

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Cuba's socialist revolution, China
and the world class struggle today
— PAGES 8-10

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 84/NO. 5 FEBRUARY 10, 2020

Back protests against gov't repression in Iran and Iraq

BY SETH GALINSKY

Many liberal editorial writers claimed that the Jan. 2 U.S. military operation that killed Gen. Qassem Soleimani would cause people to unite behind the regimes in Iran and Iraq in outrage. Soleimani commanded the Iranian rulers' Quds Force, the wing of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps at the forefront of Tehran's reactionary interventions from Syria to Iraq, from Lebanon to Yemen.

But working people in both Iran and Iraq continued to protest against Tehran's wars abroad and the effects of the economic and social crisis they face.

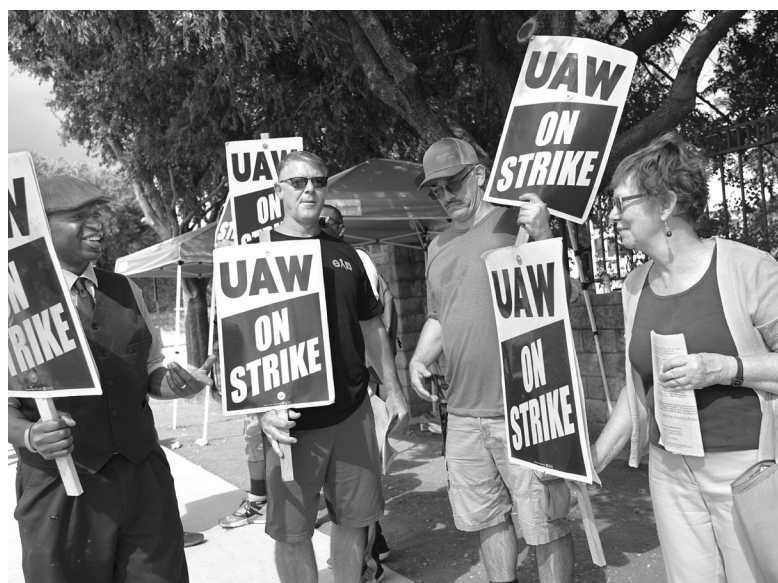
Armed attacks by cops and Tehran-organized militias in Iraq have left more than 500 dead and thousands injured since protests there erupted Oct. 1, but have only strengthened the resolve of demonstrators calling for an end to Iranian as well as U.S. interference there. The protests follow years of Tehran's interference in Iraq and government disdain for the lack of jobs and basic necessities like water and electricity.

On Jan. 25 Iraqi police and militia forces attacked anti-government encampments across southern Iraq, burning down tents and firing live ammunition.

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Join the Socialist Workers Party 2020 US presidential campaign!

Alyson Kennedy for president ≈ Malcolm Jarrett for vice president



Militant photos: Left, Hilda Cuzco; right, Eric Simpson

SWP vice presidential candidate Malcolm Jarrett, at left, joins presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy on autoworkers' picket line in Arlington, Texas, during GM strike last fall. Right, Kennedy discusses politics, SWP program with Jason Denton on his doorstep in Dallas, Jan. 25, 2019.

The SWP candidates...

Alyson Kennedy

Alyson Kennedy grew up in Indianapolis, where she was attracted to the massive battles she followed on TV against racist cops and KKK thugs across the South that tore down Jim Crow segregation, strengthening the whole working class. After she move to Louisville, Kentucky, she joined the fight to desegregate public schools there in 1975.

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Fight for what you're for, not what you're against!

BY TERRY EVANS

"The Socialist Workers Party campaign presents a road forward for working-class struggle to advance the self-confidence, fighting capacities and class consciousness of working people," Alyson Kennedy, SWP candidate for president in 2020, told the *Militant*. The party announced Jan. 29 that she and Malcolm Jarrett, the party's vice presidential candidate, were heading its 2020 national ticket.

"What our campaign explains is that working people have the capacities to fight for better wages, working conditions and defend our rights, and will transform ourselves in the course of our struggles in the years ahead, becoming capable of running society ourselves," Kennedy added. She and Jarrett spoke to the *Militant* by phone.

By joining workers' battles and speaking out in defense of all the oppressed and exploited, workers can unite and strengthen ourselves for bigger battles to come, she said. Struggles

in which the only class capable of bringing an end to the class dictatorship of the capitalist rulers — the working class — will have an opportunity to do so.

"Establishing our own party, a labor party, and fighting for a workers and farmers government," Jarrett pointed out, "creates the best conditions possible

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Solidarity bolsters copper miners' fight against Asarco union busting



United Steelworkers

Striking copper workers' contingent joins Martin Luther King Day parade in Tucson, Jan. 20.

BY BERNIE SENTER

HAYDEN, Ariz. — Workers on strike against copper giant Asarco are winning solidarity in their hard-fought four-month-long battle against the company's drive to impose steep concessions and bust their unions.

"We're doing this for the next gen-

eration, for those who are getting out of high school," Gary Jones told the *Militant* Jan. 21 at the picket line in front of the smelter here, where he's worked for 25 years. "Even retired people are coming by to talk and bring firewood."

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Victory! Indiana prison officials overturn ban on the 'Militant'

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

A victory has been won in the fight to reverse impoundments of the *Militant* from subscriber Kevin "Rashid" Johnson, who is incarcerated at the Pendleton Correctional Facility in Indiana.

"I am writing on behalf of the Indiana Department of Correction with regards to your January 15, 2020 letter," said an email sent to *Militant* attorney David Goldstein Jan. 29 by

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Join the May Day Brigade to Cuba, see the difference revolution makes

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Supporters of the Cuban Revolution are getting out the word about the 15th May Day Brigade to Cuba, April 27 to May 10, and they're finding interest.

"Most of what I had heard about Cuba was negative," Brandon Freer, a 21-year-old restaurant worker from Cohoes, New York, told Socialist

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Ontario teachers unions protest attacks on wages and class size

Fearing 2020 election defeat, liberals say: Convict Trump!

BY SETH GALINSKY

As the Democrats and their cheerleaders in the liberal media drive to convict and throw President Donald Trump out of the White House, saying it's the most important political question ever, the fact is most of the seats open to the public at the Senate's trial on impeachment charges have been empty. Their hysteria and hyperbole is driven by their belief they don't have a candidate who can beat him in November. At the same time, they confront the reality that it's virtually impossible for them to cobble together the two-thirds Senate majority needed to oust Trump.

Many workers wonder how the damning "evidence" against Trump — that the president attempted to pressure Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky to investigate corruption, including the \$50,000-a-month Ukrainian natural gas company sinecure held by former Vice President Joe Biden's son — is in any way different from how all U.S. administrations have bullied smaller nations to do as they wish. Biden himself was famous for this as the point man for foreign policy operations in the Barack Obama administration.

Nonetheless, the liberal press continues to ballyhoo new "bombshells," like outtakes from the draft of a book by former National Security Adviser John Bolton, about the president's crimes.

In reality, as Democrats became less confident they could select a candidate that has much chance of winning against Trump in November, their response was to step up efforts

to eliminate him from the contest.

They're convinced that the "deplorable" workers who voted for Trump in 2016 — who they falsely charge are racist and xenophobic — or who didn't vote at all, will do so again. But workers voted as they did not because they are backward, but because they're sick of suffering the effects of today's capitalist crisis, which is visited on them daily, and of the disdain toward them from the "swamp" in Washington.

In their 24-hour-long opening statement, the impeachment trial managers, appointed by House Democratic Majority Leader Nancy Pelosi, have made it clear that the trial in the Senate has little to do with Ukraine or the facts.

Trump will always "cheat in an election," Adam Schiff, the Democrats' chief prosecutor, said, and therefore "the president's misconduct cannot be decided at the ballot box, for we cannot be assured that the vote was fairly won."

"He is who he is," Schiff insisted, claiming, "You cannot leave a man like that in office."

The Democrats' answer is to find a way to restrict workers' right to vote and to restrict other constitutional guarantees workers need to defend themselves — like due process, the right to confront your accuser and the presumption of innocence. These are the stakes for working people, who face similar attacks daily under the capitalists' criminal "justice" system.

Workers need their own voice

Neither Democrats nor Republicans, nor Trump or Biden or any of the capitalist candidates of any stripe, offer a road

Protest hits lack of Puerto Rico gov't response after quake



La Perla del Sur/Jason Rodríguez Grafal

"Just like with Hurricane Maria in 2017, the government is acting too slow in the wake of the earthquake," Mildred Laboy, a teacher and leader of the Arecma community organization, told the *Militant* from Humacao in the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico, Jan. 29. "It's the people who are providing aid."

Three weeks after the Jan. 6 quake at least 240,000 students are still out of school, because their buildings were damaged or the government has not yet certified that they're safe. Some 5,000 are still living in tent cities in the hard-hit south. "And the mayor of Ponce says that people are 'delighted' to be living in tents!" Laboy said.

When a warehouse full of undistributed aid was found Jan. 19 in Ponce — some of it stored since Maria! — hundreds protested there (above) and thousands in San Juan. "It's incredible," Laboy said. "They were hiding the aid."

— SETH GALINSKY

forward for working people. That's why the Socialist Workers Party has its own ticket — Alyson Kennedy for president and Malcolm Jarrett for vice president — like it has in previous elections for decades. Working people need our own voice, our own program and a fighting course to replace capitalist rule with a government of workers and farmers.

The Democrats and Republicans are two rival parties that speak for the capitalist class, hoping workers will feel compelled each election to hold their nose and cast a vote for the "lesser evil." Workers need their own party and a revolutionary independent working-class program to fight effectively against the attacks we face and to take political power ourselves.

Bill of Rights out the window

The frenzied Democrats are happy to toss constitutional protections — as well as civility and fair play — out the

window in their drive to oust Trump.

They've relied as their chief allies on proven opponents of workers' rights — like former FBI chiefs James Comey and William Mueller whose direction of the capitalist rulers' political police in their spying and disruption operations against labor and political fighters is their calling card. Now they're looking to John Bolton, a long-standing political operative on the Republican right, who they used to denounce as a demon.

While it's no wonder workers have turned off their TVs, there are important questions of our rights at stake in this affair. If a wealthy real estate mogul who is president of the United States can be denied the constitutional right to due process, to be innocent until proven guilty, to be able to confront his accusers, what does that mean for working people, our unions or working-class political parties?

