

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Chinese rulers take steps to consolidate control in Asia
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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As Trump touts jobs and peace, Democrats face mounting crisis

BY TERRY EVANS

President Donald Trump used his State of the Union address to Congress Feb. 4 as a reelection rally, boasting “jobs are booming, incomes are soaring, poverty is plummeting, crime is falling, confidence is surging, and our country is thriving and highly respected again.” And he claimed he was “working to end America’s wars in the Middle East.”

The next day he got a boost when the Democrats’ impeachment drive to oust him before the 2020 elections went down to defeat. This deepened the crisis wracking the Democrats, who along with the Republicans have been the main parties of the capitalist rulers. The president’s poll numbers are now at the highest level since he was elected.

In 2016 Trump won the votes of millions of working people fed up with the disdain of successive administrations towards their deteriorating conditions of life. His Democratic opponents — from Hillary Clinton in 2016 to the dozens of rival candidates they’ve fielded this year — are desperately look for a way to prevent those “depo-

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Alyson Kennedy, SWP candidate for president ‘Fight to win workers control of production’



Alyson Kennedy, left, Socialist Workers Party 2020 presidential candidate, discusses SWP’s working-class campaign with Valero station worker Carol Ortega in Joshua, Texas, Feb. 4.

BY SETH GALINSKY

“I’ve watched a lot of State of the Union speeches by both Democratic and Republican presidents,” Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for president, told the *Militant* from Dallas Feb. 5. “No matter what party is in office, they try to con-

vince working people we are all part of a big happy family with the capitalists, that we are all in this together.”

“But it’s not ‘our’ country, or ‘our’ government,” Kennedy said. “Working people and the owners of big business have sharply counterposed interests. They exploit our labor at home and turn us into cannon fodder in their wars to protect markets and exploitation abroad.

“They want to make as much profit as they can by keeping our wages as low and the pace of production as fast as they can get away with.”

“On-the-job injuries are climbing.
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Open door for talks on Israel, Palestine state recognition

BY SETH GALINSKY

The Donald Trump administration’s long-anticipated plan to achieve a negotiated settlement in the Middle East calls on Palestinian groups to recognize Israel and for the Israeli government to recognize a Palestinian state.

President Trump announced the plan, which he says can be the basis for talks that can produce a different outcome from failed efforts by Democratic and Republican presidents alike since the 1990s, at a Jan. 28 White House press conference. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu joined him.

The ambassadors of the capitalist regimes in the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Oman attended the White House news conference. United Arab Emirates Ambassador Yousef Al Otaiba called the plan “an important starting point for a return
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See Cuba’s revolution for yourself, sign up for 2020 May Day Brigade



2019 May Day march in Havana. International solidarity brigade with Cuba will join in this year’s march, visit factories and farms, and meet with wide range of Cuban workers and youth.

BY JANET POST

Cuba’s Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP) has invited workers, farmers and young people around the world to come and join the 15th May Day International Brigade of Voluntary Work and Solidarity with Cuba, set for April 26 to May 10.

The brigade’s highlight will be participating in the million-strong May Day march celebrating the 61st anniversary of the triumph of the

Cuban Revolution.

The victory of the revolution in 1959 — led by Fidel Castro and the July 26 Movement — over the U.S.-backed Fulgencio Batista dictatorship brought a workers and farmers government to power and opened the door for the socialist revolution in the Americas.

Joining the brigade is an opportunity to meet working people in Cuba and dis-
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Support miners on strike against Asarco bosses’ union busting!

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

Copper miners on strike in Arizona and Texas continue to staff the picket lines 24/7 and reach out for support against the union-busting attack of Asarco’s bosses. “We are continuing Sunday dinners at the Mission picket line and Friday dinner and movie nights at the Silver Bell picket line,” Ruben Gonzales, vice president of United Steelworkers Local 937, told the *Militant* by phone Feb. 4.

Some 1,700 workers from seven unions went on strike Oct. 13 at Mission and Silver Bell, near Tucson; two other mining complexes in Arizona; and Asarco’s refinery in Amarillo, Texas. The workers are fighting
Continued on page 4

Out of the EU, UK rulers seek trade bloc with Washington

BY TERRY EVANS

As promised, the Conservative U.K. government led by Prime Minister Boris Johnson walked out of the European Union Jan. 31, dealing a blow to the German and French rulers who dominate it. Johnson’s government will now start talks, first and foremost with Washington, to form a new trade bloc that will determine whether he can chart an effective course for the U.K.’s capitalist rulers in the years ahead.

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—On the picket line, p. 5—

Seattle hospital workers strike for patients before profits

Amazon, Walmart robots speed up work, increase injuries

Trump crows, Democrats crisis

Continued from front page
rables” from electing him again.

The president told Congress and the others invited to the State of the Union speech that his administration was “re-
lentlessly pro-worker” and had engi-
neered a “blue-collar boom.” He pointed
in particular to the drop in unemploy-
ment, including for African Americans,
women, youth and veterans.

It’s not Trump’s policies — which
he says are geared at strengthening
the bosses and bankers, then “trick-
ling down” to you and me — that
caused the uptick in jobs. It’s a cycli-
cal economic upturn that takes place
within a long-term crisis of capitalism
in which a broad carnage still bears
down on workers and farmers.

Trump claimed average household in-
come was the highest ever, but millions
of workers know from experience that
prices of basic necessities are climbing
too. Last year health care prices rose by
4.6% and housing by 3.2%, according
to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. And
millions still struggle paycheck-to-pay-
check as household debt is rising.

The president said he was “curbing
the opioid epidemic,” pointing to the
first drop in 30 years in the numbers
dying from overdoses in 2018. But that
drop — a mere 4% from the previous
year — still saw 67,000 people die of
drug overdoses, part of the broad social
crisis bearing down on working people.

“America is the place where anyone
can rise,” Trump claimed, hoping to
blunt workers’ struggles by offering
the illusion that workers should strive
to climb out of their class by looking
out for number one. This is one thing
both Trump and the Democrats can
agree on — working people shouldn’t
look to themselves to fight the attacks

of the capitalist rulers.
Only the Socialist Workers Party
ticket — Alyson Kennedy for president
and Malcolm Jarrett for vice president
— tells the truth about the U.S. It’s a
class-divided society that rests on the
exploitation of workers by the bosses
here and ruthless efforts to oppress
workers and farmers abroad.
The SWP campaign presents a fight-
ing program through which workers and
our allies can transform themselves in
struggle, gaining the capacity to replace
capitalist rule with a workers and farm-
ers government and run society in the
interest of the vast majority.
The president touted his adminis-
tration’s expansion of military spend-
ing aimed at ensuring Washington can
defend the interests of the U.S. rulers
around the world. He has increased the
deployment of U.S. forces in the Middle
East in recent months.

And he reiterated his determination to
overturn the revolutionary government
of Cuba, and to attack the sovereignty of
Venezuela. He invited Juan Guaidó, the
pro-imperialist Venezuelan opposition
leader who Washington seeks to impose
as the country’s president. Guaidó re-
ceived a bipartisan standing ovation.

