

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Preface to 'Red Zone: Cuba and the Battle Against Ebola'
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 84/NO. 3 JANUARY 27, 2020

'Militant' files appeal against paper's ban in Indiana prison

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The *Militant* is challenging the impoundment of several issues of the paper from subscriber Kevin "Rashid" Johnson at Indiana's Pendleton Correctional Facility. A letter Johnson sent was received by the *Militant* Jan. 2, along with copies of prison officials' "Notice and Report of Action Taken" stating that issues nos. 43-46 from the end of last year were not delivered to him. The officials failed to tell Johnson what articles they objected to and why, as their own rules require. Instead, they just claimed they were "Prohibited Property" and a "Security Risk."

"The notification and basis have not been made in accordance with IDOC [Indiana Department of Correction] policy," wrote Johnson, "not to mention that in violation of constitutional due process, they do not notify publishers when they deny their media."

Militant attorney David Goldstein filed the paper's appeal Jan. 15 in a let-

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Ky. miners block coal train in fight over unpaid wages

'Somebody's got to take a stand,' miners say



Mountain Top Media

Coal miner Dustin Maynard, right, talks to press at miners' blockade of rail tracks outside Quest mine in Kimper, Kentucky, Jan. 14. Protest builds on earlier action at Blackjewel mine.

BY MAGGIE TROWE

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — A dozen Quest Energy coal miners and their families began blocking the railroad tracks near Kimper, Kentucky, Jan. 13 to protest the fact they haven't been paid. They pledge

to stay there until Quest, a subsidiary of American Resources Corp., pays them wages for work since Dec. 27.

The protest began when two miners learned that Quest planned to haul coal from one of its mines in Pike County. They stood on the tracks, blocking the 120-car CSX train. By nightfall a dozen miners and some of their wives and children had gathered on the tracks. Neighbors and friends brought firewood, water and food.

"We just want paid, that's it," roof bolter Dylan Davidson told the *Lexington Herald Leader*. "We don't want to block this train, but it comes to a point where we have to. You go three weeks without a payday, you gonna let that train go through here so they can put the money in their pocket and just say to heck with us? No, they can't do that."

Later that day CSX bosses sent a crew

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Protests spread as Iran rulers admit they lied, shot down plane

BY TERRY EVANS

Thousands of working people, students and others joined protests in at least a dozen cities across Iran as outrage mounted over the government's attempted cover-up of their missile attack that brought down a Ukrainian passenger aircraft in which all 176 people on board died. The slaughter reignited widespread protests that erupted in 2017 and again last November in some 100 towns and cities.

Protesters demanded the resignation of regime leaders, and gave voice to opposition by working people to the Iranian rulers' military interventions across the Middle East and their repercussions on people's lives.

For years the Iranian rulers have pressed workers, farmers and immigrants to serve in their army, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, and para-

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'Organize solidarity with protests by workers and youth across Iran'



Protest in Tehran Jan. 13, in rebirth of nationwide popular mobilizations against Iranian regime's interventions in the region and economic crisis bearing down on working people.

BY TERRY EVANS

Socialist Workers Party candidates are urging working people in the U.S. to organize actions in solidarity with the struggles of fellow working people in Iran. Thousands have protested there this week, angered at the Iranian government's cover-up of its Revolutionary Guard shooting down a Ukrainian passenger plane killing all 176 people on board.

The party's candidates tell the truth about the struggles of working people

there, who are demanding an end to the wars the Iranian rulers wage across the Mideast and protesting the rule of the bourgeois clerical regime. These struggles deserve the support of working people worldwide.

"Our party calls for the immediate, unconditional and total withdrawal of all U.S. forces from the Mideast," Rachelle Fruit, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from Georgia, told Alejandro Mendez when she visited his small restaurant

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Trump runs on 'peace, prosperity' as Democrats fold on impeachment

BY TERRY EVANS

The Democrats' attempt to drag out their impeachment of President Donald Trump came apart Jan. 10, with House Majority Leader Nancy Pelosi announcing she will name the Democrats' "prosecutors" and send the two articles of impeachment to the Senate this week, where the president will almost certain-

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Support copper miners strike against Asarco union busting!

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

Workers on strike against copper giant Asarco marked day 90 of their strike Jan. 11 with an expanded picket line at the Mission Mine in Sahuarita, Arizona. They are organizing more public actions to win support for their fight against the bosses' blatant effort to bust their unions.

Some 1,700 workers from seven unions went on strike at four Asarco open pit mining and processing complexes in Arizona and its refinery in Amarillo, Texas, Oct. 13. Workers had voted down the company's "last and final" contract demands by 77%. Asarco wants to freeze wages and pensions for most workers, double or triple health in-

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—On the picket line, p. 5—

French workers strike, protest government attacks on pensions

After nearly 3-year strike, Idaho silver miners approve contract

Capitalism, colonial rule cause Puerto Rico earthquake crisis

BY SETH GALINSKY

Hundreds of homes suffered serious damage, along with some schools, churches and other buildings that collapsed, after a 6.4 magnitude earthquake — one of hundreds over the last several weeks — rocked the southern part of the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico Jan. 7.

Thousands are living and sleeping outdoors or in makeshift tent cities in public plazas, and thousands more are without electricity and running water. This comes on top of still unrepaired damage from Hurricane Maria in 2017.

Three earthquakes of 4.7, 5.0 and 4.7 magnitude shook the island within three hours overnight Dec. 28, followed by many others until the most powerful quake Jan. 7. Significant aftershocks continue.

Gov. Wanda Vázquez tried to sidestep any government responsibility for the unfolding social crisis. “We are talking about something for which we could not prepare, [un]like hurricanes, which we can see,” she told the press.

But it’s never been a secret that major faults run underneath Puerto Rico. Neither the U.S. colonial masters nor its local underlings adopted any construction standards for earthquake risks until 1987. Under pressure the Puerto Rican government tightened those regulations in February 2019, requiring new buildings to be able to withstand a 6.5 quake, but it never required retrofitting, even for schools or hospitals. And it did nothing to ensure that adequate food, water or medical care was in place for when a quake did hit.

For more than a decade and a half, instead of modernizing infrastructure,

the U.S. government and the colonial regime on the island have cut social spending, slashing pensions, spending on health care and schools, and cut back on maintenance of the electric grid. Squeezing working people to pay billions in interest on debt built up mostly to U.S.-based bondholders has been the government’s highest priority. And then President Barack Obama set up the Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico — still running today — to make sure the payments continue and that the government defends the interests of capitalist investors and bankers.

A catastrophe caused by capitalism

All this just helps show that the social crisis is not the result of a “natural disaster.” It’s the product of colonial rule and capitalist exploitation and the U.S. and local capitalist class’s disdain for working people.

And just like after the 2017 hurricane, working people, community groups and churches have taken the lead in providing food and shelter for those in need, in the face of inaction by the U.S. and Puerto Rican governments.

“Everybody is sleeping on the street because we don’t know when the aftershocks are going to stop,” artist Adolfo Matos told the *Militant* from Lajas Jan. 9. “There’s no electricity. Water comes and goes.”

“The government hasn’t done anything,” he said. “It’s the people ourselves who are helping each other.”

Ivan Vargas, president of the water workers union in Mayagüez, where he works, went to Guánica, one of the hard-



Above, quake victims living in public square in Sabana Grande, Puerto Rico. Inset, school in Guánica after Jan. 6 earthquake. Thousands are sleeping outdoors, with no government aid.

est hit towns, Jan. 9 to see for himself and pave the way to organize aid from the unions. “There are a lot of houses that collapsed and even in those that are standing it’s dangerous to go back while the quakes are continuing,” he said. After the Dec. 28 quake, “some local governments organized meetings with community residents about what to expect, and that helped to limit deaths.”

“Once a year the schools have an earthquake drill where they tell the students to get under a desk to protect themselves,” Vargas said. They were lucky the most damaging quake hit at 4:30 a.m. and no one was in the schools. The students “would’ve been buried alive” in those that collapsed, he said.