THE MILITANT

Capitalism made Australia bushfires a social disaster

The 'Militant' reports on the disaster from the failure of Australia's capitalist rulers to do preventative burn-offs or clear fire trails in state forests. Production for profit turns natural bushfires into a social disaster for working people. Only help came from working-class solidarity.



Australia Department of Defence/Helen Frank Canberra belatedly evacuated people trapped by fires in Mallacoota, Dec. 31.

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Putin moves to extend his rule, tamp down workers’ resistance

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Russian President Vladimir Putin Jan. 15 announced “a major renewal,” which looks a lot like a plan to keep him in office indefinitely. His proposed changes to the constitution are being rolled out with great fanfare. This takes place as his popularity is falling and his 20-year rule faces deepening problems as workers confront falling living standards and social crisis.

Putin aims to shore up Russian capitalism in an era of world capitalist crisis, and with an economy heavily dependent on oil and gas exports that is weak compared to Washington and its other competitors. At the same time the Kremlin is seeking to shore up its international standing and defend its allies — as it did intervening in Syria to rescue the tottering dictatorship of Bashar al-Assad.

The government reorganization includes the resignation of Dmitry Medvedev as prime minister and replacement of much of the cabinet. It weakens future presidents and bolsters the State Council — a committee of top regional, security and military officials chaired by Putin — that would take on greater executive power.

This interim government is headed by newly appointed Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin, a little-known but loyal former taxation minister.

In addition to paving the way for Putin to retain the reins of power after his presidency ends in 2024, the new setup is tasked with implementing his 12-point National Projects plan. This is a set of schemes to use state resources to modernize and diversify the capitalist economy, squeeze workers to boost productivity, and allocate some social spending to try and cushion the harsh conditions of life facing working people to quell unrest.

Real income of Russian workers fell 1.3% in the first half of 2019. Some 65% of Russian households have no savings. The government adopted new pension laws that will force workers to wait later — many until after the average life span — before they can claim a pension.

This social crisis is worsened by sanctions imposed by Washington and the EU that the imperialist powers say were in reprisal for Moscow’s seizure and occupation of Crimea in 2014.

Bonapartist regime

Putin, a former officer of the KGB, the Soviet secret police, rose to power

as a capitalist-oriented economy and government emerged from the wreckage of the Stalinist police-state regime in the 1990s.

He acted as an arbiter standing above rival forces — the so-called oligarchy of newly emerged capitalist exploiters that had looted the former state-owned enterprises, and working people, who faced a deep social crisis. He put his KGB methods to work, rising in power through patronage and the arrest, torture or murder of bourgeois political opponents.

In 2000, the year before he became president, Putin said he would prevent Russia from being “relegated to the second or even third tier of global powers.”

He has since sought to restore some of Moscow’s former sway over its “near abroad” of former Soviet Republics like Ukraine. After Viktor Yanukovich, the Russian-backed Ukrainian president, was toppled by the popular Maidan uprising in 2014, Putin occupied Crimea and reinforced separatist paramilitary forces in Ukraine’s eastern provinces to break from Kyiv.

Putin set up the Eurasian Economic Union in 2015 seeking to ensnare former Soviet countries like Armenia, Kazakhstan, Belarus and Kyrgyzstan into a common trade bloc.

Using oil revenues he modernized much of the Russian military, one of the world’s largest, with a substantial nuclear arsenal bequeathed by the USSR’s collapse. But even with these moves, Putin’s 2019 military budget was \$44 billion, compared to \$716 billion for Washington.

Moscow’s rulers have tried to use their intervention in Syria to maintain influence and gain allies in the Middle East.

Putin identifies with czars, Stalin

Putin combines a hatred for the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the Bolshevik Party that led workers and farmers to power with bemoaning the downfall of the czarist empire, overthrown by the revolution, which had stood as the bulwark of semifeudal reaction in Europe for centuries.

The Bolshevik Revolution, under the communist leadership of V.I. Lenin, marked a tremendous advance for the world’s toilers, the first revolution in history to overthrow capitalist exploitation and oppression. A government was formed based on soviets — councils of workers, peasants and soldiers deputies. This example of workers and peasants taking power inspired millions across the globe, hastening the end of the bloody imperialist slaughter of World War I.

Revolutionary-minded workers worldwide organized to build Communist Parties modeled on the Bolsheviks to fight for power.

The Bolshevik-led government organized workers to take control of industry, to learn how to produce for society’s needs, not for profit. It supported peasants’ struggles by nationalizing big landholdings and distributing land to the tillers. It led working people to establish new socialized property relations, the foundation of the world’s first workers state.

Lenin’s proletarian international-



With the help of the Red Army and after two years of combat, working people in Odessa, Ukraine, took power in 1919, defeating reactionary pro-czarist forces. Vladimir Putin denounces the Bolshevik Revolution for “time bomb” of self-determination for oppressed nationalities.

ist course supported the right of oppressed peoples within the old czarist “prison house of nations” to self-determination. In the last year of his life, he led a fight — against a developing caste led by Joseph Stalin — for a voluntary federation of these oppressed nations with Russia, formed “on the basis of full equality.”

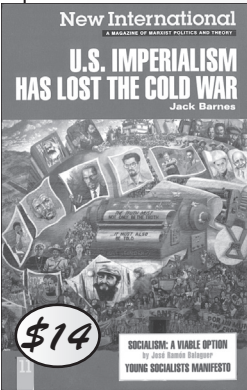
Many of these gains were reversed over the next decade. Revolutionary upsurges by workers and farmers in Germany and elsewhere were defeated and the Russian Revolution isolated. The workers and farmers government faced reactionary forces in a civil war and invasion by over a dozen imperialist powers, including the U.S. rulers.

In this context, Stalin led a rising bureaucratic layer seeking to reverse the proletarian course followed by Lenin. Amid war and deepening economic crisis, workers and farmers were pushed out of politics. Frame-up trials and the murder of revolutionaries, forced collectivization of agriculture and “gulags” of forced labor camps marked Stalin’s bloody counterrevolution reversing the political gains of the Russian Revolution.

Despite this, the Soviet Union, however hideously bureaucratically distorted, was still based on state property, not capitalist control, which workers needed to defend. The workers state finally came to an end in the years after the 1991 disintegration of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War

by Jack Barnes in *New International* no. 11

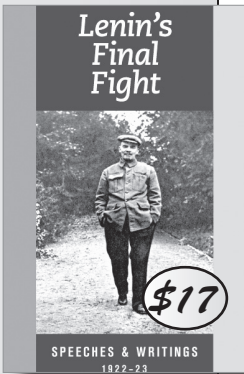


“The Stalinist political counterrevolution against the working class during the late 1920s and early 1930s by the bloated bureaucracy relied on the Bonapartist regime’s massive apparatus of repression, above all its secret police.”

“Once Stalinism had transformed the Soviet Union into the opposite of a voluntary federation of workers and peasants republics, its breakup, its disintegration from within was inevitable. This became a precondition for a new advance of the worldwide struggle for national liberation and socialism.”

Lenin’s Final Fight

In 1922 and 1923 V.I. Lenin waged his last political battle. At stake was whether the revolution would remain on the proletarian course that had brought workers and peasants to power. “I declare war to the death on Great Russian chauvinism,” he wrote.



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—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

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Miami Alianza Martiana headquarters vandalized

BY CINDY JAQUITH

MIAMI — Amid stepped-up attacks on Cuba and its revolution by Washington, rightist thugs vandalized the office of Alianza Martiana here the night of Jan. 26, spray-painting “Abajo comunistas” (Down with communists) all over its storefront. Alianza Martiana is the most prominent organization in South Florida defending revolutionary Cuba, calling for normalization of relations, and an end to the U.S. embargo and restrictions on travel to the island.

The vandals struck a few hours after a successful public event at the Alianza hall celebrating the anniversary of the birth of Cuban independence leader José Martí as well as the 19th anniversary of Alianza’s founding.

In the days preceding the meeting, Alianza leaders report they received threats from forces calling themselves “Los Clandestinos.” Unidentified criminals also claiming to be “Los Clandestinos” had vandalized 11 statues of José Martí in Havana Jan. 1, pouring pig’s blood over the busts. Two men arrested for the crime confessed they were paid to deface Martí’s images by counter-revolutionary forces in Miami.

These outfits have long worked hand-in-glove with Washington to defame the Cuban Revolution, but they are weaker today than ever before. They still try to stifle the voices of the many Cubans here who oppose the U.S. embargo and assert their right to visit their homeland.

Andrés Gómez, national coordinator of the Antonio Maceo Brigade, one of the groups active in the Alianza, said in a press release following the attack, “We remain committed as always to defend the freedom of our people and the right to travel to Cuba.”

The Alianza is organizing a car caravan here Feb. 8 to oppose Washington’s recent cutoff of charter flights to Cuban cities other than Havana, a move that makes it more difficult for Cuban Amer-

icans to visit relatives on the island.

Anthony Dutrow, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress in the 27th District, where the Alianza office is located, called on Miami Mayor Francis X. Suarez and the police to arrest and prosecute those responsible.

“The Socialist Workers Party defends the Cuban Revolution as an example for working people in the U.S.,” Dutrow said. “If the offices of the Alianza can be assaulted with impunity, so can the offices of any union, my party or other organization defending workers’ rights. I will be campaigning to build the Feb. 8 car caravan for freedom to travel to Cuba.”



Storefront of Alianza Martiana, a Miami organization that defends the Cuban Revolution, after attack by rightists Jan. 26. Vandals painted threat, “Abajo comunistas” (Down with communists).

Solidarity buoys strikers against Asarco union busting

Continued from front page

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. The company, except for a brief meeting in mid-November, refuses to negotiate with the unions.

Asarco bosses imposed their “last, best and final” contract offer in December. It continues a decadelong wage freeze for most of the miners, triples health care costs for miners and their families, and curtails union rights on the job.

Asarco is owned by Grupo Mexico, one of the world’s largest mining conglomerates. While the strike has shut down the Amarillo refinery and Hayden smelter, the company continues some production at other complexes, using supervisors, nonunion contractors and some workers who have crossed the picket line.

