imperialist oppression, and for national liberation and socialism. He is best known for fighting alongside Ernesto Che Guevara in those battles — from Cuba itself; to the Congo in 1965 (when Che gave him the nom de guerre Pombo); to Bolivia in 1966-67.

Villegas was born in 1940 in the foothills of the Sierra Maestra mountains of eastern Cuba. As a teenager he joined the revolutionary struggle against the U.S.-backed dictatorship. In 1957 he became a combatant in the Rebel Army led by Fidel Castro, fighting much of the time in a column commanded by Guevara. After the revolution's triumph on Jan. 1, 1959, Villegas shouldered responsibilities helping lead factory workers to restructure production in the interests of working people. He returned to active military duty in 1962, later serving in the internationalist missions in the Congo and Bolivia.

From 1977 to 1979, and again from 1981 to 1988, Villegas was part of the leadership of Cuba's volunteer military mission in Angola, fighting alongside Angolan and Namibian forces in the victorious battle against aggression by South Africa's apartheid regime and its backers in Washington.

Villegas was a Central Committee member of the Communist Party of Cuba from 1997 to 2011, a deputy of Cuba's National Assembly, and executive vice president of the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution. Retired from active duty at the time of his death, he held the rank of brigadier general.



Harry Villegas, left, and fellow combatants Alberto Fernández Montes and Serapio Aquino in Bolivia in 1966 or 1967, part of revolutionary struggle led by Che Guevara.

Courtesy Richard Dindo

Villegas is the author of *Pombo: A Man of Che's guerrilla; Cuba and Angola: The War for Freedom; At the Side of Che Guevara*; and co-author of *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces*. A coming issue will carry a fuller appreciation of his revolutionary life and work in Cuba and worldwide.

\*\*\*

Bottom photo, Villegas (at microphone) at February 2017 launching of his book *Cuba and Angola: The War for Freedom* during Havana International Book Fair. Others (from left): Cuban editor Irida Aguirrechu, who helped prepare book; Col. Leonardo Tamayo (Urbano), who fought alongside Villegas in Bolivia; Gerardo Hernández of the Cuban Five; Víctor Dreke, Che's second in command in Congo; Martín Koppel, co-editor of book with Pathfinder president Mary-Alice Waters (next to Villegas); Brig. Gen. Delsa Esther (Teté) Puebla, Combatants Association leader; and Aleida Guevara March, Che's daughter.



Militant/Jonathan Silverman

strictions — banning demonstrations, enforcing curfews, shutting down the internet and other attacks on political rights. They had done the same in August to weaken mass protests against the BJP rulers' decision to strip special autonomous status for the Muslim-majority region of Jammu and Kashmir.

### Britain's divide-and-rule legacy

The religious animosities that Modi seeks to use to strengthen India's capitalist rulers and assert Hindu supremacy are the legacy of British imperial domination starting in the 19th century.

For over a century London used a divide-and-rule strategy against Hindus

and Muslims to maintain its colonial hold. But the Indian toilers' struggle for national independence overcame these divisions. The uprising by sepoys (soldiers) in 1857 was "not a military mutiny but a national revolt," Karl Marx, founder of the international communist movement, wrote that year. "Muslims [Muslims] and Hindus" fought together "against their common masters."

Terrified by this united rebellion, British forces brutally crushed it. London took over direct colonial administration and stepped up efforts to pit Hindu and Muslim against each other.

In the face of a massive uprising for national independence after the second imperialist world war, the British rulers sought to hang on to as much of their power as possible by splitting the united independence struggle through the partition of India. The lives of mil-

lions were uprooted by creating the Muslim state of Pakistan.

Today the mass nationalist protest movement, fighting anew for a secular India, has put Modi on the defensive. The chief ministers of nine states have refused to implement the new citizenship law or the registry.

"We are here to fight for our rights," Tarannum Begum, part of a women-led sit-in in a Muslim enclave in New Delhi, told Al Jazeera. "Until they take back their [policies], this will go on." She added, "It is better to die here [protesting] than be put in camps."

## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### CALIFORNIA

#### Oakland

**Speak Out Against Jew-Hatred, Attacks and Killings.** Speaker: Eric Simpson, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Jan. 17, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 675 Hegenberger Road, Suite 250. Tel: (510) 686-1351.

### FLORIDA

#### Miami

**Where Should Workers Stand on Climate Debate?** Speaker: Chuck Guerra, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Jan. 10, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5. 1444 Biscayne Blvd., Suite 215. Tel: (305) 929-8966.

### UNITED KINGDOM

#### Manchester

**Behind the Rise of Anti-Semitic Attacks: A Working-Class Response.** Speaker: Ögmundur Jónsson, Communist League. Fri., Jan. 10, 7 p.m. Donation: £2.50. Office 329, Royal Exchange Buildings, 3 Old Bank St. Tel: (0161) 312-8119.

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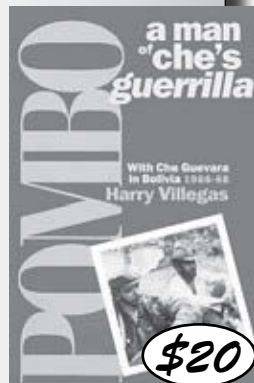
### WASHINGTON, D.C.