Democrats’ crisis deepens
As the Democrats’ impeachment
crusade crashed and burned, they re-
main in a frenzy, continuing to treat
the president as a criminal who is un-
fit for office. At the end of Trump’s
speech, House Majority Leader Nancy
Pelosi threw a tantrum, ripping up her
copy of the talk he had just given.
Their drive to oust Trump by any
means possible flows from the fact
they’re convinced he’s likely to win the
election in November.



Alyson Kennedy

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

Behold the Dallas-Based Underdog Candidate of the 2020 Presidential Election

Alyson Kennedy remains ready to start the revolution.

Socialist Workers Party launching campaign of Alyson Kennedy and Malcolm Jarrett for president and vice president was featured in Feb. 5 “Frontburner” column in D Magazine. The article quoted from press release announcing Feb. 8 meeting launching the campaign in Dallas. “My campaign presents a road forward for working-class struggle to advance the self-confidence, fighting capacities and class consciousness of working people,” Kennedy said.

The Democrats are wracked by di-
visions over who to run against him.
Some say they should try to reach the
workers who took Trump over the top
last time, which, they say, means to be
more conservative. Others claim they
should simply forget those they con-
sider deplorables and try to win by as-
sembling a new demographic coalition
based on color and gender.

Party officials began scheming about
how they can broker the Democratic
party convention to block Bernie Sand-
ers after he surged in the polls before
the Iowa primary. Former Secretary of
State John Kerry and others say a Sand-
ers nomination would destroy the party.
Sanders says he is a democratic so-
cialist. He tries to appeal to workers
and middle-class radicals with a pro-
gram of patching up capitalism by re-
forming some of its abuses.
The Democrats’ Iowa primary turned
into a debacle, with the results still un-
known after several days. They blamed

it on a faulty cellphone app, further dis-
crediting the party. This just increases
the malaise in the party about its future.
Despite the Senate clearing Trump,
House Judiciary Committee Chairman
Jerry Nadler says they’ll try to keep
their witch hunt going. Hope springs
eternal, despite failing in every effort
to impeach or indict the president since
the day he was elected.
Nadler insisted Trump is a “lawless
president,” and that Democrats would
likely keep their impeachment hearings
going regardless of the Senate’s vote.

Dallas

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SWP candidate for US President;
Gerardo Sánchez, for US Senate

Saturday, Feb. 8, 7 p.m.

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These are expressed in editorials.

THE MILITANT

Fight moves by prison officials to ban the ‘Militant’

*The ‘Militant’ joins fights
for prisoners to be able to be
part of the world, including
the right to receive and read
literature of their choice.
The paper also backs Social-
ist Workers Party candidates
fighting to win the right to
vote for ex-prisoners, and
workers behind bars.*



Self-portrait by Kevin “Rashid” Johnson
Indiana prison officers allowed Militant to
Kevin Johnson after letters protested ban.

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‘Workers control of production’

Continued from front page

We need workers control over production,” Kennedy said. “That’s a key part of our platform. It’s how workers can defend themselves on the job at the same time as we can begin to see that we are capable of replacing the bosses and their government and run society ourselves.”

“Working people cannot look to the White House, or Congress or any capitalist politician to change the conditions we face,” Kennedy said. “We have to build a movement to fight for higher wages, better conditions and workers control. To open the road to working people taking power and forming a workers and farmers government.

“That’s why our campaign says workers need their own party, a labor party, and why we are proposing a fighting platform to go forward,” she said.

Kennedy, her running mate Malcolm Jarrett, and SWP candidates for U.S. Senate and other offices, are campaigning in cities and towns, large and small, talking to working people on their doorsteps.

On Feb. 4, Kennedy and Gerardo Sánchez, the party’s candidate for U.S. Senate, teamed up to campaign in Joshua, Texas. They ran into Carol Ortega as she was coming home from work at her part-time job at a Valero gas station.

“Our party is a working-class party that believes the only way to change the deteriorating conditions that we live every day is to stand up and fight,” Kennedy told her. “Our campaign backs every fight by workers for better wages and working conditions, like the strike being waged today by copper miners against the Asarco bosses in Texas and Arizona.”

Ortega told them she was facing hard times. When the “Affordable Care Act” was first passed, she said, “I was able to get health insurance for \$78 a month for me and my son, but now I pay \$378 just for myself.” Kennedy showed her *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record: Why Washington Fears Working People*, a book by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes, which describes how the Clinton administration together with a Republican-controlled Congress worked together to end the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program.

“I didn’t know about that,” Ortega said. “I always thought Clinton was a good president.”

No matter which party is in the White House, Kennedy said, the president is just the chief executive officer for the capitalist class. “Obama’s ‘affordable’ health care is just another program that benefits big capitalist insurance companies. The Socialist Workers Party fights

for universal, government-guaranteed cradle-to-grave health care, and retirement income for all.”

Ortega got a copy of the *Militant* and asked Kennedy and Sánchez to come back after payday so she can get a subscription and some of the books by party leaders they showed her.

On Feb. 2, Kennedy campaigned with supporters at an apartment complex in Richards, Texas, that had been hit by a tornado last October. Many buildings still had blue tarps on the roofs.

U.S. out of the Middle East!

“My campaign demands that Washington immediately withdraw every single troop and all of its military weapons from the Middle East,” Kennedy told Shahr Ali, a cashier who emigrated to the U.S. from Yemen.

“I think the U.S. should stay because the Iranian government is so bad,” Ali said, referring to Tehran’s intervention in Yemen, including arming and organizing militias.

“But the U.S. intervention there aims to defend the capitalists’ investments and markets, not the interests of work-



Militant/Tony Lane

SWP vice presidential candidate Malcolm Jarrett discusses the party’s platform with campaign endorser Melanie Meade, a fighter against pollution by U.S. Steel in Clairton, Pennsylvania.

ing people,” Kennedy said. “In fact, their wars are an obstacle to us organizing and fighting there for more control and better conditions.”

“The platform of the SWP is not designed to patch up the crisis-ridden capitalist system, but to point a road forward for working people to fight to protect

their interests against the brutal aggression of the bosses, their political parties and their government.

“Working people in Yemen and Iran, just like in the U.S., need to gain self-confidence and class consciousness in struggle to replace the capitalist regimes there,” Kennedy said.

Socialist Workers Party 2020 campaign platform

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

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

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

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

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

CUBA’S REVOLUTION — AN EXAM-

PLE End the US rulers’ economic war against Cuba; US out of Guantánamo. The Cuban Revolution in 1959 showed it is possible for workers and farmers to transform themselves in struggle, to take political power and uproot capitalist exploitation.

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

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

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

WORKERS CONTROL OVER PRODUCTION & SAFETY Capitalism’s profit drive is the despoiler of nature and cause of unsafe working conditions. Workers and our unions must fight for workers control over production and safety in the factories, mines, railroads and all energy monopolies to protect those on the job and in nearby communities, and to control emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases to prevent the poisoning of the air, water and soil. Workers control over production to prevent disasters like the Boeing 737 MAX.

“JUSTICE” SYSTEM Fight against police brutality, racist discrimination and the entire capitalist injustice system with its frame-ups, “plea bargains,” onerous

bail and outrageous prison sentences, all of which disproportionately hit workers who are Black. For the right to vote for ex-prisoners and all workers behind bars.