“The Navajo Nation labor federation just gave \$5,000 for the striking miners,” Paul Stapleton-Smith, chair of the

Pima Area Labor Federation in Tucson, who coordinates solidarity contributions for the strike, told the *Militant* by phone Jan. 28. “The International Longshore retirees from three different locals in Seattle sent a check for \$500. And I just sent a thank-you letter to someone in France who sent \$25. Someone said we should ask her to send some yellow vests and we’ll send them union helmets.”

The Navajo Nation group is the AFL-CIO affiliated Nal-Nishii Area Labor Federation based in Farmington, New Mexico.

The copper miners — like their fellow workers in this part of Arizona — are majority Mexican Americans, as well as Native Americans and Caucasians. Some Native Americans opposed a land swap that allowed Rio Tinto- and BHP-owned Resolution Copper to expand its nearby mine onto traditional Apache lands.

And the miners in this area have had to fight many bitter battles against the copper bosses for over a century. There is only one other copper mine in Arizona besides Asarco that is union today.

Stapleton-Smith said the area where the Ray Mine and Hayden smelter are located “are like company towns. It’s very hard for the miners to get other work.”

“The Maricopa Area Labor Federation in Phoenix has adopted Ray and Hayden,” he said, “and has raised \$20,000 and taken responsibility for keeping their food pantry and supplies going.”

“Unlike us, the strikers at the Hayden smelter and Ray Mine are in a secluded, rural area,” Eduardo Placencio, a striking miner and the recording secretary of United Steelworkers Local 937 at the Mission Mine south of Tucson, told the *Militant*. “There are 600 strikers at the Ray Mine and they don’t have the same resources we have. We’re planning on getting more aid and food donations to them.”

The miners welcome supporters to join their picket lines, which they keep up 24 hours a day, as well as donations to their food pantry and strike fund. Solidarity is crucial and well deserved.

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 Mission and Silver Bell mines 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 Amarillo refinery, send to USW Local 5613, 4230 Texas Hwy 136, Amarillo, TX 79108.

Deborah Liatos contributed to this article.

Asela de los Santos, Cuban revolutionary leader

BY JANET POST

Cuban revolutionary leader Asela de los Santos Tamayo died Jan. 23 at the age of 90. She became one of the earliest supporters of the revolutionary movement that was born with the attack on the Moncada army garrison led by Fidel Castro on July 26, 1953. De los Santos was part of the July 26 Movement from its founding after Fidel and the others were released from prison.

She had become politically active in student demonstrations against the Fulgencio Batista dictatorship at the University of Oriente where she studied to become a teacher.

In November 1956, de los Santos helped organize an armed action in Santiago in preparation for the landing of the *Granma*, which brought Fidel and Raúl Castro, Che Guevara and other revolutionary fighters to Cuba. Along with fellow revolutionaries Celia Sánchez and Vilma Espín, she transported fighters to join Fidel Castro in the Sierra Maestra mountains in 1957, and also helped build the massive outpouring in the streets of Santiago after the murder of revolutionary commander Frank País.

She was transferred to the Rebel Army’s Second Front in Oriente Prov-

ince in August 1958, where Raúl Castro assigned her to organize education. She led the establishment of some 400 schools and combatant study groups.

De los Santos always pointed to the Second Front as the foundation for the 1961 nationwide mass literacy campaign, when more than 250,000 Cuban volunteers, many of them students, taught workers and peasants across the island how to read and write, eliminating illiteracy in less than year and allowing them to participate more fully in the revolution.

With Espín, who died in 2007, de los Santos launched the Federation of Cuban Women in 1960 and later became its general secretary. In 1966 she became director of the education section of the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces and helped establish the Camilo Cienfuegos Military Schools — high schools that also teach military skills. She was Cuban Minister of Education from 1979 to 1981.

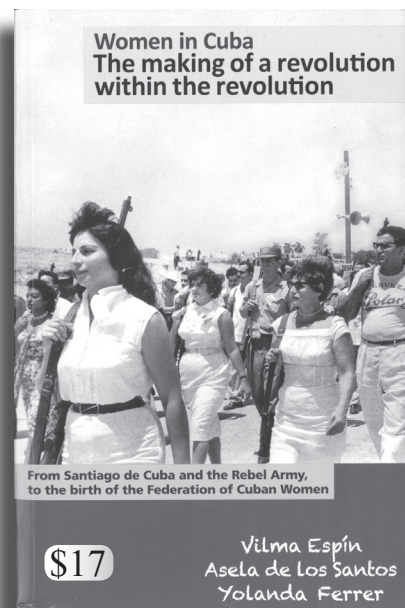
De los Santos was a founder of the Cuban Communist Party in 1965 and served on its Central Committee from 1975 to 1991. She was a national leader of the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution. De los Santos was married to José Ramón Fernán-

dez, commander of the main column of combatants at Playa Girón in April 1961 when they defeated the U.S.-organized Bay of Pigs invasion. Fernández, who died Jan. 6, 2019, was vice president of the Council of Ministers from 1978 until his death.

An urn bearing the ashes of de los Santos will be placed in the Second Eastern Front Mausoleum in the province of Santiago de Cuba.

At the 2012 Havana Book Fair, De los Santos spoke at the presentation of the Pathfinder book, *Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution*. She said that the book “offered me the opportunity to take up actions taken in the liberated territory of the Frank País Second Eastern Front, under the command of Raúl [Castro], and in which Vilma shouldered important responsibilities.”

“There, in the mountains and in the underground groups, equality and fraternity, solidarity and friendship, truth and justice, work, generosity, and respect for human dignity prevailed over the mediocrity, pettiness, selfishness and prejudices of all types that were imposed by the times of slavery, rooted in mind and behavior by centuries of colonial rule.”



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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

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

Locked-out Regina refinery workers fight to defend pensions

Over 700 workers at the Coop Refinery in Regina, Saskatchewan, are fighting to defend their pensions. They were locked out Dec. 5 after they voted overwhelmingly to strike.

Unifor, the workers union, mobilized hundreds of members from across Canada Jan. 20 to defy an injunction that limits pickets. The bosses are bringing managers and strikebreakers to try to keep production going. They got the courts to impose a 10-minute limit for the picketers stopping scab vehicles from getting into the plant. There were 14 arrests, including Jerry Dias, the national union president. The union now faces fines of 100,000 (Canadian dollars) for violating the injunction (\$75,963).

“It’s in the tough times that solidarity means something,” Sophie Albert, president of Unifor Local 522 in Montreal, who came to support the locked-out workers, told the *Regina Leader-Post*. “Maybe one day it’s going to be my local that needs some help, and we’re going to need people coming our way.” The Canadian Labour Con-

gress and several national unions have pledged their support.

The owners want to get rid of the workers’ defined benefit pension plan that is completely paid by the company. They demand workers choose between a new plan that doesn’t guarantee what workers will get or keep the present plan with workers having to pay part of the costs.

Kevin Bittman, union president at the refinery, told this *Militant* worker-correspondent in a phone interview that without the union workforce in the plant there are major safety issues. “They have taken 280 process workers and replaced them with 120 managers,” he said. “The company is bringing people in with helicopters and has built a camp to house 500.”

There are no negotiations scheduled and the company says it won’t negotiate as long as the picketers’ blockade is in place.

“The employer [made] \$2.5 billion in the last three years,” said Scott Doherty, chief negotiator for the union. “There is no reason this employer can’t afford to continue to make the pension contributions it does.”

— Joe Young

Ontario teachers unions protest attacks on wages and class size

BURLINGTON, Ontario — Hundreds of teachers and community sup-



Militant/Vicky Mercier

Four teachers unions and their supporters organized picketing in Toronto Jan. 20 as part of rotating strikes across Ontario against the provincial government’s attempt to cut school funding.

porters picketed outside the Central Public Elementary School here Jan. 23, part of province-wide, weekly rotating strikes against the Ontario government’s attempts to cut school funding.

Tens of thousands of Ontario teachers, members of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation, Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario, Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association and the French schools Association des enseignantes et enseignants franco-ontariens, have joined in the one-day strikes and work-to-rule actions since December 2019. This is the first time in two decades that all four unions are on strike together.

“Having the Catholic and public school teachers on picket lines together for the first time in many years makes

us much stronger,” David Vanturenout, a Grade 6 teacher at Central Public, told the *Militant*. “We need to be united.”

The teachers are fighting against the government’s proposal to limit pay raises to 1% a year for the next three years, a cap they also want to impose on nurses and other government workers. The government says that in order to save funds they are relaxing limits on class sizes at all levels, moves the unions say will mean elimination of thousands of teachers’ jobs. Funding for special needs students will also be cut.

Teachers here offered coffee to everyone who joined the pickets and cheered as one group showed up carrying handmade signs saying, “Grandparents for public education.”

— David Olson and Rosemary Ray

Are they rich because they’re smart?

Class, Privilege and Learning Under Capitalism

by Jack Barnes



Are they rich because they're smart?

CLASS, PRIVILEGE AND LEARNING UNDER CAPITALISM

JACK BARNES

\$10

“The meritocracy are mortified to be identified with working people. They fear someday being ruled by those they worry could become the ‘great mob’: the toiling and producing majority.”

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Parents protest asbestos threat in Philadelphia schools

BY CHRIS HOEPPNER

PHILADELPHIA — On the way home after work Jan. 17, I drove past a demonstration of parents, teachers and students from McClure Elementary School a few blocks from my row house. They were protesting elevated levels of asbestos at the school. I stopped and joined in.

McClure, built in 1910, has been closed off and on since Dec. 19 after asbestos was found in the air. School

district officials reopened the school today, insisting it was safe, even though many parents and teachers objected. Asbestos inhalation causes serious lung problems, including mesothelioma and other deadly cancers.

Just as school was starting up, district officials closed it back down due to elevated levels of asbestos recorded in the air the night before. Parents had to scramble for child care at the last minute.

Other schools in Philadelphia have been shuttered for similar reasons. When McClure was closed in December, the Laura Carnell Elementary School was also shut down for asbestos. The Franklin Learning Center was shut the week before. Earlier last fall Pratt Head Start, Ben Franklin High and the Science Leadership Academy were all closed for some time.

Officials admit there are asbestos and toxic lead paint problems at 141 district school buildings.

“My grandchild goes here, this is a question for the whole neighborhood,” protester John Perry told me when I said I was going to write the action up for the *Militant*. “There is asbestos in the classrooms. They should shut it down if they can’t fix it.”