The Jan. 7 quake knocked out power all over the island, like what happened during Hurricane Maria. The worst damage was to the Costa Sur Power Plant in Guayanilla, shutting it down. It’s the island’s largest generator, supplying 25% of the country’s electric power.

‘We need the truth’

Some reports said that the plant could be up and running in a few months, others said it could take more than a year. “We want them to tell the people the truth,” Vargas said.

“No buildings here were damaged,” Lenis Rodríguez, a pharmaceutical worker and community activist, said by phone from Yabucoa Jan. 11. People have concerns all over the island about the shape of school buildings, whether

it’s safe to reopen them. “Many parents have no confidence in what the government tells them,” he said.

On Jan. 7, both President Donald Trump and Governor Vázquez declared a state of emergency in Puerto Rico. But whatever aid they are providing is “just for immediate needs,” Rodríguez said Jan. 11, “not for reconstruction.”

The U.S. government still hasn’t released most of the money allocated to help reconstruct the island after Hurricane Maria, Rosalina Abreu, a leader of the Arecma community group in Humacao, told the *Militant*.

“They paid hundreds of millions of dollars to U.S. companies to rebuild the electrical grid,” she said. “All they did was put up some posts and string some cable, but they left it in the same terrible shape it was in before the storm.”

Fifteen members of Arecma brought hot food and supplies to a hard-hit area outside Guayanilla Jan. 12, Abreu said. “People from all over the island have been bringing aid” to the affected regions, including to “many areas where no government aid has yet arrived,” she said. “We are a people with a spirit of solidarity.”

“The government has no plan for how to rebuild the destroyed homes,” Abreu pointed out. “And a lot of people live in low-lying areas by the sea, but the tsunami warning loudspeakers don’t work.

“The government always puts the needs of the people in last place,” she said.

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

THE MILITANT

Uber, Lyft, taxi drivers — one union for all!

Lyft and Uber bosses employ hundreds of thousands of drivers they deem “independent contractors.” The *‘Militant’* explains how working people only make gains when we rely on ourselves, organize to unite, use our strength in numbers, and win solidarity.

Militant/Deborah Liatos

Uber, Lyft drivers picket Los Angeles airport May 8 demanding to be treated as workers.

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‘Solidarity with Iran protests’

Continued from front page

and grocery store La Tienda Tarimoro in Eatonton, Georgia, Jan. 11. Mendez, a former dairy farmworker, had first met SWP campaign supporters last fall.

“U.S. forces are only there to defend the interests of the ruling class, to control the resources of these countries,” Fruit said.

“Soleimani was a central leader of the Iranian rulers’ efforts to extend their counterrevolutionary economic and military influence,” she said, handing Mendez a copy of the SWP national campaign’s Jan. 10 statement on the Middle East (available on the *Militant*’s website). “He had been a target of protests by workers in Iran and Iraq.”

“It’s working people who have to fight and die in their wars,” Mendez agreed.

“Only by looking to working people in the entire region can we see a way out of the military conflicts there,” Fruit added. Mendez took copies of the *Militant* supplement “Revolution, Counterrevolution and War in Iran” to show around. It describes how working people joined demonstrations in over 90 cities and towns across Iran at the end of 2017 to protest Tehran’s military intervention in Syria, Iraq and elsewhere, and to press their own class interests.

Mendez renewed his *Militant* subscription and said he would talk with dairy workers to see if they would like to meet the socialist candidate and learn more about the SWP campaign.

‘U.S. forces out of Mideast’

When SWP campaigner Jeff Powers knocked on the door of Dre Johnson in Vallejo, California, Jan. 11, Johnson told him that the U.S. government should get its forces out of the Middle East.

“We face a deteriorating situation in this country,” Johnson said, pointing out he has to work two jobs while his wife also works full time so they can afford to pay their bills.

Workers are often told that Washington carries out “our” foreign policy and “our” wars, but different social classes, not “countries,” have foreign policies. What are usually called “U.S. interests” are in fact those of the capitalist rulers. Workers are forced to serve as the cannon fodder.

Washington’s military operations are an extension of what they do to working people at home with their dog-eat-dog profit system, backed up by their cops, courts and prisons, explained Powers.

That’s why “we need to build a movement of workers independent of the Democrats and Republicans,” Powers explained. The SWP urges workers to build a labor party that fights to defend the class interests of all workers, at home and abroad. Johnson subscribed

to the *Militant* and got a copy of the book *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record: Why Washington Fears Working People* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes.

“It’s not our job to dictate to any country, in the name of liberating them,” bus driver Tharien Graham told James Harris, SWP candidate for Washington, D.C., delegate to U.S. Congress, Jan. 8. Harris met Graham when he brought his campaign’s support to Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689 strikers picketing at the Cinder Bed Road garage in Lorton, Virginia. The bus workers are fighting for safer working conditions and more pay.

“There is a class struggle in Iran and Iraq,” Harris said. “Workers there are trying to unite across religious and national differences and find a working-class road forward.”

“Imperialist intervention does not help the ordinary people of the Middle East,” 15-year-old student Rsaal Firoz told Communist League member Andrés Mendoza at a protest called by the Stop the War Coalition in London Jan. 11. Firoz was at the action with his mother, Sadaf Nayab. She told Mendoza she opposed the killing of Soleimani, “But I’m no supporter of the Iranian government,” she added. “It is not the government that people fought for in the revolution of 1979.”

“The current government is a reactionary bourgeois clerical regime,” said Mendoza. “It’s the product of a counterrevolution that pushed back what



Militant/Susan LaMont
Rachele Fruit, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from Georgia, speaks with Alejandro Mendez in Eatonton, Georgia, Jan. 11. “It’s working people who fight and die in U.S. wars,” he said.

workers, women, Kurds and others conquered through the overthrow of the U.S.-backed shah in 1979.” Nayab and Firoz bought copies of the *Militant* and the supplement “Revolution, Counterrevolution and War in Iran,” along with *New Internationalist* no. 7, where Barnes discusses what Washington’s 1991 assault on Iraq opened up.

‘Militant’ — tool to fight Jew-hatred

SWP campaigner Susan LaMont, who works at a Walmart store in Atlanta, reports that she has made good use of the column in last week’s *Militant*, “Why Fight Against Jew-Hatred Is a Key Question for Working Class,” in discussions with her co-workers about the Dec. 10 anti-Semitic attack at the

Jersey City Kosher Supermarket.

“Some had heard about the murderous assault on TV, but others found out about it for the first time through our discussions,” she wrote. “The coverage in the *Militant* was a big help in these discussions, especially in explaining that Jew-hatred is not simply another form of ‘hate’ or discrimination, but a tool used by the capitalist rulers and their supporters to scapegoat Jews for the growing crisis of their system.

“One co-worker, Maxine Castle, who has worked a maintenance job at the store for four years, said we should send a card of condolence to families of those in Jersey City who had lost loved ones.”

“We’re all human,” Castle, originally from Jamaica, told me, “no matter what your nationality or beliefs. If my Jewish brother is hurt, it hurts me too.”

“We decided to go ahead. Seven other co-workers added their names, which led to more discussions on the importance of working people speaking out against these and any other examples of Jew-hatred.”

If you would like more information on the SWP campaign, or to help circulate campaign literature, the *Militant* and books by SWP leaders, contact the campaign office nearest you listed on page 8 or at themilitant.com.

‘Militant’ appeals Indiana ban

Continued from front page

ter sent to Chief Indiana Department of Correction counsel Jon Ferguson. He said that prison authorities’ rejection notices “do not identify anything in these withheld issues of the *Militant* as grounds for the withholding.”

“It appears,” writes Goldstein, “that Pendleton has determined that the *Militant* is to be generally banned” without finding “any objectionable material in any issue.”

Goldstein urged prison authorities to review these withheld issues and deliver them to Johnson or provide “specific reasons” why these issues are a “security risk” and “provide me with an opportunity to respond to those stated reasons for withholding these issues.”

As a political activist and a leader of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party, Johnson has been transferred repeatedly — from Virginia, where he was imprisoned, to Oregon, Texas, Florida, back to Virginia and now Indiana — and has faced repeated harassment from prison authorities. In his letter to the *Militant*

Johnson noted, “I’ve recently begun writing articles critical of the IDOC, so in turn they’ve been denying all my mail and media, which includes your paper. This is why they didn’t and couldn’t give any valid specific reasons for suddenly denying all your papers.”