POLITICAL RIGHTS Defend democratic rights — the right to vote, to free speech and assembly and to bear arms, under attack from Democrats and Republicans alike. Stop FBI and other government spying, harassment and disruption.

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

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

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

Join the Socialist Workers Party campaign!

Join Socialist Workers Party candidates around the country

Georgia

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Anthony Dutrow, U.S. Congress, 27th Dist.

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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 8 to contact party campaign office nearest you.

Join the Socialist Workers Party campaign in 2020! Campaign for what you are for, not who 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*.)

Socialist Workers Party 2020 Campaign, 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, NY, NY 10018.
Tel: 347-871-0282 ✉ Email: socialistworkers2020@gmail.com

Relatives of slain protesters in Iran reject gov't bribes

BY TERRY EVANS

Relatives of protesters who were murdered by Tehran's security forces last November have spoken out against the authorities' attempts to bribe them to lie about the killings. The protesters rose up against the bourgeois clerical regime's wars abroad and the resulting economic crisis at home. The relatives are being pressed to register their slain loved ones as "martyrs" — that is, supporters of the regime — and to state publicly that they were shot dead by other protesters. Some 1,500 were killed and thousands more injured or arrested as the government moved to put down the protests.

Families are being offered one-off lump payments, monthly pensions, slots for their children at universities, and public sector jobs if they comply, and threatened with retaliation if they refuse, said the Kurdish news agency Rudaw.

Families in Kermanshah, Marivan, Sanandaj and Javanrood reported they were pressed to take the blood money.

The family of Borhan Mansournia — an Iranian Kurd who died when authorities delayed giving him medical treatment after they shot him at a protest in Kermanshah — told Rudaw they had refused.

A political crisis has been shaking the Iranian rulers since the mass protests began in late 2017. Each time the government represses the actions, they reappear larger and more determined.

Thousands took to the streets again this January to denounce the government and its cover-up of the Revolutionary Guard shooting down of a Ukrainian

civilian aircraft last month in which all 176 on board were killed.

The regime's interventions in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen and elsewhere are an effort to extend abroad the counterrevolution they carried out at home against the working people who made the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Out of that massive popular struggle that overthrew the U.S.-backed shah, workers had organized councils in the factories and refineries to advance their demands, farmers organized to fight for land, Kurds and Arabs for their national rights and women mobilized to fight for equal rights.

The gains made were pushed back by the bourgeois clerical rulers, but the workers were never crushed.



Borhan Mansournia, left, an Iranian Kurd, was killed by gov't security forces when he joined protests in November. Relatives are speaking out about killing in face of capitalist rulers' efforts to bribe them into lying and blaming his killing on fellow protesters. At right is his father.

Sign up for May Day International Brigade to Cuba

Continued from front page

cuss the impact of their revolution.

The brigade will also bring to Cubans the class struggle and political developments participants have been part of in their own countries. Last year 320 people from 21 countries, including 65 from the U.S., joined the 14th brigade. The National Network on Cuba, a coalition of groups in solidarity with the Cuban people, is organizing the U.S. delegation.

Participants will be based at the Julio Antonio Mella camp in Caimito, outside Havana. They will join in volunteer labor alongside Cuban farmers in the fields and meet leaders of women's, youth and trade union organizations.

In Pinar del Río province in western Cuba, and in Artemisa province they will be able to attend panel presentations on the Cuban economy and the legacy of Che Guevara, as well as visit health care centers, factories, universities, farm co-operatives, museums and cultural venues to learn more about the revolution.

"The participation in the brigade of a growing number of friends from all over the world shows not only motivation to know Cuba," ICAP's North America Director Sandra Yisel Ramírez said announcing the brigade, "but also how solidarity with the island spreads, encouraged by the commitment the Cuban Revolution brings in the struggle against the U.S. blockade

and our right to exist as an independent and sovereign nation."

This is especially important, as the U.S. rulers have stepped up their 60-year campaign to use economic sanctions to try and undermine the revolution. Washington has also accelerated its smear campaign slandering Cuba's internationalist medical missions, like the one that was decisive in defeating the Ebola epidemic in West Africa.

To prepare for the brigade, participants can read the new Pathfinder book *Red Zone*, by Enrique Ubieta Gómez. It tells how Cuba's revolutionary internationalism laid the political foundation for the 2014 battle against Ebola.

Meeting volunteers who participated in these internationalist efforts, seeing firsthand the gains of the revolution and learning concretely the challenges faced by the Cuban people under blows of the U.S. rulers' economic war will make brigadistas better armed to answer Washington's slanders and win broader support for Cuba's revolution.

Travel arrangements are being organized in accordance with U.S. guidelines by Marazul Tours. Total cost, not including airfare to Cuba, is \$725. You can sign up through March 27. For more information visit: www.nnoc.info or email iCanGoToCuba@nnoc.info.

Back Asarco miners strike against union busting

Continued from front page

against the bosses' refusal to negotiate and their insistence on imposing steep concessions, including extending a decadelong wage freeze for most of the miners, tripling health care costs for workers and their families, and restricting the unions' right to protect workers on the job.

Asarco is owned by Grupo Mexico, one of the world's largest mining conglomerates. Copper company executives say they're looking at a bright future as production of electric vehicles call for increased use of copper. Over 60% of all copper produced in the U.S. comes from Arizona, with more expected as three large new mines are in the works. A number of the biggest copper companies worldwide operate them, including Freeport-McMoRan, Rio Tinto and Asarco.

The largest mine in the state is the Freeport-McMoRan-run Morenci Mine, formerly operated by Phelps Dodge. A bitter three-year strike there from 1983 to 1986 was broken by a fierce anti-union assault by the bosses buttressed by hundreds of National Guard and sharpshooters sent in by Democratic Gov. Bruce Babbitt, who strikers nicknamed "Scabbit."

After decades of bloody labor battles, most of the copper bosses in the state now run nonunion. Only Asarco and one other smaller mine are organized. This is the central question posed in the battle unfolding today.

The mines are almost all located in rural areas in southeastern Arizona,

many near longstanding Native American reservations. A significant part of the mine workforce and the population as a whole are Mexican Americans and Native Americans.

While the strike has shut down the Amarillo refinery and Hayden, Arizona, smelter, the company continues some production at its mining complexes, using supervisors, nonunion contractors and some workers who've crossed the picket line.

Confrontation on the rail tracks

On Jan. 29 Union Pacific rail bosses using an all-management crew entered the Mission Mine in Sahuarita for the first time since the strike began, Gonzales told the *Militant*. "Union members at UP joined our pickets that day protesting the train crossing the line," he said. "They took in 10 tanker cars that hold dust suppressant and 15 empties to take out ore."

SMART-Transportation Division Local 807 posted a video of the unionists picketing the UP train on its Facebook page that day. Local 807 "stands in solidarity with striking miners of Asarco," the union said. "Our members will never cross a line."

The miners welcome supporters joining their picket lines, and to the dinners and movie nights they organize, 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](https://www.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.

Three books to be read as one . . .