**U.S. Hands Off Cuba!** Speakers: Cleve Andrew Pulley, D.C. Metro Coalition delegate to 2019 Anti-Imperialist Conference in Havana; Jose Pertierra, Cuban-American immigration lawyer; Special guest from Cuban Embassy. Sat., Jan. 11, 7 p.m. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 1525 Newton St., NW. Tel: (202) 503-9465. Sponsored by D.C. Metro Coalition in Solidarity with the Cuban Revolution.

## Pombo: A Man of Che's guerrilla

**by Harry Villegas**

*The diary by Pombo of the 1966-68 revolutionary campaign in Bolivia led by Ernesto Che Guevara, an epic chapter in the history of the Americas.*



**pathfinderpress.com**

# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

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

## Minnesota Teamsters walk out in support of UNFI strikers

HOPKINS, Minn. — Seven hundred members of Teamsters Local 120 walked out here Dec. 17 at United Natural Foods Inc., the largest organic grocery distributor in North America. The workers were supporting Teamsters Local 414 members who had set up a picket line outside the Hopkins warehouse after they went on strike Dec. 12 at the UNFI warehouse in Ft. Wayne, Indiana.

The company refused to negotiate in good faith and the bosses were demanding concessions that would gut the union contract, picketing Local 414 members said. They have been working without a contract since Sept. 14.

Five thousand Teamsters work at dozens of UNFI distribution centers across the country. Whole Foods/Amazon is the company's largest customer.

Local 414 had extended its picket line to plants here and in Green Bay, Wisconsin, to broaden fellow workers' knowledge about the fight and

win solidarity.

Nearly every worker walked off the job at the Hopkins warehouse. Members of the Machinists and the Plumbers and Pipefitters unions also honored the picket lines.

When the company tried to get lower-paid nonunion contract workers to load the trucks, they walked out too.

By the next day, there were dozens of trucks with inbound freight parked outside the warehouse. No work was going on inside. UNFI bosses then announced Dec. 19 they would return to negotiations with Local 414 in Ft. Wayne. The extended picket lines were taken down and workers returned to work at all three facilities.

Mark Severs, a *Militant* worker-correspondent and member of Minneapolis-area Teamsters Local 638, who drives for a company that makes deliveries to the warehouse, joined the picketers. "Once drivers where I work learned the pickets were up, we agreed we were not going to cross the picket line," he said.

— Helen Meyers



Militant/Helen Meyers

Teamsters Local 414 members, who struck United Natural Foods plant in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, picket at company's Hopkins, Minnesota, plant Dec. 17, winning support from workers there.

## Striking Kaiser workers demand more staffing for patient care

OAKLAND, Calif. — Thousands of mental health workers went on a five-day strike Dec. 16-20 at up to 100 Kaiser Permanente clinics throughout the state demanding increased staffing and a 3% pay raise. Areas where actions were organized included San Francisco, Oakland, San Leandro, San Jose, Sacramento, Los Angeles and San Diego.

The National Union of Healthcare Workers, which represents the strikers, is calling for Kaiser to fix its "broken" mental health system where patients wait months for appointments. At the

same time as patients can't get timely care, therapists are overwhelmed by large caseloads.

"Kaiser has been understaffing mental health clinics across California for many years," Kirstin Quinn-Siegel, a marriage and family therapist at Kaiser for eight years, told the *Militant* at a rally here Dec. 20. "After the initial appointment it takes you about six weeks to get the next appointment."

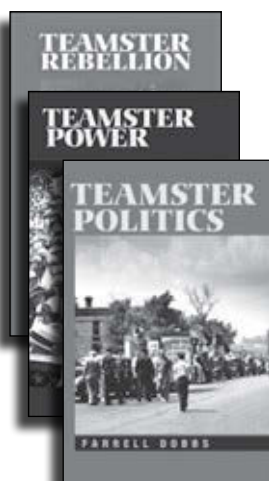
Sarah Louise, a patient at Kaiser and strike supporter, said, "I'm here today in support of mental health providers because they provide essential medical care I need and sometimes cannot get."

— Carole Lesnick

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Lessons from U.S. labor battles of the 1930s

by Farrell Dobbs



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## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



January 16, 1995

BOSTON — Less than seven hours after an antiabortion gunman walked into two Boston-area clinics December 30 and shot seven people, killing two clinic workers, more than 500 people turned out in front of one of the medical facilities to protest the killings and defend a woman's right to choose.

The next day 2,000 demonstrated at the state Capitol to denounce antiabortion terrorism and demand the government provide protection at abortion clinics. More than 1,000 people participated in a January 3 memorial service for the two women murdered in the attacks.

Activists in the fight to defend abortion rights are calling for protests and encouraging wide participation in an "Action for Reproductive Freedom" called by the National Organization for women in Boston January 22, the anniversary of the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion.



January 16, 1970

A federal district court has denied GIs the constitutional right of freedom of assembly in a ruling on a civil-liberties suit arising out of the Fort Jackson Eight case. But the decision opens the path for further appeals in higher courts.

Chief Judge Donald Russell of the U.S. District Court in South Carolina denied that soldiers at Ft. Jackson have the right to hold an open meeting on post to discuss the war and related issues.