Johnson had been receiving the paper while confined at Pendleton since November 2018. He said he plans to challenge impoundments of the *Militant* and other publications he gets like *San Francisco Bay View* and *Socialist Viewpoint*.

“We are aware,” Goldstein wrote, that Indiana Department of Correction Policy “does not specifically include a provision for a publisher to challenge administratively a DOC decision to withhold, censor or ban its publication.

“However, the U.S. Supreme Court has explicitly held that the rights of prisoners to receive publications extends to the rights of publishers to reach willing subscribers,” Goldstein wrote. “Publishers such as the *Militant* have a First Amendment right to send publications to inmates, particularly to disseminate political views.”

“Prisoners have the right to read the political materials they choose,” said *Militant* editor John Studer, “to think for themselves and be part of the world. As we’ve successfully done in Florida and other states, we vow to wage a public fight in defense of Kevin Johnson’s First Amendment rights.”

Letters urging prison authorities to overturn the suppression of the *Militant* should write to Chief Counsel Jon Ferguson, Indiana Department of Correction, 302 W. Washington St., Room E-334, Indianapolis, IN 46204, earmarked “Appeal of literature impoundment.” Please send a copy to the *Militant*.

The Turn to Industry: Forging a Proletarian Party

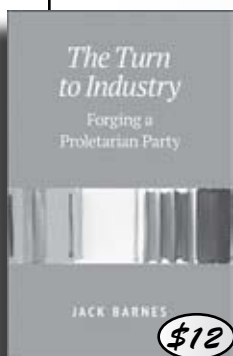
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Why Fight Against Jew-hatred Is a Key Question for Working Class. Speaker: Helen Meyers, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Jan. 24, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 1821 University Ave. W, Ste. S-106A. Tel.: (651) 340-5586.

NEW YORK

New York

No to the Death Penalty! No to Solitary Confinement and Other Prison Abuse. Speaker: Willie Cotton, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Jan. 25, 7 p.m. 307 W. 36th St. 13th floor. Tel.: (646) 434-8117.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

The 2020 Elections and the Road Forward for Working People. Speaker: Norton Sandler, member, National Committee of Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Jan. 24. Reception, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$10. 5418 Rainier Ave. S. Tel.: (206) 323-1755.

What’s at stake in Jersey City debate over anti-Semitism?

BY LEA SHERMAN

UNION CITY, N.J. — A sharp debate broke out when an elected member of the Jersey City Board of Education made blatantly anti-Semitic statements, justifying the murderous attack on the JC Kosher Supermarket Dec. 10.

Joan Terrell-Paige posted an anti-Jewish rant on her Facebook page five days after African Americans David Anderson and Francine Graham, who are associated with the Jew-hating Black Hebrew Israelites, shot dead store owner Leah Mindel Ferencz and customer Moshe Deutsch, who are Jewish, and store worker Douglas Miguel Rodríguez, who is from Ecuador. Anderson and Graham died during an hourslong gun battle with the police.

Terrell-Paige, who is Black, claimed the attack was a legitimate response to some 100 Jewish families, many from the Satmar Hasidic Jewish community in Brooklyn, New York, who have moved to the predominantly Black Greenville neighborhood of Jersey City in the last few years, seeking cheaper housing. In the past decade all working people living in New York City have faced skyrocketing rents and many have had to move farther away.

Irate at a Dec. 14 article in Insider NJ titled “Faith and Hope to Fight Hate in Jersey City,” on a meeting where Black, Latino and Jewish civic and religious figures spoke out against the anti-Semitic attack, Terrell-Paige wrote on Facebook, “Where was all this faith and hope when Black homeowners were threatened, intimidated, and harassed by I WANT TO BUY YOUR HOUSE brutes of the Jewish community?” who she claimed were waving “bags of money.”

She even wrote that “6 rabbis were accused of selling body parts,” a modern-day version of the old anti-Semitic libel that Jews drink Christian blood.

Terrell-Paige tried to use the reality of the racist discrimination confronting African Americans to justify the Jew-hating murders and turn Anderson and Graham into martyrs. “Are we brave enough to explore the answer to their message?” Terrell-Paige states. “Are we brave enough to stop the assault on the Black communities of America?”

In reality the capitalist rulers, who

also try to sow divisions among working people of different races to weaken the working class, utilize anti-Semitism at times to divide and conquer workers as the crisis of their system deepens.

In response to Terrell-Paige’s scapegoating of Jews, several public officials called on her to resign. While most Black working people are appalled at the violent anti-Jewish attacks — and many Black neighbors from Jersey City gave their condolences to the families of those who were gunned down — the defense of Terrell-Paige by at least one middle-class organization in the Black community and some prominent individuals is a reflection of a deeper problem.

The Hudson County Democratic Black Caucus stated that while they don’t agree with what they obliquely call “the delivery” of Terrell-Paige’s comments, they claim her “statement has heightened awareness around issues that must be addressed.”

At a Jan. 2 Jersey City School Board meeting, only one person spoke up to answer 20 supporters of Terrell-Paige who defended her statements.

Carolyn Oliver Fair, who identified herself as the executive director of Al Sharpton’s National Action Network North Jersey chapter, told the press that those calling on Terrell-Paige to resign “need to shut their mouths. She said nothing wrong. Everything she said is the truth.”

The National Action Network quickly denounced her statement and said she is not an official of the group.

On Dec. 30 James Harris, chair of the New Jersey Association of Black Educators and of the Montclair NAACP’s education committee, made similar re-



Sam Aronov/Pacific Press via ZUMA Wire

Thousands march in New York against deadly Jew-hatred attack on deli in Jersey City. Rulers scapegoat Jews as evil cabal responsible for high rents and all social ills, not capitalist system.

marks as Terrell-Paige at a community forum in Montclair. He claimed the Jewish community in Lakewood “controls the Board of Education and the City Council, but they spend huge amounts of money sending their kids to the Yeshivas and they’ve gutted the budget for the Black and Latino students who are left in public schools.”

When he questioned why murders of “people of color” don’t get the same attention as the assault on the kosher grocery store he got applause from many in the crowd.

“If you take the word ‘Hasidics’ out and replace the word with ‘Blacks,’ this whole room would be in an uproar,” Rabbi David Greenstein responded. “Jews are not the problem. Hasidics are not the problem.” He also got applause.

The Montclair NAACP’s executive committee unanimously voted Jan. 7 to suspend Harris from his position for six months for his anti-Semitic speech.

It is welcome that a wide variety of organizations have rejected the anti-Jew-

ish diatribes of Terrell-Paige, Harris and Oliver Fair, but none of them are able to explain what is at stake.

The overwhelming majority of landlords, real estate agents, store owners and big capitalists are not Jewish. But that makes no difference to the purveyors of Jew-hatred who try to make working people believe that the problems we face are not due to the dog-eat-dog capitalist system and its insatiable drive for profits, but to “evil Jewish capitalists.”

As the crisis of capitalism intensifies class tensions, the rulers will turn to those forces who promote the poison of Jew-hatred as they have done before in history. In fact there was a powerful ultrarightist anti-labor movement in Jersey City under Frank Hague in the late 1930s. Answering all forms of anti-Semitism and mobilizing public opposition to it will be necessary to build the kind of fighting workers’ movement that can confront the real problems workers face and advance a road forward.

Kentucky miners block coal train over unpaid wages

Continued from front page

to uncouple and take the locomotive, leaving the coal-filled hoppers behind.

The miners are emulating the example set last summer when Blackjewel coal miners camped on rail tracks in Harlan, Kentucky, to protest bankrupt Blackjewel coal company bosses bouncing their last paychecks and then trying to sell the coal they had mined. The two-month encampment on the tracks gained national and worldwide attention and won the workers much of the pay owed them.

Kentucky law requires construction and mining companies in business for less than five years to post a bond adequate to pay workers if the company runs into financial problems. American Resources, like Blackjewel and several dozen other companies, never put up a bond and are in violation of the law.