“My children were actually in there with high readings. That’s unacceptable,” said Chenoa Manley. “I want transparency, honesty and to put my children’s health first before your budget concerns.” Parents also demand that students be relocated to another school, not just sent home.

As we chanted, “What do we want? Safe schools! When do we want it? Now!” bus drivers, sanitation truck drivers and other passersby honked in support of the protest. Workers, parents and children from a day care center across the street came out and joined in the chanting, along with others from the neighborhood.

The Philadelphia Federation of Teachers union announced they were filing a lawsuit Jan. 20 opposing the reopening of McClure Elementary until the asbestos threat is eliminated.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

THE MILITANT
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

February 13, 1995

ALLIANCE, Nebraska — Rail workers here face massive overtime demands by the bosses, which have been accompanied by the most significant hiring by the railroads in more than a decade.

Rail unionists are being forced to work for days and sometimes weeks on end without a day off. The shortage of train crews means many work an 8- to 12-hour shift and are called to return for another shift 8-10 hours later. This pattern can last for weeks. Many noted that it can lead to severe fatigue, which increases the risks of accident or injury.

The companies are also pushing to get new hires working as conductors and engineers as quickly as possible. Will Ford, a member of the United Transportation Union from Sheridan, Wyoming, said, “How can you promote new people to conductors in only 60 days without someone getting hurt?”

THE MILITANT
PUBLISHED WEEKLY IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE
NEW YORK, N. Y., MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1995

February 13, 1970

The 12-union coalition that held out for 14 long weeks against one of America’s most powerful corporations emerged victorious. For the first time in years, General Electric was unable to pit one union against the other to force contract settlements on its terms. This would in itself be a victory, without adding wage gains and fringe benefits totaling a reported \$1.05 over three years.

This was a long bitter strike, with strikers in many states denied either unemployment compensation or welfare by pro-employer state governments. But the workers had support from the entire labor movement, something almost unprecedented in the past two decades.

A significant morale-building factor was the support that came from the student and antiwar movement. Students helped on picket lines and distributed leaflets urging a boycott of GE products.

THE MILITANT
Official Weekly Organ of the Socialist Workers Party

February 10, 1945

The forces of capitalist reaction mobilized in their union-smashing drive under the leadership of Roosevelt and his General Staff jammed the May-Bailey slave labor bill through the House of Representatives. This measure would strip the labor movement of the most important social gains made in decades of struggle.

It provides that men between the ages of 18 and 45 who leave their jobs “without permission” of their draft boards shall be subject to a fine of \$10,000 or 5 years imprisonment or both. The same penalties are applied to workers who refuse to accept jobs when they are commanded to do so by their draft boards. Workers can be shifted from one industry to another to work at lower wages. They can be sent from their homes to other cities with no provision made for moving their families or possessions.

Join SWP 2020 campaign!

Continued from front page
for workers and our allies to deepen the struggle to eradicate all exploitation and oppression.”

That is the only realistic and optimistic alternative to the crisis-wracked capitalist system and the rulers’ parties that defend it today, the Democrats and Republicans, and any others that emerge in the future, he added.

Kennedy invited all those interested in this perspective to join with SWP campaigners as they discuss this with workers on their doorsteps in cities, towns and rural areas, at strike picket lines and at other protests.

Both candidates have decades of experience as part of hard-fought union battles, fights against racist discrimination, for women’s rights and against the wars the U.S. rulers wage around the world.

Some workers are finding ways to resist, from copper workers in their strike against Asarco in Arizona and Texas to coal miners in Kentucky who blocked rail tracks to win pay owed them from their bosses. Kennedy has joined Asarco strikers on their picket

line in Amarillo, Texas, and calls for more solidarity.

Workers control over production

Kennedy and Jarrett will be speaking around the country and abroad to discuss what working people can do together and to win others to campaign alongside them. They will be joined by SWP candidates for U.S. Senate, Congress and other offices.

As they do so they will explain how the bosses are seeking a way out of the deepening crisis of their capitalist system by attacking workers and farmers to make us pay for it. They are throwing workers on the street, speeding up production and putting more on the backs of those left, creating increasingly dangerous conditions for working people.

“When I got hired in the coal mines in 1981, miners had already fought and won the right to shut down production if conditions were dangerous, as a result of organizing a powerful fighting movement,” Kennedy told the *Militant*.

Those gains have been largely eroded today, she explained, and — for



Alyson Kennedy, SWP candidate for president, speaks at Dallas protest in defense of abortion rights, May 25, 2019. SWP candidates join fights for wages, working conditions and our rights.

now — there are fewer struggles. “But workers are looking for ways to fight for safer working conditions.” She pointed to the support rail workers in Canada won from fellow workers and farmers when they organized a strike for safety last fall after Canadian Na-

tional bosses tried to cut crew sizes and reduce rest periods last November. “Most workers don’t have a union, but they’re not keeping quiet,” she said, describing how workers at a Chicago Walmart refused to work in hazardous waste recently, despite bosses insisting

Meet the SWP candidates: Alyson Kennedy, Malcolm Jarrett ...

Continued from front page

Today she works at Walmart in Dallas, where she organizes with other workers to press for higher wages and better working conditions and builds support for other struggles in the interests of working people.

A socialist and trade union fighter for more than four decades, Kennedy, 69, is a member of the Socialist Workers Party’s National Committee and was the party’s vice presidential candidate in 2008 and for president in 2016.

After joining the party she moved to West Virginia where she was among the first wave of women who broke through the barriers coal bosses used to exclude women from underground jobs in the mines.

In 1981 she was part of the strike of 160,000 members of the United Mine Workers of America. She said it was “one of the most important educations in my life as I saw firsthand what workers can achieve when we are united and use our power.”

As a 14-year veteran coal miner, who has also worked in garment, steel and other factories, with and without unions, she has stood up with fellow workers to fight for control over job conditions and safety. This is crucial for all workers — to fight for more and more control over all aspects of production, a school to learn how to run the economy and the country.

From 2003 to 2006 Kennedy was in

the front ranks of a union-organizing battle at the Co-Op coal mine outside Huntington, Utah. Miners there, the majority immigrants from Mexico, fought for a union to win safer working conditions, an end to abuse by the bosses and higher wages. The miners’ struggle won widespread solidarity and set a powerful example to other workers of how to fight.

She has been active in the fight against Washington’s wars from Vietnam to its interventions in the Mideast today, demanding U.S. troops get out now. She promotes solidarity with struggles being waged by working people in Iran, Iraq and elsewhere in the region.

Last year she joined a fact-finding tour in the Kurdish region of northern Iraq, attending meetings there to learn about the struggles of workers who have faced decades of tyranny, national oppression and war. She spoke about the work of the SWP in the labor movement and the road to women’s emancipation.

Kennedy has been active in the fight to defend a woman’s right to unrestricted access to family planning services, including the right to safe, secure abortions.

In 2019 she joined protests against the death penalty in Texas and took part in the successful actions that won a stay of execution for Rodney Reed. She has joined many other actions against police brutality, and the entire capitalist injustice system with its frame-ups,

“plea bargains” and onerous bail.

She was part of a solidarity and reporting team to Puerto Rico last year following widespread demonstrations that forced the resignation of Gov. Ricardo Rosselló. The SWP demands an end to U.S. colonial rule over Puerto Rico. In 2017 and 2018 she took part in international solidarity brigades to Cuba to learn how to more effectively defend the Cuban Revolution and to discuss the class struggle in the U.S.

Kennedy has joined actions in defense of immigrant workers and against deportations. The SWP demands amnesty for all immigrants in the U.S. that authorities claim don’t have “proper” papers, explaining it is essential to unite working people and create better conditions to fight the bosses’ attacks on all workers.

Malcolm Jarrett

Malcolm Jarrett, Socialist Workers Party candidate for vice president, 49, works as a cook at a catering company in Pittsburgh. He was attracted to working-class struggle as an African American youth in eastern Missouri, as his family joined in the defense of the Black community in Cairo, Illinois, from assaults by cops and vigilantes. In these struggles, he gained a real appreciation of the support from farmers in the area. Jarrett was also influenced by the popular revolutionary movement that overthrew the apartheid regime in South Africa.

He joined the SWP while organizing protests at Southeast Missouri State University to oppose Washington’s war against Iraq in 1991. Today he stands in solidarity with protests by workers and youth against wars promoted by both Washington and Tehran in Iran and Iraq.

Jarrett has built solidarity with union battles, including the wave of strikes and protests by teachers and school workers in 2018, traveling to join actions in their support in West Virginia, Oklahoma, North Carolina and Pennsylvania.

During last year’s strike by United Auto Workers members at GM, Ford and Fiat Chrysler, Jarrett joined picket lines in Indiana, Texas and Minnesota.

On a national speaking tour last fall he and Alyson Kennedy brought solidarity to coal miners fighting to get back pay stolen from them by coal bosses at the Blackjewel mine in Kentucky. The two met Uber and Lyft taxi drivers in Atlanta to discuss the exploitation they face and the need to fight for one union for all app-based, limousine and yellow cab drivers.

Jarrett has participated in fights against cop brutality and murders from the 1997 killing of Jonny Gammage to the actions of thousands of young people who marched in Pittsburgh last spring to protest the acquittal of the cop who murdered Antwon Rose II. He points out that police violence and capitalist “justice” is aimed at intimidating and punishing working people.

On Oct. 27, 2018, when an anti-Semitic killer shot down 11 Jews at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, Jarrett joined 3,000 people protesting that night. He explains that Jew-hatred is endemic to capitalism and how the ruling boss class turns to anti-Semitic thug forces in times of deep crisis to divide and crush the working class. Working people have to be educated in what this question is all about.

Jarrett has traveled to Cuba on a number of occasions, including as part of last year’s International May Day Brigade, to offer solidarity with the Cuban peoples’ six-decade-long fight against the U.S. embargo and to be able to speak out more effectively in defense of the socialist revolution. He is now on his way to participate in the 2020 International Havana Book Fair — a major cultural and political event in Cuba, and urges others to join this year’s May Day Brigade.

Jarrett was the SWP candidate for Pittsburgh City Council last year, speaking out at a public hearing attended by 200 residents of Allegheny County against U.S. Steel’s willful pollution in the area and to call for workers control of production. Jarrett says health care in the U.S. is a disaster caused by the for-profit capitalist system. The SWP fights for universal, government-guaranteed cradle-to-grave health care, and retirement income for all.