His decision was in response to a suit which grew out of the harassment and imprisonment of eight leaders of GIs United Against the War in Vietnam at the South Carolina base last spring. The day following an informal meeting at which many GIs spoke out against the war, eight leaders were arrested; three of them served 61 days imprisonment in the base stockade. They were released when their case received nationwide attention.



January 13, 1945

Following on the heels of a national campaign to whip up sentiment for labor conscription, Roosevelt submitted his annual message to the new Congress demanding immediate enactment of forced labor legislation. Roosevelt's lengthy message can be boiled down to the following specific proposals: (1) a National Service Act to be adopted "at the earliest possible moment"; (2) immediate legislation providing for the conscription of those now classified as 4-F; (3) universal peacetime military training for American youth; and (4) amendment of the Selective Service Act "to provide for the induction of nurses into the armed forces."

These measures are intended to supplement Roosevelt's job-freeze decrees, to place practically the whole working population under the control of a military caste, Prussianize American life and to straitjacket the labor movement.

deliveries in Manhattan and Brooklyn.

As part of a pilot project sponsored by the city, UPS and DHL are getting into the act. This plan involves using some 100 bikes operating below 60th Street in Manhattan. Department of Transportation Commissioner Polly Trottenberg told the media Dec. 4 that she anticipates this will be expanding "soon."

The latest figures for the city government report almost 1.8 million vehicles drive in and out of Manhattan every day and 2.1 million vehicles are registered in the city. Traffic is most dense in the areas where the delivery bikes have been set loose.

In addition to being able to park in commercial loading zones, the bikes will be able to pull up onto the sidewalk. The bikes have a storage compartment that is loaded with hundreds of pounds of cargo when they set out.

Logan Powell, who has been doing bike deliveries for Breakaway Courier Systems for months, told the *Gothamist* that it would be easier if two-way bike lanes were formed on one-way streets. It would be much easier still if all traffic was obliterated!

Many e-tail orders never get delivered. In 2017, 365 million tons of cargo entered, left, or passed through New York City. Amazon and other online retailers simply drop packages off on the porches of homes, outside apartment doors or right inside building lobbies.

On any give day, over 90,000 packages disappear or are stolen in the city. Nationwide, more than 1.7 million packages "go missing" every day.

# US hands off Iraq, Iran!

Continued from front page

groups to dispatch fighters to Syria to support the dictatorial rule of Bashar al-Assad during the civil war there.

Both Washington and Tehran continue to clash as each government pushes to further its own economic, political and military interests in Iraq, Syria and other countries in the Middle East. Their conflict is part of broader clashes between U.S. and other imperialist powers, Moscow, Ankara and other regional capitalist rivals.

Iran's capitalist rulers aim is to increase their regional power by force of arms, extending beyond Iran's borders the nearly four-decade-long, cleric-dominated political counterrevolution that pushed back the workers, farmers, women and oppressed nationalities who carried out the historic Iranian Revolution of 1979. This was a powerful, modern popular social revolution, not a religious jihad as is falsely claimed by the U.S. rulers.

The attacks and counterattacks also take place amid continuing mass anti-government protests in Iraq against the effects of interference by both Washington and Tehran and the exacerbation of the grinding capitalist economic crisis on working people there. The day before the U.S. airstrike, anti-government protesters temporarily halted operations at the Nasiriya oilfield in southern Iraq.

Since Oct. 1 Iraqi government forces and Iranian-backed militia thugs have killed over 450 protesters and wounded some 25,000.

The mass mobilizations have forced Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi to say he will step down and caused an ongoing political crisis in the country. But he remains in office until agreement on a replacement can be reached among Iraq's political parties, all facing pressure from Tehran and Washington.

Trying to deliver a blow to these protests is one of the central aims of Tehran,

their Iraqi militia forces and allies in the Iraqi government.

## Pro-Tehran rally at U.S. Embassy

Iraqi government forces made no attempt to stop hundreds of militia fighters and supporters who entered the heavily fortified Green Zone and gathered outside the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad Dec. 31. This orchestrated move was falsely presented in the U.S. press as "protests." Dozens of participants, many in Iraqi or militia fatigues or carrying flags of the Popular Mobilization Forces, smashed the gate and made a foray into the compound. Hundreds set up tents outside the embassy.

Many bourgeois forces were aware of the move. Yassine al-Yasseri, Iraq's interior minister, and other government officials showed up there, as well as central leaders of the militias. Yasseri told AP that the prime minister had warned the U.S. that the airstrikes would have serious consequences.

U.S. forces kept most of the militia forces at bay with tear gas. The next day the embassy was reinforced by Apache helicopters and 100 additional Marines.

Senior leaders of the militias ordered their forces to withdraw Jan. 1 and they did so, taking down their camps. Some set up a new "camp" well outside the Green Zone. Kataeb Hezbollah said they had won a victory and would now seek withdrawal of U.S. troops through the nation's parliament.