Tribunes of the People and the Trade Unions

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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

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Seattle hospital workers strike for 'patients before profits'

SEATTLE — Some 8,000 workers represented by SEIU Healthcare 1199NW and other unions went on strike against the Swedish-Providence hospital system Jan. 28-30. Picket lines were set up 24 hours a day at seven facilities in the greater Seattle area.

"Safe staffing is what we're really fighting for, so we can provide the highest quality care," Lizette Vanunu, who started working for Swedish as a nurse in 1988, told the Intercept magazine. "The wage issue is secondary, but we do need better wages so we can keep experienced people in our institution."

The union demanded a 23.25% raise in wages over four years while hospital bosses only offered an 11.25% increase.

Some 250 workers enthusiastically picketed outside Swedish-Providence's largest facility Jan. 28, chanting "Safe staffing saves lives," "Patients before profits" and "United for social justice."

Among those marching in solidarity was Walmart worker Pat Scott, carrying a sign, "Walmart workers support hospital workers" to an enthusiastic response.

The following day over 1,000 hospital workers and supporters rallied at Westlake Park, including members of the Teamsters, United Food and Commercial Workers, International Long-

shore Workers Union, Firefighters and the Musicians union. Members of the SMART-TD rail workers union joined the picket line at the Swedish hospital in Edmonds.

On Jan. 31 workers marched together back to work, where hundreds were barred from returning, as the bosses said they had hired thousands of replacement workers to cover that week. Swedish-Providence said it had spent at least \$11 million on the replacements.

SEIU members set up their picket line again, now carrying signs explaining they were "Locked Out."

— John Naubert and Edwin Fruit



Militant/Scott Breen

Members of SEIU Healthcare 1199NW rally in Seattle Jan. 29 during three-day walkout at Swedish-Providence hospitals demanding increased staffing for patient care and a wage raise.

Amazon, Walmart robots speed up work, increase injuries

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In their dog-eat-dog competitive war against each other, Amazon and its chief retail rival Walmart are stepping up the use of robots to speed up and intensify the exploitation of their workers. This stiffening competition has thrown other major retail outlets into crisis — from Kohl's to J.C. Penney to bankrupt Sears — all of which face declining sales and store closings.

Amazon now has over 200,000 robots roaming around its warehouses, double the number it had last year and up from a mere 15,000 in 2014. And injury rates in these mammoth Rube-Goldberg-like distribution centers are rising.

A recent study of 28 Amazon warehouses in 16 states by the Center for Investigative Reporting showed that the overall rate of serious injuries was 9.6 per 100 full-time workers in 2018. That's more than double the warehousing industry average. And, from 2015 to 2017 fatalities in those warehouses jumped from 11 to 22 annually.

To push workers harder, *Atlantic* magazine reported in December, Amazon bosses combine "cutting-edge technology, unrelenting surveillance, and constant disciplinary write-ups." One unnamed former top-level operations manager told the magazine that

the company "incentivizes you to be a heartless son of a bitch."

To compete, Walmart and its brick-and-mortar competitors have ramped up the pace as well, leading to 3.5 out of every 100 workers being injured or sickened in 2018 — edging out the rate in basic manufacturing. The most dangerous operations, *Finance & Commerce* reported, were stores selling home furnishings, building materials and tires, and anything calling itself a supercenter.

At an Amazon warehouse in Connecticut, Amanda Taillon's job is to enter a cage to pick up toys dropped by 6-foot-tall roving robots. "When you're out there, and you can hear them moving around, but you can't see them," she told *The Associated Press*, "it's like, 'Where are they going to come from?' It's a little nerve-racking at first."

Amazon has a big edge on e-commerce sales, but Walmart has a big edge over everyone in real-live stores, and has been seeking ways to catch up online. In 2018, while Walmart's online sales grew, it lost about \$2 billion. But remember the bottom line — Walmart's annual revenue is more than twice Amazon's.

Walmart bosses are also trying to squeeze greater use out of their giant superstores. This includes expanding online grocery pickup and home deliv-

ery service, which currently involves more than 1,000 stores.

In January Walmart announced it is testing a giant grocery-picking robot operation called Alphabot. Its 20,000 square-foot facility uses 30 small, cubic robots inside a giant shelving system to pick and pack grocery orders. The bosses claim this automated system will pick 800 products an hour, 10 times faster than a store worker. But of course those humans working in the Alphabot system will have to work faster and faster, at the expense of their safety and health. And, like in Amazon's warehouses, the bosses use the robots "to visually track the pace" of your work.

Not to be undone, Amazon bosses are creating checkout terminals at their actual stores that link your debt or credit card information to your hand. A similar payment system is being tested at Amazon's Whole Foods chain, according to the *Wall Street Journal*.

Through so-called smart voice-recognition programs like Amazon's Alexa, orders can be placed for just about everything. There are now more than 100 million Alexa-enabled devices around the world, and the number is growing fast, with tens of millions of orders being placed every month.

Place your orders with Alexa ...

Just about anyone can place an order. "Move Over, Santa! Kids Are Asking Alexa to Bring Them Presents," headlined an article in the Dec. 21 *Journal*. It described numerous examples where young children ordered hundreds of dollars of toys and other goodies through Alexa with their parents not knowing until they showed up at the door.

While Amazon and a variety of competitors are gearing up to begin drone deliveries directly to customers' doorsteps, FedEx has been testing its own same-day delivery robots in several cities it says can climb up and down stairs.

A swarm of FedEx delivery bots appeared on the streets of Manhattan at the end of November, weaving around cars and pedestrians. City officials, claiming these were unregistered vehicles, ordered them off the streets — for now.

Meanwhile, store vacancies in U.S. shopping malls are at the highest level in decades. Macy's announced Jan. 8 plans to shut 29 stores and Bed, Bath & Beyond said its sales dropped 9% last quarter, among many of the retail losers who fear the handwriting on the wall.

Read about the battles that forged the US labor movement



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25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



February 20, 1995

Nearly 50 years ago Washington ushered in the horror of nuclear warfare with the slaughter of some 200,000 men, women and children in the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

"The Japanese were ready to surrender and it wasn't necessary to hit them with that awful thing." Those words of former Republican President Dwight Eisenhower were among the first stricken from the Smithsonian Institution display on the August 1945 bombings. No facts were to be tolerated that might challenge Washington's lie that the bombings saved the lives of hundreds of thousands of U.S. soldiers.

The truth is that the bombings were aimed at upholding U.S. capitalist interests at the expense of workers and farmers the world over — not "saving lives," either U.S. or Japanese.



February 20, 1970

The longest strike in General Motors history was settled Jan. 22 in what appears to be a victory for the striking 2,700 UAW members at the GM Fisher Body plant in Flint, Mich.

The agreement which ended the strike provides for 43.5 bodies per hour instead of the 55 units the company originally demanded.

The settlement came immediately after the UAW head office called for a regional conference to consider ways of giving further support to the strike since the issues have national implications for the upcoming negotiations with the entire auto industry.

We can only wait and see just how much the Flint workers actually have won. For sure, they taught GM management that arbitrary speedup brings countermeasures.