Company officials told the press the payments were missed due to a “temporary blip” in coal markets and that they intended to pay the miners in full. “I’m tired of it,” miner Dustin Maynard told WYMT-TV. “Somebody’s got to stand up to these guys and I guess it’s us.”

Some miners told WYMT that on Jan. 14 two weeks’ pay had been deposited in their accounts, but more is still owed them and others haven’t received anything, so the protest continued.

“I heard about those miners in Pike County,” Donna Sexton, mother of Chris Sexton, the first Blackjewel miner

to occupy the tracks in Harlan last summer, told this worker-correspondent by phone Jan. 14. “It shows that they can stand up and fight back for what they believe in. People work hard to have mon-

ey in their pocket. They need to get paid. Those companies got the money, but it’s the miners that’s making them rich. We were raised to be decent human beings and stand up for ourselves.”

Join May Day brigade to Cuba!

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Anyone interested in learning firsthand about what the Cuban Revolution is, and has accomplished, has an excellent opportunity to do so this spring. The National Network on Cuba, a coalition of groups in solidarity with the Cuban people, is organizing the U.S. delegation to participate in the upcoming 15th International May Day Brigade of Voluntary Work and Solidarity With Cuba, hosted by the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples.

Those on the April 26-May 10 brigade will have a rare opportunity to meet and work with Cuban working people and to discuss the impact of their revolution. Their victory over a U.S.-backed dictatorship in 1959 led to the opening of the socialist revolution in the Americas.

It is also a chance to talk about the class struggle and activities of supporters of the Cuban Revolution in the U.S. and elsewhere. Last year 320 people from 21 countries, including 65 from the U.S., took part.

A central highlight of the brigade is joining a million Cuban working people for the May Day march in Havana

celebrating their revolution on the international workers day.

Brigade members will be based at the Julio Antonio Mella camp 25 miles outside Havana. They will do voluntary work side by side with Cuban farmers in the fields, meet leaders of the Cuban people’s mass organizations and talk to working people.

This year the brigade will spend several days in Pinar del Rio province in western Cuba, taking part in panels on the Cuban economy, the legacy of Che Guevara and the truth about human rights in Cuba. There will be opportunities to visit factories, farm cooperatives, universities, health care centers, museums and cultural venues to learn more about the revolution.

Despite new U.S. government restrictions, this trip is organized in accordance with U.S. guidelines. Travel arrangements from the U.S. are being handled by Marazul Tours travel agency.

Total cost, not including airfare to Cuba, is \$725. Applications are due by March 27. For more information visit: www.nnoc.info or email ICanGoToCuba@nnoc.info.

— CALENDAR —

ILLINOIS

Chicago

Celebrate 61 Years of the Cuban Revolution. Learn About May Day Brigade to Cuba. See video on Cuba’s aid to victims of the Chernobyl disaster. Sat., Jan. 25. Refreshments, 6 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. Donation: \$10. *U.E. Union Hall, 37 S. Ashland Ave. Sponsored by Chicago Cuba Coalition.*

NEW YORK

New York

Second National Conference for the Normalization of U.S.-Cuba Relations. March 21-22. US.CubaNormalization.org

CANADA

Montreal

Celebrate the 61st Anniversary of the Cuban Revolution! Speakers: Mara Bilbao, Cuban consul in Montreal; Philippe Tessier, Communist League; spokesperson for Table de concertation et solidarite Quebec-Cuba. Sat., Jan. 25. Music and refreshments, 7 p.m.; program, 8 p.m. *7107 St.-Denis St., Room 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840. Sponsored by Communist League and Table de concertation et solidarite Quebec-Cuba.*

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

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

French workers strike, protest government attacks on pensions

PARIS — Sizable demonstrations by the General Confederation of Workers (CGT) and other unions continue in France against the assault on pensions by the government of President Emmanuel Macron. Tens of thousands took to the streets Jan. 11 in a national protest called by four unions — the CGT; Force Ouvrière; FSU, the main teachers' union; and Solidaire. Some 400,000 workers demonstrated Jan. 9.

Attempting to put an end to the strikes and protests, Prime Minister Edouard Philippe sent a letter to the unions Jan. 11 saying the government was prepared to withdraw its plan to raise the retirement age for full pension benefits, “if certain conditions are met.” But workers don’t trust the government and Philippe’s pledge hasn’t stopped the protests. For rail workers — threatened by Macron to end their early retirement — it’s their longest strike in French history. Many passenger trains are not running, including several of the Paris Metro lines.

Public service workers in transportation, schools and public hospitals have organized mass rallies. More than a third of teachers in France didn’t report to work Jan. 9. The CGT called for a blockade and strike at oil refineries Jan. 7-10.

On the government’s side it’s about “you make out for yourself,” Berenger Cernon, head of the CGT rail local at Paris’ Gare de Lyon station, told the *New York Times*. “With us, it’s all about solidarity — liberty, equality, fraternity.” Airline workers, fishermen, truck drivers, hospital workers, dockworkers and the dancers and musicians of the Paris Opera — who while on strike have given free performances, including “Swan Lake,” on the steps of the opera house — have joined the fight against Macron’s attacks on pensions.

And there have been demonstrations in many smaller industrial towns and rural areas where yellow vest protests

took place last year against anti-working-class measures by the government.

— Nat London

After nearly 3-year strike, Idaho silver miners approve contract

SEATTLE — After nearly three years on strike silver miners in Mullan, Idaho, voted 86-78 to ratify a new contract with the Hecla Mining Co. Jan. 6.

The unionists, members of United Steelworkers Local 5114, walked out at the Lucky Friday mine there in March 2017 after the company arbitrarily imposed a contract on the 250 workers who had voted it down several times.

Details of the contract have not been publicly released. The company was insisting on ending the union-enforced system where workers bid on job crews based on seniority, which workers insist is key to their safety. The company also demanded workers pay more for their health insurance.

When the strike began, picket lines shut the mine down. It has operated



Thaust Denis/Abaca via ZUMA Press

Marseille dockworkers, other unionists march Jan. 11. Banner says “Government and employers break up our public services, enterprises, pensions, social security, jobs. Let’s stop them!”

at a minimal capacity since, staffed by managers and a few workers who crossed the picket line.

The unions organized rallies at the mine and at Hecla corporate headquarters in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho, throughout the strike.

Other unions contributed to a hardship fund for the striking workers and their families and participated in

several of the rallies. Local 5114 also organized a food bank that operated throughout the walkout.

Striking Road Warriors traveled to corporate meetings and trade shows where Hecla executives appeared in the U.S. and Canada to publicize their strike. And they joined in solidarity actions for other labor battles.

— Edwin Fruit

Support miners strike against Asarco union busting!

Continued from front page

insurance costs, and gut union rights on the job. Most workers haven’t had a raise in over a decade.

“Asarco is not talking to anyone, the union, the press, anyone,” Karla Schumann, Teamsters Local 104 secretary treasurer, said by phone Jan. 15. “Their silence speaks volumes.” The company has consistently refused to speak with the *Militant*.

While the Amarillo refinery and the Hayden, Arizona, smelter were shut down by the strike, Asarco, which is owned by Grupo Mexico, one of the world’s largest copper conglomerates, has gotten some production at other complexes. They’re using supervisors, nonunion contractors and some workers who have crossed the picket line. The company has stepped up attempts to hire strikebreakers through

employment ads on its website.

Schumann said that strikers are increasing their public activities to get out the word and win support for the strike. On Jan. 13 strikers protested outside the state Capitol in Phoenix to call on legislators to back their fight. On Jan. 20 strikers will march in the Martin Luther King Day parade in Tucson.

The striking copper workers have received widespread solidarity from unionists and other workers in the region, as well as in other parts of the country and from some unions internationally. Workers have brought truckloads of firewood and other supplies.

Asarco workers at the Mission Mine were joined on the picket line Jan. 11 by a labor delegation from California. The Los Angeles Labor Federation and Teamsters Joint Council 42 brought a 52-foot truck with food, including fresh

vegetables, for the strikers’ food bank.