## No end to toilers' protests

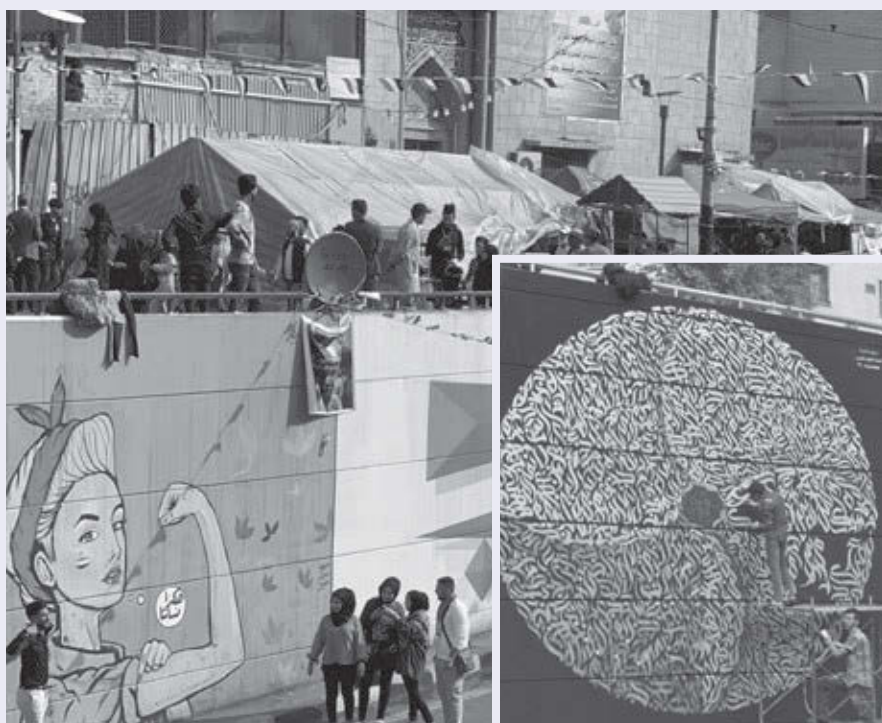
Much of the bourgeois press claimed the U.S. missile attack and pro-Tehran militia action at the embassy had quieted the mass protests by Iraqi working people that have rocked the country for months. A number of protests leaders said this was a lie.

Al Jazeera visited Baghdad's Tahrir Square Dec. 31, a main center of the anti-government protest movement. "We, the protesters of Tahrir Square, condemn the [U.S.] strikes of course, whether it be Iran or the U.S. who was responsible for them," Ali Khaybit told the news service, stressing "the crowds in the Green Zone do not represent us."

"Peaceful demonstrators [against the government] gave 400 lives but never allowed to get into the Green Zone," Sarkawt Shams, a member of the Iraqi parliament from the Kurdistan region, tweeted Dec. 31. "How come these guys get in and reach US Embassy without any barrier?"

There are some 5,000 U.S. troops in

## Iraq uprising inspires art, culture in Tahrir Square



Photos by Rudaw/Lawk Ghafari

"Revolutions are the festivals of the oppressed and exploited," V.I. Lenin, the Bolshevik leader of the victorious 1917 socialist revolution in Russia, noted. The flowering of art and literature, emblematic of the newly found sense of freedom that accompanies truly popular struggles, is being demonstrated in Tahrir (Liberation) Square in the heart of Baghdad during more than three months of anti-government demonstrations there.

A multitude of murals depicting protesters' aspirations, as well as government attempts to repress them, adorn the walls of "the tunnel," a roadway in the square. One beautiful design, inset, by Sajad Mustafa, an artist from Basra, has the name of everyone martyred.

"The main message of the drawings in Tahrir Square tunnel is to make those drawings as the symbol of the protests in Iraq," Mustafa told the Kurdish news agency Rudaw.

Other murals depict the role of women in the movement, above.

Behind the ongoing protests is the lack of jobs and electricity, water and other government services for working people and youth in one of the most oil-rich countries in the world — as well as hatred for the intervention in the country's affairs by both Tehran and Washington.

The corruption and nepotism that marks capitalism in Iraq has also fueled the protests.

A massive gathering was held in the square Dec. 10 with people coming from all the southern provinces. Those from Basra's poorest slums mixed with students from Baghdad's top universities.

In early December, demonstrators in Tahrir Square were targeted by regime forces and Tehran-backed paramilitary thugs with over a dozen wounded in stabbing incidents and gunfire that killed at least 14.

In response, some young people organized checkpoints to try to prevent would-be attackers with arms from entering the area. Others formed units with protective gear to neutralize tear gas attacks. Some set up field clinics. They're intermixed with bookstalls, theater groups and, of course, the murals.

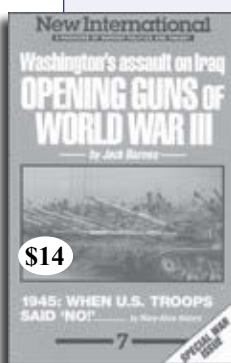
"First, end all Iranian and American influence in Iraq," Mustafa, a 19-year-old protester injured recently, told Rudaw. "Then removal of all the current political parties, change of the constitution, and dissolving of the parliament."

— ROY LANDERSEN

## In New International no. 7 Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq

by Jack Barnes

"Washington's war in Iraq has exacerbated political turmoil, instability, and national, class and state conflicts throughout the region."