Join Socialist Workers Party candidates around the country

Georgia

Rachele Fruit, U.S. Senate

Florida

Anthony Dutrow, Congress, 27th Dist.

Illinois

Naomi Craine, U.S. Senate

Kentucky

Maggie Trowe, U.S. Senate

Minnesota

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

New Jersey

Lea Sherman, U.S. Senate
Candace Wagner, U.S. Congress, 8th Dist.

Pennsylvania

Dave Ferguson, U.S. Congress, 18th Dist.
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

Henry Dennison, Governor

See directory on page 11 to contact party campaign office nearest you.



Militant/Tony Lane

Malcolm Jarrett, SWP candidate for vice president, tells July 30, 2019, hearing that workers need to fight for control of production to stop U.S. Steel pollution from Clairton plant in Pennsylvania.

they do so, after several sewage spills in the tire and lube department.

The SWP urges a fight to extend workers control over production “so that workers can look out for themselves and those in the communities that surround the places where we work,” Kennedy said. “We need to see ourselves as the stewards of the environment against a destructive dog-eat-dog social system that organizes production solely for profits.”

The fight for workers control on the job is the seed of broader struggles — a step towards reorganizing all society and placing planning and direction of the economy under the control of the working class. “To do that will take a social revolution,” Kennedy explains. “Working people throughout history have demonstrated over and over our capacities to wage struggles in our interests.” She pointed to the working-class-led movement that mobilized millions to tear down Jim Crow segregation, changing the attitudes of millions forever.

Cuban Revolution an example

Jarrett will join a team of SWP members from the United States to participate in the Havana International Book Fair in February. “The Cuban Revolution shows that life-changing revolutionary struggle by working people can triumph and that by forging the leadership we need workers and our allies can win,” Jarrett said.

Kennedy discussed the example of Cuba’s revolutionary leadership Jan. 24 when she and other SWP members campaigned in an area of northwest Dallas that was struck by a tornado last October.

“There was no alarm to warn us about the tornado,” Rogelio Rodríguez told Kennedy. More than four months later many buildings, homes and schools in the area have not been repaired.

Kennedy had visited Cuba shortly after Hurricane Irma hit the island in 2017. The revolutionary government, she told Rodríguez, “mobilized construction, electrical and other working people to begin reconstruction and re-

storing electrical power immediately.”

And the same working-class solidarity guides the Cuban Revolution’s internationalist foreign policy, she said, pointing to the decisive role of Cuban medical volunteers in eradicating Ebola in West Africa.

Rodríguez was sympathetic, but said his concern was that “nobody can take power from the rich.”

“The history of working-class struggles gives the SWP confidence we *can* build a different kind of society that truly represents humanity, if we organize and fight,” Kennedy replied.

Capitalism has no concern for workers’ welfare or our future, only for whatever can make them money off

Socialist Workers Party 2020 campaign platform

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 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.

our backs. The SWP candidates explain how through the fight for a workers and farmers government — like the Cuban Revolution established — we will be able to deal with whatever we confront.

Working people in power and united to build a world based on human need, not profits, will step forward to use the unlimited power of our labor, and harness science and culture. There are no challenges facing humanity that can’t be confronted and solved — from the capitalists’ despoliation of our environment to expanding the safe use of nuclear power to preparing and meeting the destructive force of hurricanes, wildfires or earthquakes — with this revolutionary perspective.

Fight to unify working people

“We join every fight that helps cut across the divisions the capitalist rulers try to impose to weaken our class and cut us off from our natural allies,” Jarrett told the *Militant*. “We fight against racist discrimination, for the rights of women, and for amnesty for all immigrants here. We speak out against the poison of Jew-hatred.”

“President Trump says he is the ‘peace and prosperity’ candidate, while millions of workers are still living paycheck-to-paycheck, and the U.S. rulers maintain tens of thousands of troops around the world to defend their imperialist interests,” Kennedy said.

“He says he’ll establish peace by making Washington’s war machine ever more menacing, but the ‘peace’ he promotes relies on the threat of U.S.

military might to ensure the rulers can plunder the world.”

The Democratic challengers are no different. Most modern U.S. wars were launched by Democratic administrations — from Kennedy in Vietnam to the overthrow of the Libyan government under Barack Obama in 2011. And for over 60 years, under Democrats and Republicans alike, the U.S. rulers have ruthlessly tried to strangle the Cuban Revolution.

Workers need our own foreign policy

The working class needs its own foreign policy, Kennedy said, one that explains that when Washington says its war moves are to defend all “our” interests, it’s a lie. Workers and the bosses have diametrically opposed interests, both at home and abroad. Washington’s trade conflicts; its punishing sanctions against the peoples of Korea and Iran; the military assaults it unleashes, are all aimed at defending the capitalist rulers’ interests, not those of working people.

“My party’s campaign says bring all U.S. troops home from the Middle East,” Kennedy said. “And it urges solidarity with working people in Iran and Iraq who are protesting in the streets against their governments’ repression at home and Tehran’s reactionary interference in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and elsewhere.

“Endorse the campaign, organize house meetings where your friends, neighbors and co-workers can hear the SWP program and join us as we campaign across the country,” Jarrett said.

“This is something truly worthwhile.”

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 recogni-

tion 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 CO₂ and other greenhouse gases to prevent the poisoning of

Continued on page 12

Three books to be read as one . . .

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... about building the only kind of party worthy of the name “revolutionary” in the imperialist epoch.

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Join the Socialist Workers Party campaign in 2020! Campaign for what you are *for*, not what you’re against!

- ☐ I want to endorse the Socialist Workers Party ticket of Alyson Kennedy for president and Malcolm Jarrett for vice president.
- ☐ Here is my contribution of \$_____ to help spread the word. (Make checks to Socialist Workers National Campaign)
- ☐ I would like a 12-week subscription to the *Militant*, the campaign newspaper. (\$5 enclosed, checks payable to the *Militant*.)

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Cuba’s socialist revolution, China and the world class struggle today

Cuban Revolution shows what’s possible when working people take power, transforming ourselves as we transform class relations of life and work

The following is the presentation by Mary-Alice Waters, who spoke as part of a panel discussion in Guangzhou, China, one of some 50 during the 10th International Conference of ISSCO, the International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas. The conference was held Nov. 8-11, 2019, at Jinan University (see news article in issue no. 47 in 2019). Waters is president of Pathfinder Press and editor of *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution* by Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, and Moisés Sio Wong. The title of her presentation was, “Cultural, Diplomatic and Trade Ties between the People’s Republic of China and Cuba Today.” Participating in the audience were Cuba’s consul general in Guangzhou, Denise Llamas Infante, and Consul Hansel E. Díaz Laborde. Copyright © 2020 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

Sixty years ago in Cuba, a century of revolutionary struggle against Spanish colonialism and U.S. imperialist domination culminated in a victorious socialist revolution. It was a deep-going popular revolution. Millions of working people of all ages, both men and women, transformed themselves as they fought for independence, for sovereignty, for dignity, and began to transform their society.

In face of military aggression and economic sabotage by Washington, supported by other imperialist powers, workers and peasants in Cuba defended and deepened their initial conquests. They established a government, and a state, of their own — one that advanced the interests of those who had been the most oppressed and exploited layers of the population.

They ended capitalist ownership of the land, mills, factories and banks. They gave land to the peasants who worked it. They outlawed discrimination based on race in all public facilities. They organized millions of women into employment and social and political ac-

tivity. With a popular mobilization involving hundreds of thousands of young people, they went to the mountains, working-class barrios and rural areas, eradicating illiteracy across Cuba in less than one year. They armed the workers and farmers and organized them into disciplined militia units to defend the country they were building on new economic and social foundations.

And against all odds, for more than six decades, Cuban working people have successfully held at bay the most powerful empire the world will ever see.

Cubans of Chinese descent

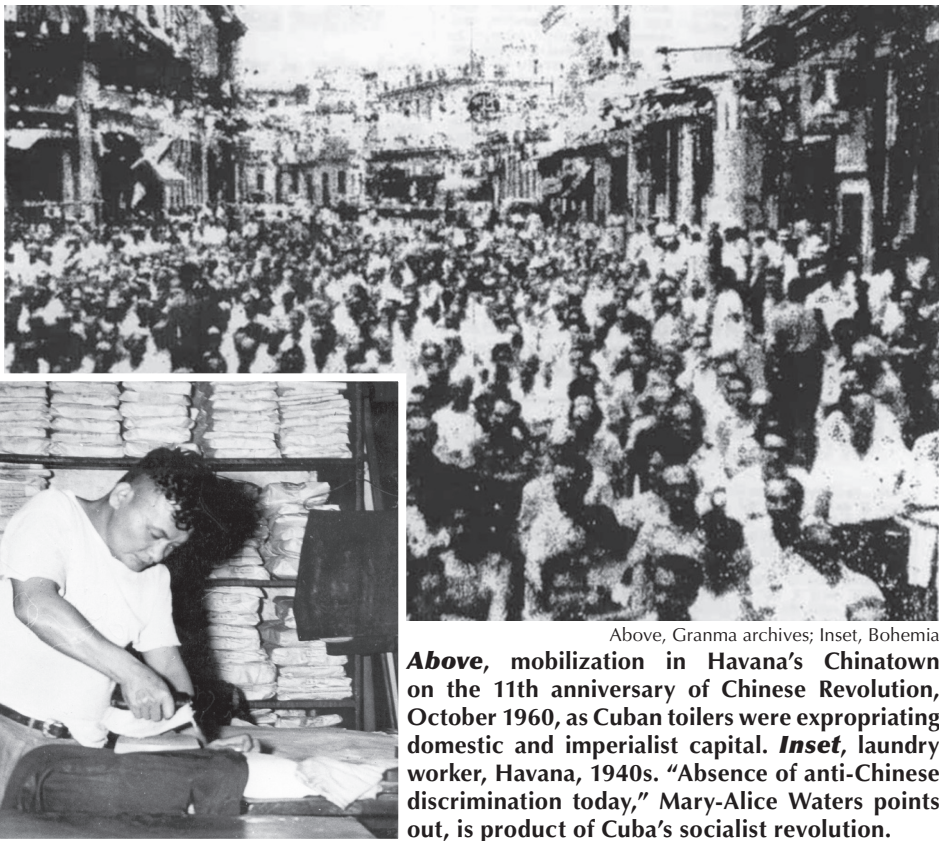
For Cubans of Chinese descent, the consequences of these historic conquests have been unprecedented. One thing distinguishes the economic and the social conditions of life today for Cubans of Chinese origin from Chinese communities everywhere else in the world. That is the near total absence of discrimination or prejudice against Chinese Cubans and their descendants.