February 17, 1945

LOS ANGELES, Feb. 8 — "Building a labor party is the essential next step for the labor movement if it is to stem successfully the wave of reaction in the period ahead," Myra Tanner Weiss, Trotskyist candidate for mayor of Los Angeles, told the United AFL Interviewing Committee representing 500,000 AFL members in Los Angeles County.

Asked whether she would withdraw from the race and throw her support to the labor-endorsed candidate if she is not endorsed, the Trotskyist candidate stated, "If the labor movement puts forth an independent labor ticket, we would certainly withdraw and support such candidates vigorously. But we definitely would not support a Democrat or Republican candidate. Both of these parties are employers' organizations."

UK rulers seek US trade bloc

Continued from front page

He says he will also fulfill his pledge to the largely working-class voters who put him in power to make their conditions of life better, a course that could result in a long-term shift in the political lineup in the U.K.

Millions of working people helped form a majority that voted for the U.K. to get out of the EU in a 2016 referendum, seeking to put an end to its intrusion into their lives and in opposition to the Conservatives, Labour and all the main capitalist parties that predicted a catastrophe if the U.K. quit.

For over three years those same parties along with the EU bureaucracy obstructed carrying out the 2016 vote, believing they should “correct” those who voted the “wrong” way. But Johnson defeated the “remain” wing of the Conservatives, taking over the party leadership, and routed the Labour Party in December’s election. He won by taking seats in largely working-class areas — especially in the north of England — that had been held by Labour for decades. He says he will redeem those “borrowed” votes by government borrowing to “level up” the areas of the U.K. where working people face greatest hardship.

Speaking on Jan. 31, Johnson said the U.K. getting out of the EU would usher in “a new era in which we no longer accept that your life chances ... should depend on which part of the country you grow up in.”

He pointed to his government’s expanded funding for the National Health Service and promised the biggest round of infrastructure construction “since the Victorians.” He presents a different course to defend the rulers’ interests that is in contrast to that of previous Conservative leaders handed down from former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

EU coming apart

The EU has been tearing at the seams long before the 2016 vote, as the French and German rulers squeeze the weaker capitalist powers, with devastating consequences for working people in Greece, Italy and elsewhere. For years the rulers in Germany sought to defend their interests as an imperialist power by relying on Washington’s military power and Berlin’s economic and political dominance of the EU. But no imperialist rul-

ing class can remain dominant without their own military might to back it up.

The U.K. will no longer be represented at the EU’s parliament or any of its numerous agencies. Under the withdrawal agreement the U.K. can conclude trade deals with powers outside of the EU, but can’t implement them until the end of the year, the deadline for negotiations over terms of its exit from the EU’s customs union.

French President Emmanuel Macron attacked the millions of workers who voted for the U.K. to leave the EU Jan. 31, claiming that “lies” and “simplifications” determined the 2016 vote. But Johnson answers with a simple truth — the debate over “Brexit” is over. His government has ruled out any extension of the “transition period” in its talks with the EU. He said Feb. 3 the U.K. wouldn’t be bound by EU regulatory red tape in any future agreement.

Crawford Falconer, Johnson’s chief trade adviser, is urging London to strike a deal with Washington *before* it settles its future trade relations with the EU.

London also seeks to buttress an alliance with Washington by drawing in the governments of Australia, Japan and New Zealand. Simon Birmingham, the Australian government’s trade, tourism and investment minister, said Canberra aims to strike a deal with the U.K.

For U.K.’s capitalist rulers such a package would be a formidable international competitor, far more advanta-



Reuters/Jonathan Ernst

U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson, left, and President Donald Trump meet at U.N. meeting last September. After London break with EU, rulers seek trade bloc with Washington to compete.

geous than its friction-filled and bureaucratic ensnarlment with the EU. British imperialism remains a sizable economic and military power. The combined gross domestic product of the U.S., Canada, Australia and the U.K. is twice as large as China’s and 150% bigger than what’s left of the EU after the U.K. leaves.

In 2017 the U.K. was the world’s sixth largest capitalist economy, according to the World Bank, with investment in the country growing faster than in France and Germany in 2018.

While the British rulers have let their military forces decline, London remains an important ally of Washington — the world’s dominant imperialist power. The countries’ rulers maintain a high

level of integration between their forces.

In 1973 the U.K. joined the EU’s predecessor, the Common Market, set up years earlier by the German and French rulers in an effort to create a counter to their U.S. rival. It was always intended to become a kind of capitalist superstate, something that is impossible under the conflicts between ruling classes inherent to capitalism.

In fact, the EU bureaucracy has massively extended its interference into countries in the bloc since it was founded. A common currency was added among 19 European countries that strengthened the dominance of Berlin and, to a lesser degree Paris, against the weaker capitalist powers.

UK fight over firing for defense of women’s rights, science

BY ÖGMUNDUR JÓNSSON

MANCHESTER, England — Judge James Tayler of the Central London Employment Tribunal upheld the firing of Maya Forstater Dec. 19. Forstater had spoken out against undermining women’s rights in the name of protecting those who “identify” as the opposite sex. Her firing had been justified under the U.K.’s Gender Recognition Act, passed in 2004.

The law allows you to formally change your gender simply by filing a certificate.

Forstater challenged her firing, and protested the court’s decision to uphold it. “There are two sexes, male and female,” she said. “It is impossible to change sex. These were until very recently understood as basic facts of life by almost everyone.

“This judgment removes women’s rights and the right to freedom of belief and speech,” she added. “It gives judicial license for women and men who speak up for objective truth and clear debate to be subject to aggression, bullying, no-platforming and economic punishment.” Forstater announced Jan. 25 she had filed an appeal.

Forstater, a tax researcher at the London-based Centre for Global Development, went to court after bosses at the “think tank” refused to renew her contract. They said she used “offensive and exclusionary” language in tweets opposing government-proposed changes to the Gender Recognition Act that would allow people to “self-identify.”

“I have been told that it is offensive to say ‘transwomen are men’ or that women means ‘adult human female,’” Forstater wrote. “However since these statements are true I will

continue to say them.”

Of particular concern to Forstater was to defend places historically reserved for women. “Women and girls lose out on privacy, safety and fairness if males are allowed into changing rooms, dormitories, prisons, sports teams,” she said.

Judge Tayler ruled in December that Forstater’s firing was lawful since her insistence on her right to refer to people by their actual biological sex “even if it violates their dignity and/or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.” Apparently, there’s nothing “intimidating” or “hostile” about firing someone for expressing their opinions.

Making it crystal clear that bosses can legitimately place limits on workers’ freedom of expression, Tayler said Forstater could oppose reforms to the Gender Recognition Act, as well as call for the exclusion of trans women from women-only spaces, but could not say “that biological sex is immutable.”

Forstater’s most high-profile defense came from J.K. Rowling. “Dress however you please. Call yourself whatever you like. Sleep with any consenting adult who’ll have you,” the *Harry Potter* series author wrote in response to the ruling. “Live your best life in peace and security. But force women out of their jobs for stating that sex is real?”

The verdict was supported by groups such as Human Rights Campaign, Amnesty U.K. and Stonewall.