The financial contributions and donations of food and other basic necessities have been a big help to strikers, and some have had to find work elsewhere to weather the strike.

“We haven’t had one member lose their home, we’ve never had a repo’d vehicle and no one’s lights are being shut off,” Ruben Gonzales, vice president of United Steelworkers Local 937, told the press at the expanded picket. “The water is staying on, the gas is staying on.”

Steelworkers Local 1010 in Hammond, Indiana, recently sent a donation of \$2,000 to Steelworkers Local 915 in Kearny, Arizona, to aid the strikers, after hearing a report on the strike from Walmart worker Dan Fein, who recently visited the picket lines in Arizona.

“The members of USW Local 1010 stand with our sisters and brothers that are under attack from Asarco!” Local 1010 President Steve Wagner told the *Militant* Jan. 13. The union will continue to support the Asarco workers as long as the company “does not bargain in good faith with our union sisters and brothers,” he said.

Mine bosses in Arizona’s “copper triangle” have waged an anti-union campaign for decades, seeking higher profits from paying workers less and from disdain for safe working conditions. Besides Asarco, there is only one other union copper mining company left.

The strikers need — and deserve — solidarity. Help spread the word. 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. Solidarity messages to the strike can be sent via 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.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



January 30, 1995

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah — The fifth Southern Pacific train derailment in the past six weeks in this region occurred January 8. Four locomotives went off the track with 14 cars, two of which rolled into the Colorado River.

Bob Barney, an SP locomotive engineer for 25 years and member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, said he had never seen so many derailments in such a short period of time. He blamed the company’s “no rail maintenance” policy. “Years ago you could see section gang members inspecting the tracks. I haven’t seen an inspector in years,” Barney said.

Ron Hyatt, a longtime conductor on the SP and member of the United Transportation Union, [said] the company never acknowledges responsibility for accidents. “They just drug and alcohol test all the crew members and try to pin the blame on the workers.”



January 30, 1970

The thirty-month Nigerian civil war ended January 12 when secessionist Biafra was finally overwhelmed by federal troops. The toll in human lives was at least 2,000,000 dead, more than have perished in the war in Vietnam.

From the beginning, rival imperialist interests intervened in the Nigerian civil war, seeking to deepen their influence on the African continent. Both sides accepted and sought aid from the most reactionary sources, and each accused the other of making important concessions to imperialism to secure military backing.

Washington maintained an ostentatious neutrality, but tacitly supported the Nigerian government, while providing some \$80,000,000 in food relief for Biafra — a “humanitarian” policy that was also designed to assure its influence there if the Biafrans should win their bid for independence.



January 27, 1945

After 13 months confinement behind federal prison bars, the 12 Socialist Workers Party and Minneapolis Truckdrivers’ Local 544-CIO leaders railroaded under the Smith “Gag” Act were released this morning from Roosevelt’s penitentiaries.

All the prisoners showed in their eyes and their pale skins the effects of the incarceration for defending the interests of the working class and upholding the principles of revolutionary socialism. But elation over their freedom and eagerness for renewed struggle predominated in the expressions and words of the Trotskyist leaders.

James P. Cannon, National Secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, stated: “We are glad to be out. The work of the party in our absence shows that our party is based on ideas and cannot be halted in its work by the imprisonment of a few individuals.”

‘Red Zone: Cuba and the Battle Against Ebola in West Africa’

New book is a ‘remarkable account of the solidarity and internationalism at the heart of the Cuban Revolution’

Below is the preface to Red Zone: Cuba and the Battle Against Ebola in West Africa by Enrique Ubieta Gómez, just published in English and Spanish. Copyright © 2019 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

**BY RÓGER CALERO
AND MARY-ALICE WATERS**

Red Zone: Cuba and the Battle Against Ebola in West Africa is not a book about doctors, epidemics, or medical care, as central as those topics are to the remarkable account you are about to read. First and foremost, the book is “about the solidarity and internationalism that are at the heart of the Cuban Revolution,” as author Enrique Ubieta told the audience at its launching in Havana in February 2016.

In August and September 2014, the World Health Organization and the governments of three West African countries, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea, issued international calls for help in combating the largest epidemic on record of the deadly Ebola virus. In contrast to the meager and callously self-serving response of capitalist powers, especially the United States, France, and the United Kingdom, Cuba’s revolutionary socialist government acted rapidly.

Within three days of a call to Cuban president Raúl Castro from Ban Ki-moon, secretary-general of the United Nations, more than 12,000 Cuban medical professionals had volunteered, many with experience responding to epidemics and disasters from Haiti to Pakistan to Central America. Of those volunteers, 256 Cuban doctors, nurses, and health care technicians were selected and trained for the mission.

Eight months later, when the last member of the Cuban medical brigade returned home in May 2015, the Ebola epidemic in West Africa had been virtually eradicated.

Ubieta’s firsthand reporting of this fight, told largely through accounts by the Cuban participants themselves, paints a graphic picture of the social disaster that unfolded in these three countries in 2014 and 2015, and how the enemy was defeated.

The volunteers were given intensive

training in handling the highly lethal Ebola virus at Cuba’s world-famous Pedro Kouri Institute of Tropical Medicine. The first teams were on their way to the crisis areas in a matter of weeks.

The small island nation of Cuba provided what was most needed and what no other country even tried to deliver: hundreds of doctors, nurses, technicians, and public health specialists on the ground, caring for thousands of desperately ill human beings and their families and communities traumatized by the killer disease.

For the Cuban people and their communist leadership, such a response was nothing new. It was simply one more example of the political course that began with the January 1959 triumph of a revolution that brought to power a government representing working people. A government of, by, and for the humble, as they often describe it. That course — at home and abroad — is one of solidarity, not charity. From Asia and Africa, to Latin America and the Caribbean, they have shared in the hardships and struggles of others seeking national sovereignty and independence.

To give but one example, in the very first years of the revolutionary transformation of Cuba, the new government sent not only weapons but also doctors to aid the embattled National Liberation Front of Algeria fighting for independence from France. And on the ships returning to the island, Cubans brought war orphans and wounded combatants for medical care and education.

Sending doctors to Algeria in the early 1960s “was like a beggar offering his help,” said Cuba’s then Minister of Public Health José Ramón Machado Ventura some thirty years later. “But we knew the Algerian people needed it even more than we did and that they deserved it.” No words better capture the internationalism of the Cuban Revolution.

❖

This unmatched record explains why the presentation of the Cuban edition of *Zona Roja* at the 2016 Havana International Book Fair was a high point of that annual event. Among those in the standing-room-only crowd were two

dozen members of the volunteer Cuban contingent that waged this fight.

The atmosphere in the room was filled with camaraderie among the doctors and nurses who had answered the call for help. Their sense of collective pride at having taken part in this battle — and, for the rest of us present, the respect and admiration for these internationalist volunteers — was palpable.

The heads of the Cuban medical brigades in Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia each spoke, along with the author and Abel Prieto, former longtime Cuban minister of culture and now head of the Office of the José Martí Program in Havana. Prieto saluted “the selflessness, principles, and convictions” of the Cuban volunteers, saying that “they exemplify the purest ideals of the Cuban Revolution.”

He reminded participants of the words of Fidel Castro, historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, at the opening of the Ebola mission in October 2014: “The medical personnel who will go anywhere to save lives, even at risk of losing their own, are the greatest example of solidarity a human being can offer, above all because they aren’t motivated by material interest.”

The discipline, courage, sense of humor, and joy of these Cuban volunteers comes through time and again in these pages. The political course and moral values their actions embody are an expression of the social relations only a truly socialist revolution can produce. They register the economic, social, and political conquests working people in Cuba have made since they freed their country from US imperialist domination and took power out of the hands of domestic and foreign capitalists and plantation landowners.

Many have asked, “Why did no other country in the world respond to the Ebola epidemic the way Cuba did? Can’t Cuba’s medical system and internationalist missions be emulated by other countries?” The answer is no secret. Cuba’s proletarian internationalism is the product of a socialist revolution. It cannot be grafted onto other nations, nor reproduced by men and women who have not been transformed by a similar revolutionary class struggle.