That unique condition is a stunning fact. Most of you in this room know well from your own experiences the countless forms of anti-Chinese prejudice elsewhere in the world. That alone would justify a closer look at the Cuban Revolution. In Cuba there are no typically Chinese occupations anymore, whether it’s restaurants or laundries, or small shopkeepers, or families growing vegetables and fruits for urban markets.

There’s no glass ceiling. No field of endeavor or level of leadership responsibility beyond which no one of Chinese ancestry will be found. Whether it’s government ministries, leaders of mass organizations of the Cuban Revolution, generals, artists, scientists or whatever.

Esteban Lazo, president of the National Assembly of Cuba, is a Cuban of Chinese African descent.

Lázaro Barredo, until recently the longtime editor-in-chief of *Granma*, the daily newspaper of the Communist Party of Cuba, is a Cuban of Chinese descent.



Wifredo Lam, among the world-renowned artists of the 20th century, was a Cuban of African Chinese descent, who wove threads from those cultures into the richness of his paintings.

Another example — one I’ll be drawing on today, since I happen to know it best — is the three generals of Cuba’s Revolutionary Armed Forces: Moisés Sio Wong, Gustavo Chui and Armando Choy. Their stories are available — including here at the conference — in the book *Our History Is Still Being Written*, published in English, Spanish, Chinese, Farsi and, just this week, now in French as well.

Capitalists divide and rule

The lessons of the Cuban Revolution are especially important in today’s world of deepening capitalist crisis. Because chauvinism and xenophobia are weapons of choice wielded by the ruling classes to try to divide working people and turn us against each other. They try to convince us our problems come not from those who exploit us, but from “immigrants who take our jobs,” or neighbors whose skin color or religion is different from ours.

This is a history that overseas Chinese know well. What’s happening today in Asia, in America, in Europe, in Africa is not new. Overseas Chinese for centuries have been a prime target of attacks against “foreigners,” from the more subtle forms of discrimination and race hatred, to mob violence, exclusion laws and pogroms. This is the context in which the example of Cuba stands out.

The impact of this history on Chinese living abroad is highlighted in the foreword by Wang Lusha to Pathfinder’s 2017 edition of *Our History Is Still Being Written*. Wang is the young

TV and film scriptwriter who translated the book into Chinese. As a university student, he studied in New Zealand and the Netherlands. In the foreword he describes encountering anti-Chinese discrimination and prejudice for the first time while living in these countries, and the feelings of inferiority it gave him.

“But one man changed my way of thinking,” Wang writes. And “that man was General Moisés Sio Wong.” Just by chance, as Wang explains, he came across Sio Wong’s name surfing the internet and read that he was a general of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba and an adviser to then Cuban Vice President Raúl Castro. Wang says he thought such a thing was impossible. It couldn’t be true.

So he started trying to find out more about Moisés Sio Wong, and in the process a friend in Christchurch, New Zealand, gave him a copy of *Our History Is Still Being Written*.

“I felt overwhelmed as I read through the pages,” Wang noted, discovering that there were many Chinese in Cuba in addition to General Sio Wong “who

made remarkable contributions.”

Learning about the Chinese in Cuba, Wang writes, restored his self-confidence and pride in being born Chinese.

No more Chinese in Cuba?

The history of Chinese in Cuba is not the topic of my presentation today. But for those of you to whom this is all new, that story began in 1847 when, over the next quarter century, more than 140,000 Chinese indentured laborers were shipped to Cuba as part of what was known as the “coolie trade.” They worked on Cuba’s booming sugar plantations under conditions very close to slavery. Many deserted the cane fields, joined the *mambises*, the liberation army fighting for independence from Spain and stayed in Cuba, where they became part of the Cuban working people.

You will often hear it said in Cuba that the Cuban nationality was forged one-third Spanish, one-third African, and one-third Chinese.

Chinese immigration to Cuba ebbed and flowed for a century. By the 1930s, the Barrio Chino in Havana was second in the Western Hemisphere only to San Francisco’s Chinatown in size and cultural life. It was the largest in all of Latin America.

As elsewhere, the Chinese population in Cuba rapidly became class-divided. It included peddlers, laborers, laundry workers and peasants. But by the 20th century there were also rich landlords, owners of department stores and large restaurants and clubs, bankers and others of great wealth. According to Cuba’s 1899 census, by that time there were 42 Chinese sugar plantation owners.

In the United States it’s not unusual to be told there are no longer any Chinese in Cuba, that “they all left with the victory of the revolution.” Like so much else said about Cuba in the U.S., that’s simply false. From 1959 to 1968 the plantation owners, bankers and well-to-do merchants — having tried and failed to save the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship, or establish some other bourgeois regime — did flee the country. That’s true.

But tens of thousands of Cubans of Chinese descent were among the millions of Cubans who joined workers militias, drove organized crime out of Havana’s Chinatown, and repelled the U.S.-instigated invasion at the Bay of Pigs in 1961. They and their descendants are everywhere in Cuba today, in all occupations. All you have to do is walk the streets of any city in Cuba to see the Chinese characteristics in face after face. The truth is obvious.

People’s Republic of China

I want to focus my remaining time on the main subject of my presentation here — some of the turning points in the political, economic and diplomatic relations between the People’s Republic of China and Cuba over the last 60 years. And the different political and class starting points that have marked those relations.

When the revolutionary movement led by Fidel Castro took power at the opening of the 1960s, the new government immediately reached out to China. They identified with the victorious anti-imperialist struggles of the Chinese people that led to the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949. In September 1960, Cuba became the first Latin America country to recognize what the capitalist rulers called “Red China,” defying Washington’s economic blackmail, which kept every other country in the Americas aligned for decades with Taiwan.

In a reciprocal way, as U.S. government attacks on the Cuban Revolution escalated, Beijing stepped in with assistance, much-needed shipments of rice above all. Before the revolution, most rice consumed in Cuba had been imported from the United States. That trade was abruptly ended in the early 1960s as part of Washington’s near-total cutoff of economic and financial relations with Cuba. China’s aid was greatly appreciated.

But the opening years of the Cuban Revolution also coincided with rapidly deepening divisions between the governments of China and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics — what became known as the Sino-Soviet conflict. The Cuban leadership led an impassioned political battle to convince both Moscow and Beijing to put aside factional interests and come together to support the Vietnamese national liberation struggle in face of the murderous war being waged by Washington and its imperialist allies. Che Guevara’s famous call in 1966 “to create two, three ... many Vietnams” in solidarity with the Vietnamese struggle is well known.

In late 1965, in an effort by the Chinese government to pressure the Cuban leadership to line up with it as opposed to Moscow, Beijing abruptly slashed almost by half its emergency rice shipments to Cuba. Fidel Castro issued a scathing public response.

In a February 1966 statement pub-



Above, Guangzhou, China, Nov. 9, 2019, opening session of International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas conference. Inset, Mary-Alice Waters, speaking on conference panel. “The lessons of the Cuban Revolution are especially important in today’s world of deepening capitalist crisis,” she said.

lished by Prensa Latina, Castro called the Chinese leadership’s action “a display of absolute contempt toward our country ... and the dignity of our people.” In a public speech in Havana a month later, he said Chinese government officials had “introduced the style of absolute monarchies into contemporary socialist revolutions”; forgotten “the Marxist truth” that it is not individual men “but people who write history”; and made “a god of Mao Tse-tung.”

As the so-called Cultural Revolution unfolded in China in the late 1960s, the Cuban leadership was horrified by its destructive course; by its devastation of culture and education; and by its violent factionalism and adventurism, copied and practiced by pro-Maoist parties everywhere, including in Latin America.

Cuban leaders considered the factional divisions created by this Beijing-fostered course to be one of the factors that led to the defeat in 1967 of the Bolivian guerrilla front led by Che Guevara and to Che’s death in combat.

The Cultural Revolution played out with consequences in Cuba as well, as

Chinese Cubans who backed the Mao leadership briefly gained control of the Chung Wah Casino in Havana, the main Chinese association in the country, before some of them abandoned revolutionary Cuba for the People’s Republic of China in 1968.

Although the two governments never broke diplomatic ties, relations between them had gone into a deep freeze by the last half of the ‘60s, a situation that lasted for close to a quarter century. Those were years during which the governments of Cuba and the PRC confronted each other on opposite sides of the barricades in decisive international class battles.

Key among these clashes was the blood-drenched 1973 coup in Chile, after which Beijing developed close ties with the military dictatorship, including two state visits to the PRC by Gen. Augusto Pinochet. Other conflicts included Beijing’s 1979 invasion of Vietnam along its northern border, which was denounced by the Cuban government. And Cuba’s internationalist mission to help turn back the South African apartheid regime’s U.S.-backed invasions of

Continued on page 10



Vietnam 1966-67: National Liberation Front combatants prepare for battle during U.S. imperialist war. Revolutionary Cuba called on Beijing and Moscow to put aside factional interests and rally world support for freedom struggle. “Create two, three ... many Vietnams!” must be our watchword, said Che Guevara.



Angola, 1975 or ‘76: Chinese advisers at camp of Angolan guerrillas allied with apartheid South Africa and Washington. Some 425,000 Cuban internationalists volunteered to aid Angolan freedom forces battling South African invasions between 1975 and 1991. Beijing aided reactionary forces commanded by Holden Roberto (center, in sunglasses) and group headed by Jonas Savimbi on opposite sides of barricades from Cuba’s revolutionary leadership.

Cuban Revolution, China

Continued from page 9

Angola in the 1970s and '80s, during which the Chinese regime aided counterrevolutionary Angolan forces aligned with Pretoria and Washington.