## In New International no. 12 Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun

by Jack Barnes

"The second Iraq War sharply accelerated conflicts among the imperialist and capitalist powers of the former Desert Storm alliance. What sounded during that earlier Gulf conflict were indeed the opening guns of World War III."



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## IFCO wins victory in fight against IRS harassment

BY SARA LOBMAN

NEW YORK — In an important victory for political rights, the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization announced Dec. 19 that it had won its fight against revocation of its tax-exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service in 2017.

"As our attorney Martin Stolar noted, this is a vindication of our right to do work in solidarity with the people of Cuba, of Palestine, and to stand up for the voiceless, including prisoners," Gail Walker, executive director of IFCO, told the *Militant* Jan. 1.

Since 1992 IFCO has been best known for its yearly "Friendshipment caravans"

that bring humanitarian aid and solidarity to the people of Cuba. It also administers a scholarship program that has allowed nearly 200 young people from the United States to graduate as doctors from Cuba's Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM). They return to the U.S. to offer medical care to those who might do without in working-class communities.

In 2011 the IRS went after IFCO, targeting the group's backing of a project called Viva Palestina, which organized convoys to bring food and medical supplies to people in the Gaza Strip. Viva Palestina was not on any U.S. government "terrorist" list and

ing in Iraq and Syria is in the interest of working people there or here in the U.S.," Naomi Craine, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate in Illinois, told the *Militant* Dec. 31. "Working people in the U.S. can aid the Iraqi people in their struggle by demanding U.S. troops and bases out now!"

was recognized as a legitimate charity by the official Charity Commission in the United Kingdom, where it is based. Nonetheless, U.S. tax officials charged the group had ties to Hamas and terrorism.

The IRS also claimed that the Friendshipment aid caravans to Cuba violate U.S. sanctions against Cuba and cited IFCO's support for U.S. students attending ELAM.

"This reinstatement 'justifies our steadfast commitment to defend the rights of the disenfranchised, the wrongly imprisoned, and the victims of police brutality,' IFCO said in a statement on the victory.

# Speak out against Jew-hatred!

**Continued from front page**

one count of burglary. In addition, federal hate crime charges have been filed against him.

Officials released evidence of anti-Semitic writings found in Thomas' journals and on the internet.

The day after the attack, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said, "These are domestic terrorists. They are trying to inflict fear. They are motivated by hate," stating he would propose a domestic terrorism law this January.

"Gov. Andrew Cuomo said that 'anger' and 'hatred' are an 'American cancer on the body politic.' But that misses the point. This was Jew-hatred," said a statement by Lea Sherman, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from New Jersey; Candace Wagner, the party's candidate for U.S. House of Representatives District 8 New Jersey; and Seth Galinsky the party's 2019 candidate for New York City public advocate. "The scapegoating of Jews for economic and social problems is a deadly threat to all Jews, religious and secular. And it is a life and death question for the working class."

There have been other expressions of Jew-hatred in the area. In August the Rockland County Republican Party released a campaign video targeting Jews with graphics saying, "What's at stake: Our homes, our families, our schools, our communities, our water, our way of life. If they win, we lose. Take back control." The video was quickly taken down after its anti-Semitic character faced widespread condemnation.

Rockland County, about an hour outside of New York City, is home to a growing Orthodox Jewish community, like a number of other suburbs in New York and New Jersey. Thirty-one percent of Rockland County's 300,000 residents are Jewish.

"To this day I don't understand why Jews are targeted," Mia Zazon, a 39-year-old dietician, told the *Militant* at her home here Dec. 29, the day after the assault.

"This deals blows to the unity working people need to be able to fight the bosses' attacks on our wages and conditions," said Sherman. She

gave Zazon the SWP statement condemning the assault.

The statement explains, "Jew-hatred plays a unique role under capitalism. It invents a mythical scapegoat — the evil rich Jews — to protect and take our eyes off the real enemy: the capitalist system."

"It's completely different from 'hate,'" said Sherman. "It has festered for centuries and is seized upon by the capitalist rulers in times of deep social crisis to try and divert and crush the working-class movement."

Since the attack, Zazon said, people have turned out from "all different Jewish groups and I'm sure my friends and co-workers will offer support."

The attack in Monsey follows on the heels of the murderous attack in Jersey City, New Jersey, Dec. 10 at a kosher supermarket where two anti-Semitic attackers killed three people — Moshe Deutsch, Leah Mindel Ferencz and Douglas Miguel Rodríguez.

While Jew-hatred is at a low ebb among working people, there has been an increase in anti-Semitic vio-



Gili Getz

**Some 250 people gather in Brooklyn's Grand Army Plaza to condemn anti-Semitic attacks Dec. 31, days after brutal machete assault on Hanukkah celebration in Monsey, New York.**

lence in the U.S., and worldwide, including deadly attacks at synagogues in Poway, California and Pittsburgh. The anti-Semitic assaults have come overwhelmingly from lone-wolf attackers, with political outlooks that range from right to left.

According to the Anti-Defamation League, there have been at least 10 anti-Semitic incidents in the New York/New

Jersey area in the last two weeks, including a physical attack on a 22-year-old Hasidic Jew in Williamsburg, a Brooklyn neighborhood, Jan. 1.