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The first edition of *Zona Roja* was published by Casa Editora Abril, the publishing house of Cuba’s Union of Young Communists.

These new editions — *Red Zone* in English, *Zona Roja* in Spanish — join the arsenal of Pathfinder books and pamphlets that tell the truth about the Cuban Revolution to new generations of workers, farmers, and youth in the United States and worldwide. These titles offer political lessons to study and examples to emulate for working people and youth everywhere. For those fighting for health, safety, and dignity on the job. Against imperialism’s bloody and never-ending wars and assaults on national sovereignty. For an end to the discrimination and brutalities faced daily by African Americans, women, immigrants, and other oppressed layers. Against debt slavery, farm foreclosures, and capitalism’s destruction of our natu-



ral environment. And all the other ravages of capitalist property relations.

The record the Cuban internationalists recount here helps us understand what a socialist revolution is. Eradicating exploitation changes not only the circumstances in which we live and work. It begins to change what capitalism teaches us is “immutable” human nature. Cuba’s example points us to the only class forces that can and will make it possible for working people to fundamentally transform ourselves as we transform social conditions.

❖

Red Zone also provides a compelling refutation of the US government’s slanders against Cuba’s internationalist medical cooperation.

Precisely because the example of this cooperation is so powerful and so welcomed by working people around the world, Washington has intensified efforts to peddle the lie that Cuban doctors, nurses, and medical technicians who volunteer for these missions are victims of “exploitative and coercive labor practices,” “human trafficking,” even “modern slavery!” The US rulers aim in particular to entice Cuban doctors with the siren song of the princely incomes that most physicians in the United States and other capitalist countries have been taught to expect as “fair” remuneration for the embossed

piece of paper on their office walls. Washington’s slanderous campaign is simply another front in the six-decade-long economic war by US Democratic and Republican administrations alike aimed at isolating and economically strangling the Cuban people. These measures, once again tightened since 2017, have the objective of ultimately restoring control of Cuba’s land, labor, factories, and natural resources to capitalist hands, from which they were ripped by working people in the opening years of the revolution.

There is no better answer to the US government’s efforts to tarnish the Cuban Revolution’s medical internationalism than the response of thousands in 2014 to the request for aid in the fight against Ebola. When members of the brigade were on the ground, millions in Cuba closely followed the news of what was happening there. Despite concerns for the volunteers and the risks of introducing the disease into Cuba, the example set by the volunteers in West Africa was deeply popular on the island.

Cuba’s system of primary health care and medical treatment, at no cost to individuals and their families, is a conquest of the revolution that the Cuban people justly take pride in. It’s not a commodity bought and sold for profit. It starts from saving lives, from the right of every person to health care, and from basic human solidarity at home and abroad.

In addition to the victory in the battle against Ebola, readers will learn in *Red Zone* how Cuban medical brigades helped combat a deadly cholera epidemic in Haiti in 2010. How such internationalist missions have provided desperately needed medical and other disaster relief in countries across Central and South America and the Caribbean to Pakistan, the Pacific islands, and beyond. How Cuban medical personnel were already at work in thirty-two African countries when the Ebola epidemic erupted.

❖

The exemplary conduct of the Cuban volunteers won the admiration of other medical personnel with whom they shared the trenches, both health workers from the three West African countries and those from elsewhere around the globe. Ubieta also describes the process, sometimes more winding than others, through which the volunteers won the trust of patients and their families, many of whom ended up asking for themselves or loved ones to be treated by Cuban doctors and nurses.

The Cuban volunteers maintained the most rigorous safety procedures, especially in the “red zone” — the area of treatment centers with the highest contamination levels, where patients were quarantined. Only one Cuban contracted the disease; he recovered and returned to the front lines of the battle two months later.

Despite the “space suits” and other necessary safety measures, the Cubans treated the patients and their family members as fellow human beings, not a biohazard. They fought for the life of every patient, even when doing so wasn’t “cost-effective,” since the person seemed to have little chance of survival. If a patient was going to die, they would die with dignity, the Cuban doctors and nurses insisted. And their families would know that everything possible had been done to cure them.

The volunteers took an interest in the patients, asking about their work and their families. They called patients by their names, not by a bed number. In the often overcrowded treatment centers, they never asked a patient lying on the floor to stand up to be exam-

ined. These were the social attitudes the patients came to recognize in the Cuban doctors and nurses, even when they were sealed in their “astronaut”-like bodysuits and masks.

❖

The Cuban volunteers in West Africa were part of the Henry Reeve International Contingent, launched in September 2005. President Fidel Castro initiated the contingent that year in response to Hurricane Katrina. The hope was they would be allowed to provide assistance to residents of New Orleans and the surrounding Louisiana bayous devastated by the storm.

The US government, however, flatly rejected Cuba’s offer to send 1,500 medical personnel to help. Instead, Washington brutally left working people there to fend for themselves, knowing full well that medical attention, food, and water were woefully lacking.

This contempt for working people’s lives and welfare on the part of the wealthy US capitalist families — and of the government and twin political par-

Continued on page 8



Above, Cuban Medical Brigade in Guinea Facebook page
Left, Cuban medical volunteers unload supplies on arrival in Freetown, Sierra Leone, Oct. 2014. Above, doctors in protective suits with patients about to be released from Coyah treatment unit in Guinea, January 2014. Today some 50,000 Cuban health care volunteers are serving in more than 60 countries, part of revolution’s solidarity with fellow toilers worldwide.



Ciencias Sociales
Ernesto Che Guevara, second from left, with Cuban volunteers in Algeria, 1964, Cuba’s first internationalist medical mission, part of revolution’s aid to fight for independence from France.



“Just as the Cuban combatants in Angola set an example that can never be erased, the heroic actions of Cuba’s army of white coats will occupy a place of honor.”

—Fidel Castro, October 2014

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US gov’t puts restrictions on charter flights to Cuba

BY ROY LANDERSEN

In the U.S. rulers’ latest move to ratchet up their almost six-decade-long economic war on the Cuban Revolution, the administration of President Donald Trump announced Jan. 10 it would bar all charter flights to nine regional airports in Cuba. It also capped charter flights to the international airport in Havana at last year’s level of 3,600 round trips. These new restrictions go into effect after “a 60-day wind-down period.”

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the move was to further impede “the Cuban regime from gaining access to hard currency from U.S. travellers.” Promoting Washington’s slander campaign against the Cuban Revolution, Pompeo claimed the new strictures were retaliation for the Cuban government’s “ongoing oppression of the Cuban people” and “support for dictator Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela.”

The U.S. rulers — under Democratic and Republican administrations alike — have targeted Cuba’s socialist revolution since workers and farmers over-

threw the Washington-backed Fulgencio Batista dictatorship in 1959 and took political power into their own hands.

The U.S. government continues to try to bring down the Venezuelan government, despite being frustrated by the failure of the opposition politicians it backs to oust Maduro. Washington has since sanctioned any oil tankers that take Venezuelan petroleum to Cuba. It hopes to weaken and undermine both the Cuban Revolution and the Venezuelan government.

The ban on charter flights to provincial airports will mainly affect thousands of Cuban Americans wanting to travel to the island to visit relatives. Over half a million such visits took place last year.

Charter flights to Cuban cities have expanded since Washington banned commercial flights to all Cuban airports except Havana last December.

Anti-Cuba lawsuits thrown out

Two days earlier Washington suffered a reversal when a federal court

in Miami threw out lawsuits against Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings and MSC Cruises over their use of the Havana cruise terminal. The administration opened the floodgates for suits like this when it ended the longstanding suspension of Title III of the notorious Helms-Burton Act that invites relatives of prerevolution capitalist property owners to sue for damages because the revolution nationalized their assets.

Carnival Cruise Lines and Royal Caribbean Cruises, facing a similar lawsuit, are likely to use this decision to seek to have their cases dismissed as well. All of these suits have been pushed by Mickael Behn, grandson of the capitalist owner of the company that ran Havana’s docks before 1959.

Cuban officials report that nearly 900,000 people took cruises to the island in 2018. Carnival had plans for more routes and cruises before the Trump administration imposed a ban on cruise ships to Cuban ports last June.