New relations open

A new stage of relations between the two governments opened at the end of the 1980s with the fall of the “meringue,” as Cuban President Fidel Castro called the collapse of regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe that had paraded as “socialist.” Virtually overnight, Cuba lost 85 percent of its foreign trade, bringing agriculture, industry, transportation and other economic activity to a crashing halt. The resulting economic and political crisis is known in Cuba as the Special Period.

These momentous shocks coincided with another watershed, the events of Tiananmen Square in spring 1989. In face of large youth mobilizations demanding political and economic reforms, the Chinese government declared martial law and used the People's Liberation Army to put an end to the protests, killing countless numbers.

Amid the near-total isolation of Beijing internationally, the Cuban leadership supported the actions by the Chinese leadership. Fidel called them “regrettable” and said they were poorly handled, with inexperience perhaps, but that the Chinese leadership had no alternative.

In 1993, for the first time ever, the Chinese president, Jiang Zemin, visited Cuba, and Cuban President Fidel Castro reciprocated with a trip to China for the first time ever in 1995. The Chinese government also began providing vital emergency economic aid to Cuba. Even today, Cubans talk about the half million Chinese bicycles that became one of the most widely used means of transportation in those years. That welcome development was soon followed by a bicycle factory, built with Chinese equipment and aid, that was managed by the UJC, the Union of Communist Youth.

By some reports, the Chinese government extended over a billion dollars in loans to Cuba during the 1990s. Some of the interest and principal was later written down, as terms were renegotiated in 2011. But substantial yearly payments are still rigorously adhered to by the Cuban government.

As important as China's aid to Cuba was, however, it pales in comparison with Chinese investments elsewhere in Latin America, including a reported \$65 billion to Venezuela between 2005 and 2017. According to recent reports, China has announced plans to increase overall investments in Latin America to \$250 billion by 2025.

Trade as a whole between Latin America and China amounts to roughly \$260 billion a year today. Only \$2 billion of that is with Cuba.

The point I want to emphasize, however, is that these trade ties and loans have nothing to do with international solidarity. They are strictly based on market relations and profit maximization for the lender. Investment in infrastructure projects like ports and railroads is everywhere tied to the purchase of Chinese equipment and materials and is financed in large part by loans to be paid in full and on time. That's the basis of Beijing's famous Belt and Road Initiative.

As Sío Wong was fond of saying,

“Our Chinese friends don't give anything to anyone.”

In the capitalist world, some academic “experts” on the Cuban Revolution gleefully, if inaccurately, joke that China has become “Cuba's International Monetary Fund.”

Meanwhile, despite many signed memoranda of understanding with Beijing, pledges of cooperation and friendship, and reciprocal trade delegations back and forth, most major projects in Cuba have yet to materialize. That's the case as of now with regard to funds to revitalize nickel production in eastern Cuba, modernize the oil refinery in Cienfuegos, and build luxury hotels and golf courses on prime real estate.

The policy of China's leadership has been explicit throughout, to bring pressure to bear on the Cuban leadership to meet its international debt payments and to adopt China's example of “market socialism.” It can more accurately be called “capitalism with Chinese characteristics,” if I can adapt a phrase from Deng Xiaoping.

End US economic war on Cuba!

Let me close on one point. The depth of the economic crisis facing Cuban toilers today is no secret to any of us. It's severe.

As Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez told more than 1,000 participants at an international solidarity conference in Havana in early November, “I feel it is my duty to tell you that hard times are ahead of us.”

The brutally grinding and never-ending economic strangulation of the Cuban toilers by U.S. imperialism takes a heavy cumulative toll on a people whose “crime” is their refusal to become vassals of U.S. imperialism once again.

There are today in Cuba significant shortages of personal hygiene products, with the consequences we know that has for one's dignity and sense of well-being. Diesel fuel, medicines, gas for cooking, as well as many food products are difficult to obtain.

And Washington is once again



Demonstration in Chicago May 6, 2019, protesting U.S. rulers' six-decade-long economic war on Cuba.

Militant/Naomi Craine

tightening the economic noose, seeking every way to choke off vitally needed imports and foreign currency. It's an old story. We've all lost count how many times over the last 60 years, under both Republican and Democratic administrations, the pendulum has swung in this direction. In fact, most often the ratcheting up of economic pressure has been carried out under Democratic Party leadership.

If you follow the bourgeois media — whether “mass” or “social” — all you hear is that the difficulties facing Cuban working people are the inevitable result of six decades of efforts to advance along a socialist course in defiance of what capitalists consider to be “human nature” — that is, dog-eat-dog greed and exploitation.

Whatever mistakes and false steps have been made by the Cuban leadership — (and they are the first to acknowledge them) — it's not hard to imagine what Cuba — once among the most economically developed countries of capitalist Latin America — would be like today if it had not been for Washington's 60 years of economic strangulation. Cuba's new guidelines for social and economic policy, adopted in 2011 after extensive nationwide debate, as well as the new constitution that went into effect earlier this year, are a recognition of the consequences of imperialism's decadeslong war. The Cuban government has had to introduce greater space for market relations in Cuba. But the lesson is not the inevitable bankruptcy of socialism. It's the opposite.

What emerges from this history is the capacity of working people in Cuba to

make and defend their revolution since 1959 in face of this unrelenting assault by U.S. imperialism.

The surprise is not that they are forced to make a retreat. It's the enduring example of what is possible when the working class and its allies take power, transforming themselves as they fight to transform the world.

I will end by quoting the words of Sío Wong at an ISSCO conference, like this one, that took place in Havana in 1999. In the pages of *Our History Is Still Being Written*, Sío Wong recounts an exchange he had at that event with ISSCO's founding president, Wang Gungwu.

“How is it possible,” Wang asked Sío Wong, “that you, a descendant of Chinese, occupy a high government post, are a deputy in the National Assembly, and a general of the Armed Forces? How is that possible?”

Sío Wong answered: “The difference is that here a socialist revolution took place.” A revolution that eliminated the economic foundations on which discrimination based on the color of a person's skin has been founded. A revolution that established a government that has been used by working people to fight all forms of discrimination and prejudice.

“To historians and others who want to study the question,” Sío Wong concluded, “I say that you have to understand that the Chinese community here in Cuba is different from Peru, Brazil, Argentina or Canada.

“And that difference is the triumph of a socialist revolution.”

That remains the lesson of Cuba for us today.

Join May Day brigade, learn about Cuban Revolution

Continued from front page

Workers Party member Jacob Perasso.

Freer was referring to the unrelenting lies by successive administrations, aimed at bolstering the U.S. rulers' six-decades-long attempt to overturn Cuba's socialist revolution. But since a friend went on vacation to Cuba, Freer said, and after talking with Perasso, he was now “interested in learning how a post-revolutionary government works.”

Freer and other young people spoke with SWP members at the party's hall in Albany, Jan. 5, just after participating in a protest against U.S. airstrikes that killed Qassem Soleimani, who was commanding the Iranian rulers' military intervention in Iraq. A number of those at the protest expressed interest in joining the brigade.

It is organized by the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the

Peoples (ICAP) and includes voluntary work in the fields alongside Cuban workers and farmers and the opportunity to join them at the May Day march in Havana. Hundreds of thousands of workers will participate in that action to express their determination to defend their revolution — demonstrating why it has withstood Washington's economic war and threats by 12 U.S. administrations.

Based in a camp outside Havana, brigade members will visit the provinces of Artemisa and Pinar del Río. Visits to factories and meetings to hear representatives from the revolution's mass organizations are also scheduled, along with trips to universities, health care centers, museums and cultural venues.

The brigade is an opportunity to meet and work with Cuban working people and discuss the lessons of one of the

20th century's most outstanding revolutions. Participants from some 20 countries on the brigade also get the chance to share experiences about politics in the countries they come from and discuss how to build opposition to the U.S. embargo of Cuba when they return.

Despite new travel restrictions by Washington, the National Network on Cuba — which organizes U.S. participation in the brigade — says the trip meets all legal guidelines. Travel arrangements are being handled through Marazul Tours.

Total cost, not including airfare to Cuba, is \$725. All room, board and travel in Cuba is covered. ICAP has extended the deadline for brigade registration until April 15. For an application and more information, contact www.nnoc.info or email ICanGoToCuba@nnoc.info.

SWP 1968 candidate takes antiwar campaign to GIs in Vietnam

One of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for January is Cointelpro: The FBI's Secret War on Political Freedom by Nelson Blackstock. The extent of this decadeslong FBI disruption campaign against labor and political groups was exposed by the Socialist Workers Party's historic legal and political fight against it. The excerpt below from Chapter 2: "Inciting violence: 'It should be an interesting experience for Mr. Halstead'" covers the 1968 visit by SWP presidential candidate Fred Halstead to Vietnam to talk to GIs about the U.S. rulers' war, and how the FBI's efforts to disrupt it failed. Copyright © 1975 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY NELSON BLACKSTOCK

Early in 1946 a young sailor named Fred Halstead was stationed on a ship off the coast of China. World War II had just ended, but on the mainland of China the fighting had not stopped. A civil war was raging.

Back in Washington the rulers of this country were very interested in the outcome of that struggle. They would have liked to send their army in to back up Chiang Kai-shek's crumbling forces, but their attempts to stall the demobilization of American troops after the war provoked massive protests among the GIs. It was clear that large-scale U.S.



Fred Halstead, above, Socialist Workers Party 1968 candidate for president, campaigned among GIs in Vietnam. FBI targeted trip for disruption but failed in effort to provoke an attack.

military intervention in China was out of the question.

Two decades later when the United States began committing thousands of troops to another Asian country in an attempt to hold back a revolution, Fred Halstead remembered what he had seen while he was in the navy. He was convinced that there were important lessons for the growing movement against the war in Vietnam.

In an interview, Halstead talked about this and about some revelations contained in the Cointelpro papers. Halstead was the Socialist Workers party candidate for president in 1968. During the campaign he made a trip to Vietnam. It now turns out the FBI had tried to sabotage that trip.

Among the documents turned over to the SWP under federal court order is evidence that the FBI wrote a "news story" that it sought to have placed in the military press.

The FBI's purpose was to provoke violence against the socialist presidential candidate during his visit to Vietnam. "It should be an interesting experience for Mr. HALSTEAD when he encounters the men who have served both their own country and others in the interest of freedom," the FBI's article concluded.

Before discussing that experience, Halstead described what he had seen at the close of the Second World War.

"I was attached to a ship that was part of the Seventh Fleet in Chinese waters.