A rally to denounce Jew-hatred and the attacks has been set for Sunday, Jan. 5 at 11 a.m., gathering at Foley Square in New York. Sponsors include the United Jewish Appeal, the ADL and the New York Board of Rabbis.

## Liberals 'impeach' drive aims to stifle workers' voices

**Continued from front page**

Washington for the carnage they face under today's crisis of capitalism.

David Leonhardt laments in the same paper that if the Democrats can't oust Trump before next November, they are fielding an "unnecessarily weak presidential field" in 2020.

His solution? Impose "the judgment of experts" in place of that of "ordinary citizens," who he and fellow meritocrats seek to block from affecting government decisions.

What he's really describing is the deepening crisis of the capitalist rulers' two-party system, which has served their class interests well since the rise of Washington as an imperialist power. Today it has led to the Democrats' "impeachment" assault on the Trump administration and working-class rights.

Despite calling 17 witnesses, submitting 8,000 pages of testimony, organizing over 100 House staff members full time to dig up dirt on the president,

and forcing through a partisan vote to impeach, Democrats now refuse to present their motions to the Senate. With no hope of winning in the upper house, they hope to milk political advantage from their stage-managed "trial," while they desperately fret over whether any of their 2020 candidates can defeat the president.

### Working-class road forward

From the point of view of working people, it is necessary to expose and fight all efforts by the rulers to restrict our rights, whether they come from this liberal crusade or any other source.

There is a road forward amid the capitalist attacks workers face today, in Washington and in labor battles like Asarco bosses' union-busting assault on copper miners in Arizona and Texas.

The Socialist Workers Party is presenting a working-class alternative, urging fellow workers to join to advance all efforts to unite and strengthen struggles against the rulers' attacks along a course to break with both the Democrats and Republicans and build our own labor party. In the years ahead the crisis of capitalism will result in revolutionary struggles by working people in which we can gain the confidence and class-consciousness to take political power into our own hands.

### Liberals target workers' rights

Anti-Trump FBI agent Peter Strzok was a staffer for former FBI Director Robert Mueller's failed crusade to oust the president on Democrats' ginned-up charges he colluded with Moscow to swing the 2016 vote. Strzok sent texts to FBI lawyer Lisa Page describing working people in Loudoun County, Virginia, as "ignorant hillbillies [sic]." And he claimed he could "smell" Trump supporters at Walmart stores.

Paul Krugman, a columnist for the *New York Times*, says if you look at pictures of a crowd watching the lynching of African Americans decades ago

it's like areas of "Republican support in places like eastern Kentucky," a hard hit coal-mining center.

In his Dec. 29 op-ed, Leonhardt points to some of the changes he'd like to see imposed to restrict workers' ability to affect politics. "When voters are given the dominant role in choosing a nominee," he says, "only an unrepresentative subset tends to participate, which skews the process." What kind of process does he prefer? Give "party leaders a larger role in selecting nominees."

The liberal impeachment party's attacks on the Trump administration — and on workers' rights — cross many fronts.

In response to the continuing crisis of the imperialist "world order" spawning and feeding wars across the Mideast, the Democrats demand more robust military interventions by Washington.

To buttress their attacks on the Trump administration, they seek to rely on and bolster the authority and reach of the U.S. rulers' political police. They tout cooperative "heroic Americans" like former FBI chiefs Mueller and James Comey and ex-FBI and CIA Director William Webster. This aims to strengthen spy and disruption agencies with decades of dirty tricks against the struggles and rights of working people.

And they try to chip away at crucial rights for working people to discuss, debate and vote.

## Jew-Hatred in the Epoch of Imperialism

**Below are excerpts from *The Jewish Question, A Marxist Interpretation* written by Belgian revolutionary Abram Leon on the eve of the second imperialist world war. Leon was killed at the Auschwitz extermination camp at the age of 26.**

"The disappearance of Hitler can change nothing fundamental in the situation of the Jews. A transitory improvement of their condition will in no wise alter the profound roots of twentieth century anti-Semitism. ...

The tragic fate of Judaism mirrors with singular sharpness the situation of all humanity. Capitalism bars the road of the past as well as the highway to the future. Only the destruction of capitalism will make it possible for humanity to benefit from the immense achievements of the industrial era."

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# ‘Only social revolution can sweep clean path for new culture’

What Is Surrealism? Selected Writings by André Breton, is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for January. Breton was the founder and major leader of the surrealist movement, one of the most influential currents of 20th century art and art criticism. The excerpt is from "Manifesto for an Independent Revolutionary Art," which was written by Breton, revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky and artist Diego Rivera when the three met together in Mexico in 1938. Copyright © 1978. Reprinted by permission of Pathfinder.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

We can say without exaggeration that never has civilisation been menaced so seriously as today. The Vandals, with instruments which were barbarous and comparatively ineffective, blotted out the culture of antiquity in one corner of Europe. But today we see world civilisation, united in its historic destiny, reeling under the blows of reactionary forces armed with the entire arsenal of modern technology. We are by no means thinking only of the world war that draws near. Even in times of 'peace' the position of art and science has become absolutely intolerable.