Broader fight for rights

The court ruling justifying the sacking of Forstater is just one recent example of how state institutions have attacked workers’ rights under the guise of protecting transgender people.

Harry Miller, a dockworker from Lincoln, was investigated by cops in January last year after he posted a limerick on Twitter that questioned whether a transgender woman could really be a biological woman.

Cops went after Miller after receiving complaints that Miller’s comments made his workplace “unsafe.” When Miller protested the cops’ visit there, officer Mansoor Gul told him, “We need to check your thinking,” and warned him he would be hit with “further action,” if he continued to state his opinions on this subject.

“I have a wife, a mother and daughters,” Miller told the *Daily Telegraph*. “When it comes to their rights and safety and those of women everywhere men need to speak up.”

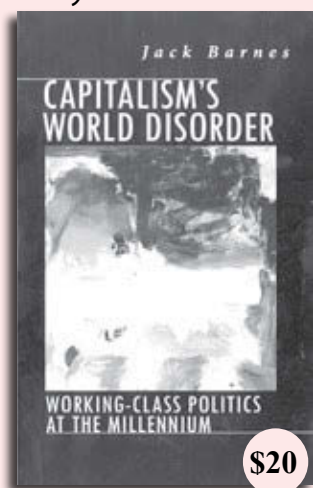
In another case, two parents and a teacher are demanding courts instruct Oxfordshire County Council to withdraw its “Trans Inclusion Toolkit for Schools,” published last year. The document instructs schools that boys can share toilets with girls if they “identify” as girls and vice versa.



Maya Forstater is fighting to overturn firing.

Capitalism’s World Disorder

by Jack Barnes



“To maintain a ‘special relationship’ with Washington is becoming more necessary than ever for the British bourgeoisie.”

pathfinderpress.com

China rulers take steps to consolidate control in Asia

BY ROY LANDERSEN

While big-business press headlines have focused on the trade disputes and agreements between Washington and Beijing, the course of the rulers in China has become increasingly clear. Armed with a long view, they are focused on building their own empire in Asia linked by their Belt and Road Initiative without engaging in a fight with the U.S. rulers for world supremacy, for now.

This is most clearly seen in how the state bureaucracy in China is pushing its ambitious “Made in China 2025” policy. At the end of last year, Beijing announced it would remove all foreign technology from every state office and public institution by 2022. As part of the goal of developing “secure and controllable” technology, up to 30 million computers will be replaced.

In two years, Beijing insists, no workstations that are not made in China and based on Chinese programming will be permitted to operate in government offices or the vast network of state-linked enterprises.

The aim is to become completely self-reliant in making new-generation wireless and internet telecommunications gear; artificial intelligence, automation and robotics; synthetic materials; as well as aerospace, maritime, biopharmaceutical and other high-tech manufacturing, key to a modernized capitalist economy — and military — of the future.

Beijing is focusing on pouring billions into research and development on Chinese equipment and technology. It offers a wide range of enticements — both legal and otherwise — to overseas Chinese scientists and others to join its push to become self-sufficient in science and technology.

The goal of China’s bureaucratic rulers isn’t to use this shift to challenge Washington in Europe and the U.S. It’s to have the equipment, software and resources to draw neighboring capitalist rulers into a virtually self-contained Asian economic cooperation that they dominate, linked by the belt and road system.

Spreading world ‘degloblization’

For years, pundits pointed to a world more and more integrated and interdependent. They predicted lowering of trade barriers and increased capital flows across borders were the future.

But it has become clearer that rivalry

between capitalist nation states in the age of imperialism is far more powerful than so-called globalization. Deglobalization is spreading worldwide.

In the 1990s, the U.S. rulers, blinded by the illusion that the implosion of the USSR and Eastern Europe meant they “had won the Cold War,” thought they had free rein to lord over a new boom for imperialist expansion and profit. The 2008 financial panic sharply revealed how wrong they were.

Instead of becoming a new, giant state, the European Union is being torn apart. The U.K. has headed out, and other capitalist rulers who have suffered at the dictates of Berlin and Paris, the two strongest European powers, are considering similar moves. “Emerging” nations — from Brazil to India and Russia — have yet to emerge.

And so-called worldwide organizations — from the United Nations to the World Trade Organization — have less and less to say about relations between competing capitalist ruling classes.

Harvard scientists charged in spying for China

BY ROY LANDERSEN

In a high-profile escalation of Washington’s campaign against intellectual property theft by the rulers in Beijing, FBI agents arrested professor Charles Lieber, chair of Harvard University’s department of chemistry and chemical biology, Jan. 28. He was charged with lying to federal investigators about receiving millions of dollars in funding from Chinese institutions and hiding his involvement in the Thousand Talents Plan, Beijing’s program to attract top foreign-educated scientists to China.

“Chemistry, nanotechnology, polymer studies, robotics, computer science, biomedical research” were listed by Andrew Lelling, the lead federal prosecutor in Boston, as the sciences involved in the cases before them. These are “not an accident or a coincidence” he said. “This is a small sample of China’s ongoing campaign to siphon off American technology and know-how.”

The bureaucratic rulers in Beijing are on a forced march to develop their own self-sufficient internet and cellphone networks, as well as more advanced scientific systems. These are inten-



AP photo/Andy Wong

Huawei display of 5G mobile station at China Expo in Shenzhen, Oct. 29, 2019. Beijing seeks to use high-tech dominance to help establish long-term bloc with reliant Asian regimes.

In this framework, both Washington and Beijing have reached a new trade deal that lifted the recent series of tit-for-tat tariffs.

For decades the Chinese rulers drove a huge wave of industrialization that drew hundreds of millions of peasants into mushrooming cities. The bureaucratic state acted to police the proletarian workforce intensely

exploited by foreign and native capital in the factories. It presided over explosive capitalist growth as imperialist bosses set up shop to take advantage of cheap labor. In return for access to a burgeoning mass market, foreign investors were forced to allow Chinese access to advanced technology.

Now the Chinese rulers are poised to take another step.

ded for exclusive use in China and in drawing countries in the region into reliance on them.

Two other scientists, both Chinese nationals, were indicted the same day as Lieber. Zaosong Zheng, a Harvard-sponsored cancer researcher, was charged with trying to smuggle biological material out of the U.S. He allegedly had 21 vials of cells, stolen from a Boston laboratory, hidden in a sock as he tried to board a plane to Beijing last December.

Yanqing Ye, a researcher at Boston University’s department of physics, chemistry and biomedical engineering until she left for China last April, was accused of hiding the fact she was previously a lieutenant in the People’s Liberation Army and that while in the U.S. she continued to receive assignments from Chinese military authorities.

She is alleged to have accessed U.S. military websites and researched U.S. scientists with expertise in robotics and computer science, sending the information to Beijing. She was charged in her

absence with visa fraud, making false statements, acting as an agent of a foreign government and conspiracy.

The criminal charges against Lieber caused a shock in scientific circles, since he is a pioneer in nanotechnology, the science of manipulating individual molecules and atoms. His work was credited with helping to develop “bio-nanoelectronic sensors capable of detecting diseases down to the level of a single infectious virus particle.” Ironically, he was charged just as a global health emergency scare has erupted over the new coronavirus epidemic spreading from China.