Ostensibly, we were there to repatriate Japanese troops," Halstead said.

"But after unloading our passengers in Japan, we found ourselves loading up again. This time with Chinese troops, which we took up to a port in northern China. This was part of the use of the American navy to assist Chiang's offensive in the Chinese civil war.

"Well, most of us didn't know there was such a thing as a civil war in China until we found ourselves more or less involved in it."

The GIs had just finished one war, and they didn't like the idea of getting into another one. Soon a protest movement developed.

"I remember walking into the Red Cross building in Shanghai where GIs would go to get coffee and hamburgers," Halstead said. "There I saw this big banner with the words: 'GIs Unite! We want to go home!'" ...

They held some big demonstrations. There was one in Manila and another in Shanghai. The message got through, and orders soon came in to return to the United States.

"This made an impression on me that I didn't forget. That you could organize among GIs," Halstead remarked. ...

When the movement against United States involvement in Vietnam began to develop, Halstead became one of its leaders. He joined the staff of the New York Fifth Avenue Vietnam Peace Parade Committee upon its inception in

1965, and he remained there until he left to run for president in 1967. ...

The SWP's candidate went to Vietnam as part of the socialist strategy to try to inject the war into the presidential campaign as *the* major issue.

"We demanded the immediate withdrawal of the American forces as the only way to end the killing over there and as the only legal and moral thing for the United States to do," Halstead recalled.

"That year there was a tendency on the part of some in the antiwar movement to get into electoral activity as a *substitute* for antiwar demonstrations. Through this campaign we encouraged the antiwar movement to stay in the streets."

There was another reason for making the trip. "We wanted to illustrate to the antiwar movement that it could reach GIs," Halstead said, "and we wanted to demonstrate to the GIs that the antiwar movement was on their side." ...

"We were interested in talking to the American GIs who were on the scene," Halstead said. "They had a right to vote and to listen to what the candidates had to say. They also had a right to have an opinion on the war — a greater right than any American citizen, including the president. I went there to ask them what that opinion was."

What did he find? "The overwhelming majority of them were not willing to suddenly join the peace movement, but they weren't supporters of the war either," Halstead remembered.

They were mainly confused, looking for answers, still making up their minds. "That was all the more reason for the antiwar movement to have the stance and attitude that they were interested in reaching GIs — we're on their side," Halstead observed. ...

Halstead explained that he was a candidate from the United States who was active in the antiwar movement. He said that he thought this country never belonged in Vietnam and should get out immediately.

"I was received in a courteous and sometimes friendly way," Halstead remembered. "Never in a hostile way."

Is there any evidence that the FBI was successful in its goal of getting their story about Halstead into the military press in order to provoke an attack? The item was never picked up and printed as far as Halstead knows.

January BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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Protests hit gov’t attacks in Iraq, Iran

Continued from front page

tion. Cops arrested 16 protesters in Basra and killed at least one near Tahrir Square in Baghdad and three in the southern city of Nasiriyah.

The attacks took place the day after a march organized by Muqtada al-Sadr, in Baghdad, calling for the expulsion of U.S. troops. Al-Sadr, a Shiite politician with past connections with the clerical leaders in Iran, heads the largest electoral bloc in the Iraqi parliament and commands his own armed militias.

On Jan. 26 thousands of students and workers converged on Baghdad’s Tahrir Square to protest the government’s assault and reestablish the camp there.

Al-Sadr claims he sympathizes with the Tahrir Square protesters. But after the drone strike that killed Soleimani, he met with leaders of the reactionary regime in Iran. He then returned to Baghdad and called on anti-government protesters in Tahrir Square to join his Jan. 24 march against the U.S. troops in Iraq.

But most anti-government protesters refused to drop their demands for an end to Tehran’s violations of Iraqi sovereignty.

“If Muqtada asks for the exit of the Americans and nonintervention, he should raise the same slogan against Iranian interference,” protester Yahya Mohammed told The Associated Press. Militias organized by the Iranian rulers have been at the forefront of the murderous assaults on Iraqi anti-government protests.

Washington meanwhile has increased its troops in the Mideast by more than 20,000 since last spring.

Al-Sadr tweeted his “disappointment” with the Tahrir Square protesters for not joining his march and instructed his followers — some of whom had set up tents in the anti-government protests — to abandon the encampments. This opened the door for security forces’ assaults.

Sadr supporters’ “withdrawal has achieved the opposite effect of breaking up the movement,” Abu Siwar, a demonstrator in Tahrir Square, told Al Jazeera. “We have had more protesters joining in.”

No justification for Tehran’s repression

Protests also spread widely in Iran, after the regime first lied, then admitted that it “accidentally” shot down a Ukrainian passenger plane Jan. 8 killing all 176 on board.

The regime in power in Tehran spearheaded the counterrevolution that pushed back many advances made by working people during the 1979 Iranian Revolution. That upheaval was a deep-going, modern, popular social revolution that overthrew the U.S.-backed shah, won rights for women and oppressed nationalities and led workers to form workers councils in the factories and fields to press their demands.

Soleimani emerged as a Revolutionary Guard leader, as a combatant in the counterrevolutionary assaults, starting with leading bloody attacks against Iranian Kurds fighting for their national rights.

Students at the Amir Kabir Polytechnic University in Tehran issued a statement Jan. 11 stating that “the presence of the United States in the Middle East has done nothing but sow chaos and disorder.” Nonethe-



Ali Dab Dab

Jan. 29 protest in Baghdad against gov’t repression, Tehran intervention.

less, the students said, “U.S. adventurism in the region cannot be an excuse to justify domestic repression.”

The students lauded the demonstrations against Tehran’s interventions abroad and anti-worker measures at home that swept the country in November — sparked when fuel prices were tripled. Those actions were more extensive than the protests there in 2018, and echoed many of the demands chanted at those actions, including opposition to Tehran’s military intervention. The Iranian rulers’ wars are aimed at extending their power across the region and the deadly consequences fall overwhelmingly on working people.

“The only way out of our current predicament is the simultaneous rejection of both domestic despotism and imperial arrogance,” the students said.

According to reports there were more than 3,500 protests in Iran in 2019, mostly by workers and farmers. Demands ranged from opposing cuts in pensions, to water rights for farmers, aid to flood victims and for an end to the regime’s wars abroad.

On Nov. 13, some 1,000 workers demanded unpaid wages at the sugar mill in Haft Tapeh, in Khuzestan province in the southwestern part of Iran, home to the country’s Arab minority, which faces widespread discrimination in hiring.

In Mahshahr, Arab farmers — who lost access to water for irrigation when a dam was built — blockaded the roads to oil refineries and were brutally attacked by the Revolutionary Guard on Nov. 18. As many as 100 people were killed.

The government attacks on the protests in November failed to crush the spirit of working people.

At the beginning of January, workers at the Zarand Minerals Company in Kerman in central Iran stopped work to protest the company’s intention to change their employment status from permanent to temporary.

Tens of thousands of workers went back onto the streets after the Ukrainian plane was shot down, by not one but two Revolutionary Guard missiles.

Like in Iraq, many working people and youth are repelled by what Soleimani represents. Protesters in Tabriz, a city in the north west mostly populated by Azerbaijanis, in Tehran and other cities tore down posters of Soleimani, put up after his death.

Recognizing the widespread sentiment against the regime, Soleimani’s family was quoted in the Iranian press, saying they “forgive” a teenager arrested for tearing down the general’s photo and asked that the youth not be prosecuted.

2020 Socialist Workers Party platform

Continued from page 7

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.

‘Militant’ wins victory

Continued from front page

Jon Ferguson, state Correction’s chief legal officer. “We were able to make an inquiry into why the periodical was withheld and it was determined to be in error.

“Staff have been retrained in the matter and the withheld issues should be returned to Mr. Johnson in short order,” Ferguson wrote. “Thank you very much for bringing this problem to our attention.”

The *Militant* first learned about the impoundments from a letter received from Johnson Jan. 2 reporting that issues nos. 43-46 from the end of last year were being withheld from him, as well as other periodicals like *San Francisco Bay View* and *Socialist Viewpoint*.

Johnson said that notices given to him informing him of the ban claimed the paper was “Prohibited Property” and a “Security Risk.” Prison officials never informed the *Militant* of the impoundments, nor, in violation of their own rules, did they give any explanation to Johnson of what they found objectionable.

“I know that you all generally challenge such bans,” Johnson wrote, “so I want to give you all relevant information to support your challenge.”

In his Jan. 15 letter appealing the ban, Goldstein said, “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.”

“From the moment we received Johnson’s letter asking for help in challenging the ban, the *Militant* and other defenders of prisoners’ rights sprang into action to win this victory,” said *Militant* editor John Studer.

“Johnson, like all prisoners, has the right to be politically active and to read the political views of his choice. And the *Militant* has the right to send its paper to all its subscribers,” Studer said.

Indiana correction officials began receiving letters objecting to suppression of the *Militant* and backing prisoners’ right to read the literature they want.

“Prisoners should have the same rights to read material of their choosing as those of us not behind bars,” Jerome Ulman, a retired professor from Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, wrote. “The Bill of Rights applies to all citizens.”

Petitions signed by dozens of workers from Walmart stores in Chicago and Louisville, Kentucky, were sent in. “Prisoners should be allowed to read what they want,” said a letter signed by 21 workers at the Walmart store in Darien, Illinois, sent to the Indiana Department of Correction Jan 22. “The seizing of the *Militant*, other newspapers, and personal mail, is a violation of prisoners’ human rights. Workers behind bars need to be able to read material of their choosing, to think for themselves and to be part of the world.”

“I implore you to grant Mr. Johnson Bill of Rights,” wrote Bishop Dennis Lyons from the Gospel Missionary Church in Louisville, Kentucky, to prison authorities Jan. 22, and give him his “Militant Publication.”

“I have been a subscriber to the *Militant* for some 45 years,” wrote Mindy Brudno, a rail worker from Athens, Ohio, in her note to the Indiana Department of Correction, “and cannot imagine any possible justification” for the impoundments.

Johnson became a political activist in prison and is a leader of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party. In an attempt to isolate him, prison officials have repeatedly transferred him around — from Virginia to Oregon, Texas, Florida, Virginia again, and now Indiana. He had been receiving the *Militant* in Pendleton since November 2018.

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