Australia bushfires: Capitalism is responsible for social disaster

The following statement was released by the Communist League in Australia Jan. 8.

The massive bushfires that have swept south and eastern Australia have had a devastating impact on the lives of many working people. But the social crisis developing in the wake of the fires is the result of the workings of the capitalist system, which puts the profits of building companies, investors and insurance magnates before the interests of working people who have lost their homes and livelihoods.

The contempt of politicians for working people, including volunteer firefighters as they struggled to save lives and homes, was epitomized by the indifference of the Prime Minister and the NSW [New South Wales] Emergency Services Minister as they took off for their overseas holidays in the midst of the crisis.

While there were plenty of signs that warned of the severity of fires this season, governments did nothing to prepare for the conditions. There were no steps taken in advance to organize for evacuations or to provide for those who had to flee their homes with nothing.

The hot, dry weather conditions and high winds has made the fires more intense and unpredictable, but the scale of the fires has been exacerbated by the massive buildup of forest fuel. State and federal governments, which rule in the interests of the capitalist class, bear responsibility for the failure of management of the forests and water supplies.

Aboriginal leaders explain that frequent low intensity burns are necessary to prevent the buildup of forest fuel. This traditional practice was based on thousands of years' experience of doing what was necessary to protect the environment rather than extracting profit. Under capitalism these methods have been deemed too expensive. Instead, governments cut spending and employment in forest and parks services, and tie preventive measures up in red tape.

Protests called by climate activists in response to the bushfires have centered on calls for the government to change its "climate policy." But every policy implemented by corporations

and bourgeois governments only serves the interests of maintaining capitalist profit-making and rule.

It is the capitalists' profit-fueled manufacturing competition that has tens the poisoning of the earth's air, water and soil. The effects are ruinous for working people in city and countryside. What is needed is to advance a working-class program to fight to end capital's exploitation of both labour and nature.

The Communist League calls for workers and our unions to fight for workers control over production to ensure health and safety in the factories, mines and energy monopolies, and to control emissions of greenhouse gases, which contribute to the gradual rise in the temperature of the earth's atmosphere.

Working people need to fight for a government-funded public works program to put thousands to work at union rates to rebuild housing and infrastructure destroyed in the fires, and carry out work in the forestry industry and the National Parks. The federal government must ensure ad-



Resident of Cobargo, Australia, area hard hit by bushfires, refuses to shake hand of Prime Minister Scott Morrison. Capitalist rulers left working people on their own as fires raged.

equate compensation for those who have lost their homes and livelihoods and volunteer firefighters who have had to leave their jobs. We demand that it extend affordable credit to working farmers and guarantee their costs of production.

Working people need to organise and act independently of the ruling capitalists and break from their political parties. The only way we can prevent future such catastrophes is by building a movement to fight along a course to replace

the rule of the exploiters with a workers and farmers government.

Cuba's revolutionary government sets an example of what can be done when working people are in power. When hurricanes hit Cuba, all the resources of Cuba's people are mobilised. The government organises evacuations so everyone knows in advance what shelter to move to. "We have one unmovable principle," former President Raúl Castro said, "the revolution will not leave anyone defenseless."

'Red Zone' shows Cuba's solidarity, internationalism

Continued from page 7

ties through which they exercise their exploitation and class rule — has been repeated many times over, both before and after Katrina. In the past few years alone, we've seen the social catastrophe in the wake of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico in 2017; the devastation in Florida and the Carolinas in 2019; and countless floods, wildfires, and other disasters in Texas, California, and across the United States. *And around the world.*

While many such occurrences are natural in origin, the catastrophic *social consequences* for tens and hundreds of millions are a product of capitalism.

As this book goes to press in late 2019, a new outbreak of Ebola in the Congo, second only in scope to the West Africa epidemic, has passed its one-year mark and still threatens to spread. Once again, the response by the profiteers' governments and "charitable" institutions hasn't gone much beyond declarations of "a public health emergency of

international concern." Meanwhile, the capitalist owners of giant US and other multinational pharmaceutical corporations compete for market share for their new Ebola vaccines and treatments.

Cuba's "army of white coats," as Fidel Castro aptly called them in 2014, acts in stark contrast to capitalist "medicine." Serving in 64 countries, these volunteers often work and live in the most remote rural regions or worst-off urban working-class neighborhoods. These are areas that profit-maximizing hospitals and "health-care" conglomerates stay as far away from as possible. As do most physicians who graduate from medical school in the capitalist world, convinced that their diplomas entitle them to big bucks and the best comforts their class privilege can offer.

The goal of Cuba's internationalist cooperation is not simply to provide needed medical personnel where none currently exist. The Cuban government strives to contribute to build-

ing a medical infrastructure in these countries wherever possible, helping establish medical schools in some countries, bringing students to Cuba for medical training at little or no cost, and assisting in developing networks of primary care clinics.

Cuba's revolutionary government has extended medical assistance to countries with which it doesn't have diplomatic relations as well. That was the case, for example, when 2,400 doctors, nurses, and others went to the mountainous Kashmir region of Pakistan in 2005 following the 7.6 magnitude earthquake that killed some 80,000 human beings there. Cuban medical volunteers set up 30 field hospitals, later donated to the Pakistan government. Cuba provided 1,000 scholarships to students in the region to study at the Latin American School of Medicine in Havana.

Like other missions abroad, the fight against Ebola was a learning experience for the Cuban medical personnel involved. This was especially true for younger brigade members, who have never themselves (nor, as years go by, their parents or even grandparents) lived or worked under the dog-eat-dog social relations bred by capitalist exploitation and rendered even more brutal by imperialist oppression.

In *Red Zone*, Ubieta said at the 2016 launching, "I write about the seeds we are sowing inside and outside of our selves. Every time a Cuban doctor takes part in a mission abroad, they renew themselves as revolutionaries."

Some people contend "that the epic moments of the Cuban Revolution are a thing of the past," Ubieta noted, and "that Cubans should concern themselves only with their own individual, everyday problems, which can sometimes be overwhelming.

"And then suddenly you hear the battle cry, like the request we received for aid. And thousands turn out, volunteering to go. Solidarity is very much alive in the Cuban people."

December 7, 2019

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Cuban Revolution: Example for Puerto Rico

The Puerto Rican government and its colonial masters in Washington left people on the island to fend for themselves in the aftermath of last week’s earthquake, just as they have for over two years since Hurricane Maria wrecked havoc there.

No one can stop an earthquake or a hurricane. But their effects are not a “natural” disaster, nor a result of “climate change.” It’s a result of the way capitalism works — to maximize profits for the bosses and bankers — disregarding the lives of working people, from shoddy construction to lack of any real preparation for storms, earthquakes or other disasters. In Puerto Rico it is made many times worse because of the economic distortions and superexploitation imposed by U.S. colonial rule.

The Cuban Revolution shows that society doesn’t have to be organized that way. As Raúl Castro explains, in Cuba no one is left on their own. Working people there are organized to minimize the loss of life and to rapidly begin to rebuild whenever disaster strikes. But this is only possible because working people made a revolution and took power out of the

hands of a U.S.-backed dictatorship in 1959, replacing capitalist rule with a workers and farmers government and winning real independence.

The response by working people across Puerto Rico — immediately organizing to get food and supplies to earthquake-stricken areas in the face of the government’s indifference and completely inadequate response — shows that they are capable of doing the same.

Today, while thousands in Puerto Rico are living in tent cities or in the open air, capitalist bondholders — backed by Washington — continue to demand payment on Puerto Rico’s billions of dollars of debt.

Working people in the U.S. join with the workers and farmers of Puerto Rico to demand: Cancel the debt! Abolish the U.S. imposed Financial Oversight and Management Board! Immediate, unconditional U.S. aid for reconstruction!

Fighting for these demands, and setting out to follow the example of Cuba’s workers and farmers, will put working people in Puerto Rico in the best position to organize to put an end to U.S. colonial rule.

Protests spread as Tehran admits it downed plane

Continued from front page

military forces they organize, seeking to extend their sway through intervention in the conflicts taking place in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and elsewhere. The deadly and destructive consequences of these wars falls overwhelmingly on the working class.