In so far as it originates with an individual, in so far as it brings into play subjective talents to create something which brings about an objective enriching of



From left, surrealist leader André Breton, Mexican artist Diego Rivera and Leon Trotsky, a leader of the Russian Revolution, wrote "Manifesto for an Independent Revolutionary Art" in 1938.

culture, any philosophical, sociological, scientific or artistic discovery seems to be the fruit of a precious chance; that is to say, the manifestation, more or less spontaneous, of necessity. Such creations cannot be slighted, whether from the standpoint of general knowledge (which interprets the existing world) or of revolutionary knowledge (which, the better to change the world, requires an exact analysis of the laws which govern its movement). Specifically, we cannot remain indifferent to the intellectual conditions under which creative activity takes place; nor should we fail to pay all respect to those particular laws which govern intellectual creation.

In the contemporary world we must recognise the ever more widespread destruction of those conditions under which intellectual creation is possible. From this follows of necessity an increasingly manifest degradation not only of the work of art but also of the specifically 'artistic' personality. The regime of Hitler, now that it has rid Germany of all those artists whose work expressed the slightest sympathy for liberty, however superficial, has reduced those who still consent to take up pen or brush to the status of domestic servants of the regime, whose task it is to glorify it on order, according to the worst possible aesthetic conventions. If reports may be believed, it is the same in the Soviet Union, where Thermidorian reaction is now reaching its climax.

It goes without saying that we do

not identify ourselves with the currently fashionable catchword, 'Neither fascism nor communism!' — a shibboleth which suits the temperament of the philistine, conservative and frightened, clinging to the tattered remnants of the 'democratic' past. True art, which is not content to play variations on ready-made models but rather insists on expressing the inner needs of man and of mankind in its time — true art is unable not to be revolutionary, not to aspire to a complete and radical reconstruction of society. This it must do, were it only to deliver intellectual creation from the chains which bind it, and to allow all mankind to raise itself to those heights which only isolated geniuses have achieved in the past. We recognise that only the social revolution can sweep clean the path for a new culture. If, however, we reject all solidarity with the bureaucracy now in control of the Soviet Union, it is precisely because, in our eyes, it represents not communism but its most treacherous and dangerous enemy.

The totalitarian regime of the USSR, working through the so-called cultural organisations it controls in other countries, has spread over the entire world a deep twilight hostile to every sort of spiritual value; a twilight of filth and blood in which, disguised as intellectuals and artists, those men steep themselves who have made of servility a career, of lying-for-pay a custom, and of the palliation of crime a source of

pleasure. The official art of Stalinism, with a blatancy unexampled in history, mirrors their efforts to put a good face on their mercenary profession.

The repugnance which this shameful negation of principles of art inspires in the artistic world — a negation which even slave states have never dared to carry so far — should give rise to an active, uncompromising condemnation. The opposition of writers and artists is one of the forces which can usefully contribute to the discrediting and overthrow of regimes that are destroying, along with the right of the proletariat to aspire to a better world, every sentiment of nobility and even of human dignity.

The communist revolution is not afraid of art. It realises that the role of the artist in a decadent capitalist society is determined by the conflict between the individual and various social forms which are hostile to him. This fact alone, in so far as he is conscious of it, makes the artist the natural ally of revolution. ... The need for emancipation felt by the individual spirit has only to follow its natural course to be led to mingle its stream with this primeval necessity — the need for the emancipation of man.

The conception of the writer's function which the young Marx worked out is worth recalling. 'The writer', he said, 'naturally must make money in order to live and write, but he should not under any circumstances live and write in order to make money. . . . The writer by no means looks on his work as a means. It is an end in itself and so little a means in the eyes of himself and of others that if necessary he sacrifices his existence to the existence of his work. . . . The first condition of freedom of the press is that it is not a business activity.'

It is more than ever fitting to use this statement against those who would regiment intellectual activity in the direction of ends foreign to itself and prescribe, in the guise of so-called reasons of state, the themes of art. The free choice of these themes and the absence of all restrictions on the range of his exploitations — these are possessions which the artist has a right to claim as inalienable. ...

Our aims:

The independence of art — for the revolution.

The revolution — for the complete liberation of art!

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# Celebrate 61 years of Cuban Revolution!

For more than 61 years, since overthrowing the U.S.-backed Fulgencio Batista dictatorship on Jan. 1, 1959, the Cuban Revolution has shown there is an alternative to the capitalist system and its dog-eat-dog, every-man-for-himself morality. It has unselfishly offered aid and solidarity to those battling imperialist domination worldwide.

The U.S. rulers have never forgiven the workers and farmers of Cuba for having taken control of their own country and destiny. Their biggest fear is that workers and farmers in other countries will follow their example.

Over the last year we have seen millions of workers around the world take to the streets. From Sudan

to Algeria from Iraq to Lebanon from Hong Kong to France. They show that working people around the world are capable of heroic courage and self-sacrifice in fighting in their millions against the effects of decaying capitalism in crisis today. But they lack the revolutionary working-class leadership to chart a road to take political power.

The Cuban Revolution showed it is possible to fight and to win — if we forge a leadership through the battles of workers and farmers, build a revolutionary party and draw all the oppressed and exploited behind our banner.