The arrests and increased U.S. government attention to theft of scientific research and technological innovation for China are potentially very disruptive to “American science,” said Frank Wu, a law professor and former president of the Committee of 100, an organization of prominent Chinese Americans. “The number of people who have some connection to China is so vast.”

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

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

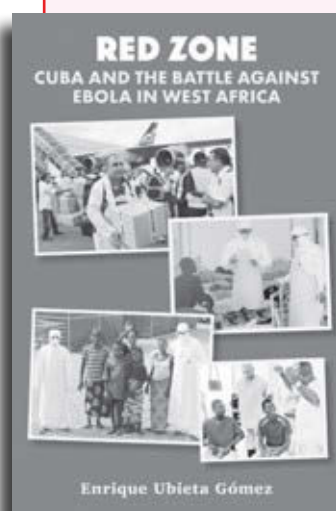
—Fidel Castro, October 2014

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U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War

by Jack Barnes

in New International no. 11



U.S. imperialism has lost the Cold War. The enormity of imperialism’s historic loss is revealed by the speed with which some of the most fundamental lynchpins of world politics in the post-World War II era have changed and are changing.

Jack Barnes and Mary-Alice Waters in “Ours is the epoch of world revolution.”

Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun

by Jack Barnes

in New International no. 12

pathfinderpress.com



Fidel's leadership was decisive in defending Angola independence

Below are excerpts from one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for February, Cuba & Angola: The War for Freedom by Harry Villegas, known the world over as "Pombo." This was the nom de guerre given him by Ernesto Che Guevara, at whose side he worked and fought in Cuba, the Congo and Bolivia. From 1977 to 1979 Pombo helped lead Cuba's volunteer military mission in Angola, defending the newly independent country against the apartheid regime of South Africa and its imperialist backers in Washington. From 1981 to 1988, when the South African forces were defeated, Pombo served as liaison between Fidel Castro, the Cuban commander-in-chief, and the Cuban internationalist forces in Angola. The book contains interviews with Villegas by Pathfinder President Mary-Alice Waters and others. Villegas died last December. Copyright © 2017 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY HARRY VILLEGAS

Fidel's leadership was decisive in winning the victory. He was on top of everything, day in and day out. He went to the command post daily.

During the Cangamba battle, Polo [Gen. Leopoldo Cintra Frías] spoke to the Commander every day at 7:00 p.m. by radio. I've described the foresight that Fidel demonstrated in that battle and the



Granma/Arnaldo Santos
Departing Cuban internationalist volunteers bid farewell to Angolan combatants after victory defending country's independence. Cuban, Angolan, Namibian forces defeated South African military in 1988, winning Namibian independence, reinforcing mass anti-apartheid struggle.

confidence he inspired in the troops. He was always concerned about the well-being of the combatants.

Che said Fidel's greatness lay in the details. During the struggle in Angola, he wanted to see everything, touch everything, verify everything.

"Don't tell me what Polo or [Gen. Arnaldo] Ochoa told you, or what anyone else told you," he would say to me. "Tell me what you saw and touched yourself. And if it's feasible, bring me some evidence of what you saw and touched." So I got a young soldier from the Interior Ministry with a video camera to go around with me.

As UNITA's actions began escalating and further jeopardized Angola's stability, Fidel followed events even more closely. We had to provide him with more information, and more frequently. ...

He'd ask your opinion: "Well, if it were like this, not like that, what would you do?" ...

Fidel always kept analyzing everything, the changing elements, and drew his conclusions. ...

WATERS: The internationalist aid to Angola over a nearly sixteen-year period was an enormous effort for a relatively small and economically underdeveloped nation such as Cuba. Beginning in 1989, almost simultaneous with the end of the Angola mission, the disintegration of the Soviet bloc regimes led to the collapse of most of Cuba's foreign trade agreements

and many aid projects, sparking the severe economic crisis of the 1990s. Some Cubans express the view that the resources that went to help Angola should have been used at home.

VILLEGAS: Cuba's aid to Angola was not only worthwhile, but if we were in a position to do it again, we would.

If the South African army had not been defeated in Angola, would apartheid have been eliminated when it was? If we did nothing more than indirectly help defeat apartheid, our effort was unquestionably worthwhile.

Thanks to the victory in Angola, the Namibian people won their independence.

Perhaps it was a dream of ours to think that socialism could be built in Angola. But South Africa was prevented from carving up and dominating Angola.

Whether or not the final objectives were achieved, these are glorious pages in the history of the peoples that have created the foundations for the future.

The internationalist mission in Angola strengthened us in every respect. But above all, I would say, in consciousness.

Angola exposed us to a reality very different from what we were familiar with in Cuba. We lived and struggled together with the Angolan people. We saw with our own eyes the legacy of centuries of colonialism and imperialism in Africa: hunger, disease, illiteracy, deep

inequalities. The consequences of a system of exploitation that doesn't value the life of ordinary people.

That experience enriched us. It allowed us to better understand everything we have achieved with the revolution. To understand that the values of the revolution are superior to those of capitalism, where "every man for himself" prevails.

Hundreds of thousands of Cubans proved capable of self-sacrifice, of acting on behalf of other human beings, of defending sister peoples against the apartheid regime.

All that strengthened us politically. The generations that went through those experiences included three of our Five Heroes [the Cuban Five] — Gerardo, Fernando, and René — who later carried out an internationalist mission in the United States in defense of the revolution.

It was not only a learning experience for those who took part in the internationalist mission. When you know that your father or mother or grandfather went to Angola as a volunteer, thousands of kilometers away, without receiving a cent, and risked his or her life, you admire and learn from that example.

As Raúl [Castro] said, thanks to Angola, "all of us know much better what we are capable of achieving." In the 1990s the experience of Angola helped us survive the hard years of the Special Period.

Today in Cuba we face big economic challenges. Without economic progress there can be no socialism. Our goal is to increase production of the means of subsistence, and to do it more efficiently. But above all else, we have to put human beings at the center of everything we do.

That's what we did in Angola. We proved capable of giving all in exchange for nothing. Nothing but the satisfaction of having fulfilled our commitment to humanity.

That's very important for the education of the new generations.

What Raúl said when our combatants returned from Angola in 1991 remains true today: "When we face new and unexpected challenges we will always be able to recall the epic of Angola with gratitude, because without Angola we would not be as strong as we are today."

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OF THE MONTH

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8 The Militant February 17, 2020

Why workers should fight for control of production

As part of strengthening the self-confidence, fighting capacities and class consciousness of working people, Socialist Workers Party candidates for president and vice president Alyson Kennedy and Malcolm Jarrett, explain why the fight for workers control of production is a key part of advancing our struggles against the bosses and their capitalist government.

It is our labor that creates all the wealth that the bosses take from us every day. Throughout industry they raise line speeds and cut corners on safety. The bosses and the parties that serve them have no concern about how their drive for profits endangers our lives and limbs, undermines our quality of life, nor how it destroys the environment and prevents us from conserving the earth's patrimony for future generations.