For three days the government lied about the Revolutionary Guard’s shooting down of the Ukrainian International Airlines Boeing aircraft after it took off from Tehran bound for Kyiv and then Canada Jan. 8. Officials denied responsibility, insisting the flight had suffered mechanical problems. Lost in the missile attack were 82 Iranians and 63 Canadians, many students studying abroad or holding joint citizenship.

Protests began at Amir Kabir University in Tehran at a vigil organized for 16 students killed in the missile strike. Actions spread to other colleges there, to Tehran’s Azadi Square and to Esfahan, Rasht, Yazd, Kerman, Shiraz, Hamedan, Boroujerd and other cities.

Protesters demand ousting of gov’t

Protesters in Tehran chanted, “Death to liars” and “Death to the dictator,” referring to Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. They demanded the Iranian Revolutionary Guard — a central pillar of the regime’s rule at home and whose Quds Force has led its intervention abroad — “let go of the country.” The Quds Force was formerly led by Gen. Qassem Soleimani, who was killed in a U.S. military drone strike Jan. 2.

Others chanted, “The game is over” for both “reformists” and “principlists” — popular names for the two wings of the bourgeois clerical regime that have ruled the country since leading a counterrevolution in the early 1980s. The regime pushed back gains won by working people in the 1979 Iranian Revolution that overthrew the U.S.-backed rule of the shah, established workers councils — called shoras — in factories and oil refineries across the country, and fueled struggles by farmers, oppressed nationalities and women.

The anti-government protests came just days after authorities claimed the country had been unified behind the regime during funeral processions for Soleimani, and then showed their disdain for ordinary people when they did nothing to prevent more than 50 mourners from getting killed in a stampede.

After evidence was posted to social media from videos taken by people who saw the plane plummet after being hit, the regime refused to allow Boeing, the Ukrainians or anyone else to get access to the plane’s black boxes. Then there were photos of what appeared to be efforts by the government to steamroll away the remains of the plane’s wreckage.

More video that surfaced Jan. 14 confirmed U.S. officials’ claims that the Revolutionary Guard fired not one but two missiles to down the plane.

Finally Iranian officials admitted they had “accidentally” shot the plane down, confusing it with a guided missile. Major Gen. Hossein Salami, the most senior commander of the Revolutionary Guard, issued

a public apology and was summoned to a closed session of parliament Jan. 12.

“Why insist on lying for a few days?” asked Gholamreza Haydari, a member of parliament from Tehran. “We need to go after the highest chain of command responsible for this.”

A few other members of parliament also spoke out against the moral bankruptcy of the cover-up. In an effort to mollify the growing protests and pin blame on rivals in the regime, President Hassan Rouhani urged the courts to arrest and punish those responsible for downing the plane.

Some protesters in Tehran denounced Soleimani, who had helped organize the Iranian capitalist rulers’ military forces that crushed the anti-government protests in November, when at least 300 people were killed and over 1,000 arrested.

In Mahshahr, a largely Arab cities in the country’s southwest, Revolutionary Guard forces surrounded and gunned down fleeing protesters in a marsh where they sought refuge during the November protests.

Washington out now!

But none of Tehran’s counterrevolutionary actions at home or in the region excuse the U.S. imperialist intervention in Iraq and across the Middle East. Seeking to use the weight of their massive military machine to deter further attacks from Tehran, the U.S. rulers have increased their ground, naval and air forces in the region to over 80,000 troops.

And they’ve continued to tighten stifling sanctions that fall most sharply on Iran’s working people. President Donald Trump announced further punitive measures Jan. 10, including sanctions on Iran’s trade in metals, construction, manufacturing, textiles and mining. The governments of France, Germany and the U.K. took the first steps to reimpose sanctions on Iran Jan. 14, saying Tehran had violated the 2015 nuclear pact that Washington pulled out of in 2018.

“The Socialist Workers Party calls for the immediate, unconditional and total withdrawal of all U.S. troops, bases, weaponry and armaments from Iraq, Syria and the region,” Naomi Craine, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from Illinois, said in a statement Jan. 10 available on the *Militant*’s website. “U.S. hands off Iran!”

New waves of anti-government protests have also broken out in Iraq, with thousands in the streets Jan. 10. The protests are fueled by a lack of political rights, jobs and basic services, and widespread anger at the deadly impact of Tehran’s intervention in the country.

“We have all seen and felt what this government has done,” Ahmed al-Rikabi told Al Jazeera in Baghdad’s Tahrir Square. “They have done it with Iranian help, they did it with Qassem Soleimani too.” At least 500 people have been killed by pro-government forces and Tehran-organized militias attempting to drive fear into the workers and young people who’ve been in the streets since October.

Impeachment fold

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ly be acquitted. Pelosi had delayed doing so for weeks, in violation of the Constitution, demanding that the opponents of Trump’s presidency set the rules.

The liberals press their permanent witch hunt against a president they despise — and his working-class “base” that they fear, a reflection of their concern they have little chance of defeating him in November.

And they’re searching for any way they can think of to prevent working people from ever putting their stamp on an election again.

Pelosi claimed the president is “impeached for life,” a meaningless statement designed to cover the fact Democrats know there is zero chance the Senate will vote to convict. A growing number of Democratic senators urged her to quit stalling and send on the articles of impeachment.

The liberals and their impeachment media allies like the *New York Times* have fought to oust or indict Trump since the day he was elected. They drew in two former FBI bosses — James Comey and Robert Mueller — to set up a partisan “Special Prosecutors” office that tried for over two years to cook up a case that Trump colluded with Moscow to steal the 2016 vote.

When that came apart, with not a shred of evidence, they grabbed charges the president interfered in Ukraine for partisan ends — despite the insistence of the Ukraine’s president it just wasn’t true. Now they’re flailing around for a new load of mud to toss at Trump as the election keeps looming nearer.

Trump is stepping up his campaign for reelection, running on a platform that his administration has brought “peace and prosperity.” He touts the growth of the capitalist economy under his administration, buoyed by a cyclical decline in unemployment.

And he says his course in Iraq — like the military operation that killed Iranian Revolutionary Guard Gen. Qassem Soleimani — was an example of the use of U.S. military might to deter rivals from attack.

“Trump and his team do not believe in appeasement as did Team Obama; they believe in peace through strength,” writes Hugh Hewitt in the *Washington Post*.

At a campaign rally in Toledo, Ohio, the president argued the protectionist trade pact he negotiated with the governments of Mexico and Canada was “historic for Ohio farmers, workers and manufacturers.”

Capitalist politicians of all stripes try to rally workers and farmers behind their military and trade policies as they vie with competitors for resources and markets, obscuring the fact that working people and the bosses have completely opposing interests, as the capitalist rulers try to pit workers in the U.S. against workers in other countries.

Attempts by liberals to portray Trump as a war monger for ordering Soleimani’s killing fell flat, as the bourgeois clerical regime in Tehran backed off from further retaliation for the U.S. airstrikes. Trump called for a new relationship with Tehran, appealing to the Iranian rulers to end meddling in the region and agree to a more stringent nuclear deal with Washington.

What road forward for working people?

As the Democrats fret and flail and Trump looks like a repeat winner — barring a collapse in the economic uptick — none of this presents a road forward for the working class and others battered by the ongoing crisis of capitalism.

The “peace” he presides over is one of imperialist plunder and his “prosperity” is one where the bosses feel bolder while tens of millions of workers and farmers live on the brink, paycheck to paycheck.

In contrast to the Democrats and Republicans, the Socialist Workers Party candidates point a way forward for working people. They start from workers organizing themselves independently and fighting in their own interests. They urge workers to break from the trap of casting a ballot for this year’s “lesser-evil” ruling-class party candidates. Workers need their own party, a labor party to fight to take political power and organize a workers and farmers government.

SWP candidates point to what workers can do together today to organize solidarity with copper workers on strike at Asarco in Arizona and Texas. To join protest actions demanding Washington get its troops and weaponry out of the Mideast and mobilizing solidarity with those hit by recent murderous Jew-hating attacks.

Join the Socialist Workers Party campaign!