There is a treasure-trove of books on the history, politics and internationalist solidarity of the Cuban Revolution available at [pathfinderpress.com](http://pathfinderpress.com)

The Cuban Revolution — the only living revolution in the world today — faces big challenges and pressures, including from U.S. imperialism's relentless efforts to overturn it. The days and years ahead will not be easy. That's why we need both to learn from its example and to strengthen the fight against Washington's attempts to slander and destroy it. This year's April 26-May 10 15th International May Day Brigade of Voluntary Work and Solidarity With Cuba is an excellent opportunity to do both. You can get all the details from [www.nnoc.info](http://www.nnoc.info).

U.S. hands off Cuba! End Washington's economic war against Cuba! Long live the Cuban Revolution!



Che Guevara and Fidel Castro in the early years of the revolution.

## Fight to end the rents and mortgages system

BY TERRY EVANS

In a letter below reader Brigette Blalock from San Leandro, California, asks, "What can we do about high rents?" She describes a challenge familiar to millions of workers — fighting to prevent a landlord from evicting herself and other tenants who can't afford never-ending rent hikes. The

### REPLY TO A READER

housing crisis is a permanent feature of life under capitalism for working people.

Housing should be a basic human right available to all. And it *can* be. But under capitalism, the land itself and housing stock are not organized to meet these basic needs. Like everything else under this dog-eat-dog exploitative setup, housing is a commodity that is bought, sold and rented for a profit, a setup worsened by a perennial shortage and the resulting competition among workers for an affordable place to live.

Workers also face "gentrification," as landlords and real estate speculators search for profits; blood sucking loan sharks; redlining and racist discrimination.

So in the richest capitalist country in the world more and more workers find themselves tossed on the street.

Frederick Engels, one of the founders of the communist movement, wrote in 1872, "The house owner in his capacity as a capitalist has not only the right but, by reason of competition, to a certain extent also the duty of ruthlessly making as much out of his property in house rent as he possibly can." His booklet, *The Housing Question*, provides insights into how the housing racket operates under the profit system today.

Landlords squeeze us because they are driven to do so by the operation of the market system. "In such a society the housing shortage is no accident; it is a necessary institution," Engels writes. It's a byproduct built into the heart of capitalist exploitation.

"The pivot on which the exploitation of the worker turns is the sale of labor power to the capitalist," he explains. Workers produce far more value for the bosses than is returned to us in wages. "It is this transaction between the capitalist and worker which produces all the surplus value which is afterwards divided in the form of ground rent, commercial profit, interest on capital, taxes etc., among the various subspecies of capitalists and their servants."

From this understanding a way forward can be charted. One that starts with organizing together with fellow workers on the job to take back the wealth our labor produces — fighting the bosses for higher wages and giving solidarity to workers involved in struggles.

As we engage in such battles we learn to trust our own forces, develop the confidence and courage we need for the next fight against the employing class and get a true measure of our own capacities to change ourselves and our conditions.

The alternative the bosses offer workers to escape cut-throat landlords is to lure us into becoming a home "owner." But this road offers no more respite from capitalist pillage and resulting destitution than the rents and mortgages system. It is just another way the capitalists expand the burden of debt on our shoulders and place us under the domination to yet another set of parasites. Property "ownership" chains us down with onerous mortgage payments that we spend huge chunks of our lifetimes attempting to pay off.

And the mortgage trap makes workers more vulnerable to conservative pressures, fearful we will lose what we have toiled years to claim "ownership" of, less confident to join fellow workers as they stand up to the bosses' attacks.

As labor battles and other social struggles increase, prospects expand for building a revolutionary movement of working people. Such a movement will champion the demand for nationalization of the land and the housing stock. Take these resources that are vital for the well-being of all out of the grasp of the capitalists and place them under the control of working people.

The fight for nationalization of the land is the road for an alliance of the two producing classes — workers and working farmers, both victims of the rents and mortgages system. This is a struggle that can be won as we fight to take power out of the capitalist rulers' hands.

## The Cuban Revolution in World Politics

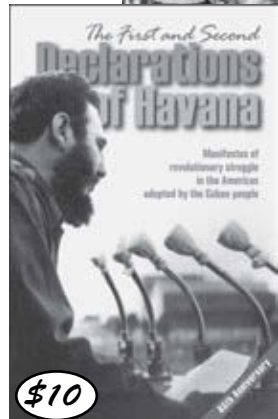
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## LETTERS

### How can we stop high rents?

The landlord at our apartment building has tried to evict me and other tenants in order to be able to raise the rents. We've fought back. My eviction has been dismissed for now and I was allowed to stay. But the battle is not over.

The landlords are making it difficult for tenants to live comfortably in their homes. No matter what laws are passed, the rents increase every year.

I'm a fighter and proud that my stepfather was one of the hotel workers who went on strike and

won a victory against Marriott last year. My question is, what can we do about the high rents? We need to get control over this.

Brigette Blalock  
San Leandro, California

#### Correction

The article in the Dec. 30 *Militant*, "CP's Oil Train Wreck Raises Specter of New Lac-Mégantic" incorrectly stated that Canadian Pacific Railway is the largest rail company in Canada. It is second largest, Canadian National is the biggest.

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate what city you are from and if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

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