From time to time workers are able to wrest some control over safety on the job from the bosses as we organize and build unions, the key defensive organizations of the working class, and extend solidarity and use union power. Such steps can make a real difference to our capacity to prevent injuries and worse. No worker has to die on the job!

As long as production, transportation and distribution remain under the control of the bosses, the productive capacities of human labor will be twist-

ed to serve profits, not human needs. The bosses lie about all aspects of production — to keep us from learning about what we are being exposed to and, more importantly, when they lie about their real expenses and profits to press us for concessions.

"The immediate tasks of workers control," explains Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky in the *Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, adopted by the Socialist Workers Party in 1938, is to "explain the debits and credits of society, beginning with individual business undertakings; to determine the actual share of the national income appropriated by individual capitalists and by the exploiters as a whole," and, "finally, to reveal to all members of society that unconscionable squandering of human labor which is the result of capitalist anarchy and the naked pursuit of profits."

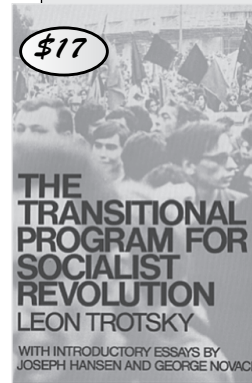
The fight for workers control of production is a school for the working class, as we uncover the bosses' business secrets and reality of their economic relations. As we learn — and become more confident through our struggles — we fight for deeper and deeper inroads over all aspects of production.

It is a necessary and essential step along the road to reorganizing all of society, as we fight to take the planning and direction of the entire economy into

our own hands, something only the overthrow of capitalist class rule and establishment of a workers and farmers government will make possible.

That liberating perspective is what the SWP's presidential ticket and candidates around the country will be explaining. Join the campaign!

The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution by Leon Trotsky



"The capitalist profiteers cannot permit the workers in a factory or an industry to have an effective and lasting veto power over the way the industry is run. The workers themselves, once they acquire a certain measure of control, either have to go forward to complete control or give up the measure of veto power they have acquired."

pathfinderpress.com

Open the door for talks on recognition of Israel and of a Palestinian state

Continued from front page to negotiations."

The governments of Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Qatar also welcomed the U.S. administration's initiative. The Qatari government — which gives hundreds of millions of dollars to both Hamas in the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank — released a statement saying it appreciates "all efforts aiming towards a longstanding and just peace in the occupied Palestinian territories."

This is a change from the not-so-distant past when most Arab governments gave aid and political support tied to the refusal by the leaderships of the Palestinian Authority and Hamas to recognize Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state.

The mostly Sunni-led regimes in the region have increasingly relied on U.S. military support and improved ties to the Israeli government to counter Tehran's aggressive efforts to extend its reach.

But Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas responded by saying, "I reject this plan outright" at a special meeting of the Arab League Feb. 1. He said he refused to even read the 181-page document, adding, "Trump asked that I speak to him over the phone, so I said 'no.'"

The League, including delegates from Saudi Arabia and others who had expressed backing for new talks based on the Trump administration's proposals, voted unanimously to back Abbas.

Jared Kushner, the main architect of the plan and Trump's son-in-law, has pushed to make it clear that everything is open to negotiations. "If the Palestinians don't like where the line is drawn," he said in an interview with Egyptian MBC Masr news network, "they should come and tell us where they want to draw it."

And the administration has pressed the Israeli government not to take any new steps in the occupied territories.

The fact is working people in the West Bank and Gaza have been losing confidence in the Palestinian Authority and Hamas leaderships, tired of their dead-end course. Hamas has repressed demonstrations and locked up opponents as discontent with its rule has grown, even as it has cut deals with the Israeli government to allow thousands of Gazans to work inside Israel.

Every time the Palestinian misleaders refuse to pursue opportunities to discuss a settlement, it means they start from a worse position. "The record of Arab-Israeli peace efforts can be summed up succinctly," *New York Times* columnist and former *Jerusalem Post* Editor-in-Chief Bret Stephens said in his Jan. 30 *Times* column. "Nearly every time the Arab side said no, it wound up with less."

Well-known Saudi journalist Abdulrahman al-Rashed wrote in *Asharq Al-Awsat*, "The greatest danger to Palestinian interests now is to do nothing and continue waiting for a miracle."

All of these factors mean the Trump administration plan has a better chance of making headway than any other proposal in decades.

The proposal's 'starting point'

Under the Trump administration proposal about 70% of the West Bank would be under Palestinian rule, and some 30%, centered around the Israeli settlements there, would be ceded to Israel.

An "undivided Jerusalem" under Israeli control would become the capital of Israel. The plan proposes that Palestine's capital would be in neighborhoods to the east of what is traditionally East Jerusalem, outside the current "security" barrier.

The deal promises a four-year freeze on new Israeli settlements. In exchange for land ceded to Israel, it extends the West Bank farther south and would give the Palestinian state two additional areas, near Gaza and Egypt.

The Trump administration proposal also calls for disarming Hamas and Islamic Jihad in the Gaza Strip, linking Gaza and the West Bank for the first time through an underground high-speed rail line, and offers

\$50 billion in economic "assistance."

The Trump administration is also pressing the Israeli government to hold off any new moves to allow the greatest chance for the opening of negotiations. When Netanyahu attempted to use the proposed deal to push through legislation recognizing Israeli law over the settlements in the West Bank, Kushner warned him off.

Negotiations a 'political necessity'

When the Trump administration, backed by Democratic Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer, officially recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel in December 2017, the Socialist Workers Party said this showed the "political necessity for the Israeli and Arab governments and leaderships of Palestinian organizations to begin immediate talks to recognize both Israel and an independent Palestinian state."

Trump's new proposal calls for the same response. The SWP statement notes that negotiations "must recognize the right of Jews everywhere to take refuge in Israel in face of the global rise of Jew-hatred and anti-Semitic violence, as well as the unconditional right of the dispossessed Palestinian people to a contiguous, sovereign homeland on territory — including East Jerusalem — conquered and occupied by the Israeli government during the 1967 war."

An agreement along those lines would advance the ability of working people "of all national backgrounds, religious beliefs and political allegiances in Israel and Palestine," it said, "to speak, organize and begin redressing the blood-drenched legacy of imperialist domination and capitalist exploitation" in the region.

In the face of decades of defeats and setbacks for working people in the Middle East, caused by anti-working-class misleaderships, whether Stalinist, bourgeois nationalist or Islamist, the SWP says, the toilers need a different starting point: "the class interests and solidarity of workers and toiling farmers across the Middle East — be they Palestinian, Jewish, Arab, Kurdish, Turkish, Persian or otherwise, and whatever their religious or other beliefs — as well as working people in the United States and around the world.

"We are *for* whatever helps working people organize and act together to advance our demands and struggles against the capitalist governments and ruling classes that exploit and oppress us.

"We are *for* whatever renews our class solidarity and self-confidence, advancing us along a revolutionary course toward a united struggle for workers power."

For recognition of a Palestinian state and of Israel

- For repeal of U.S. Jerusalem Embassy Act

- For workers' solidarity in Israel, Palestine, the world over

Socialist Workers Party statement

Download ready to print flyer at www.themilitant.com

