

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

**'Cuban Revolution taught us to go where we are needed in the world'**  
— PAGES 8-9

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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## Crisis deepens in Democratic party in fight over nominee

BY TERRY EVANS

The crisis wracking the Democratic Party is escalating amid debate over selecting a candidate capable of preventing what the party considers “unthinkable” — President Donald Trump winning reelection in November. And their debate over what kind of ideology to run on is getting sharper. None of this presents a way forward for working people.

Only the Socialist Workers Party ticket, Alyson Kennedy for president and Malcolm Jarrett for vice president, and the over 20 SWP candidates backing it across the country, present a course forward based on a working-class line of march.

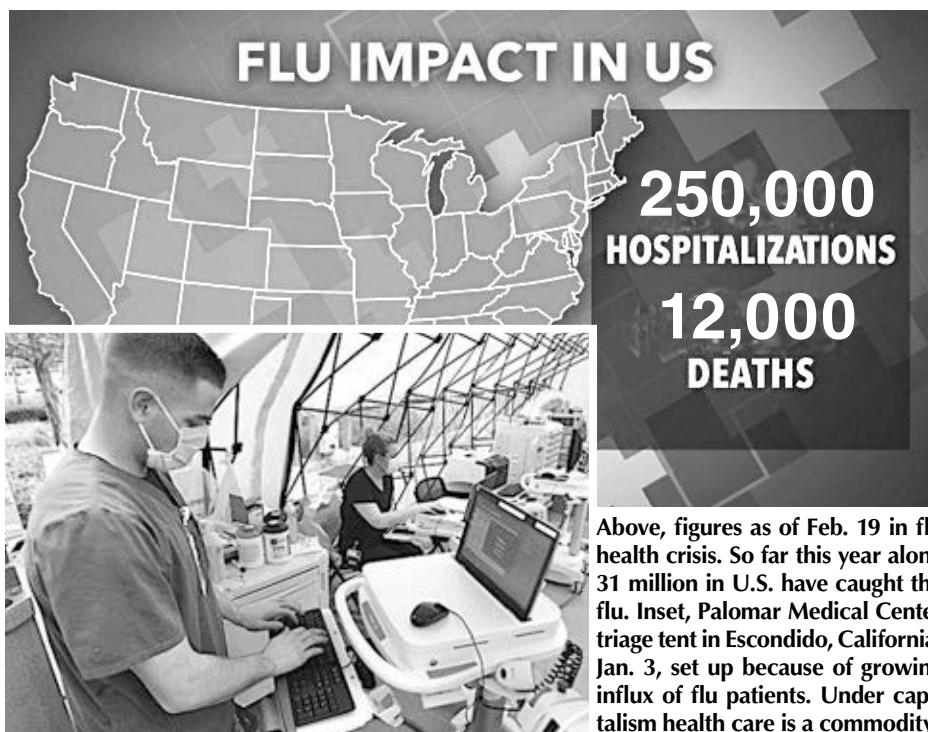
Democrats supporting Bernie Sanders want to make the party — that acts to defend the interests of the U.S. imperialist rulers — more explicitly socialist in name. And he has been winning a plurality in the party's 2020 caucuses and primaries so far.

Centrists are stepping up efforts to stop him. Some hope Michael Bloomberg can use his billions to buy the

**Continued on page 12**

## US flu outbreak toll caused by for-profit ‘care’ system

Cuba's revolution shows different road possible



BY ROY LANDERSEN

The public health crisis caused by the coronavirus outbreak in China threatens — if it becomes an international pandemic — to overwhelm the profit-driven system of “health care” of the U.S. and other capitalist rulers. For the greater part of humanity in countries kept underdeveloped by

imperialism, like in Africa, the result would be far worse still.

“In the capitalist world, medical care is a commodity to be bought and sold for profit. If you have to see a doctor or go to a hospital, the first question you're asked is: How will you pay?” said Martin Koppel, of the Socialist Workers Party and a Pathfinder editor, at a Feb. 10 event launching the new book, *Red Zone: Cuba and the Battle Against Ebola in West Africa*, at the Havana International Book Fair. “In the U.S. we don't have a system of medical care. There is a system of medical insurance, for the profit of the wealthy owners.”

As of Feb. 19, Covid-19, as this strain of coronavirus is called, has

**Continued on page 11**

## Assad regime offensive in Syria brings devastation

BY TERRY EVANS

The offensive against rebel forces and civilians in Syria's Idlib province carried out by the Bashar al-Assad regime and its backers in Moscow and Tehran has intensified since December. The assaults have forced 800,000 people to flee their homes, the biggest single displacement of people in Syria's civil war.

Some 80% of those fleeing are women and children. The regime's coalition forces have retaken a third of the province, as well as most of the remaining pockets of rebel forces in adjacent Aleppo.

Assad and his supporters have also clashed with Turkish troops in Syria, who back many of the rebels in Idlib and have engaged in clashes with U.S.-backed Kurdish forces elsewhere. Turkish troops based in a series of observation posts have also come under fire. And Washington unleashed an airstrike on Assad's forces

**Continued on page 11**

## SWP campaign: Back workers' fights for better wages, working conditions



Militant/Betsey Stone

Dennis Richter, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress in California, discusses party's working-class program with dental assistant Mayra Mejía in Lathrop Feb. 16.

BY BETSEY STONE

LATHROP, Calif. — Socialist Workers Party candidates campaigning for the party's national ticket headed by Alyson Kennedy for U.S. president and Malcolm Jarrett for vice president are talking with workers about the party's platform to confront

the economic, social and moral crisis caused by capitalism.

Dennis Richter, the party's candidate for Congress in the 37th District in California, and campaign supporters spent the day in this town of 22,000 people a couple hours east of

**Continued on page 3**

## 'Asarco wants to take everything away,' strikers say, build Feb. 24 rally

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

Strikers at the Asarco mining complexes in Arizona and Texas are gearing up for a Feb. 24 solidarity rally at the Phoenix Convention Center outside the Society for Mining, Metallurgy and Exploration National Conference. The labor movement in the area is building the action.

“We're taking on the company that wants to take everything away from us. They want us to go four more years without a raise,” Lyle Murphy, president of United Steelworkers Local 5252 and a striking worker at the Ray Mine in Kearny, Arizona, says on a union-made video. “We're not

**Continued on page 10**

## Sign up to go on May Day Brigade to bring solidarity, learn about Cuba

BY JANET POST

The deadline for working people and youth from around the world to sign up for the upcoming May Day brigade to Cuba is set for March 27. The 15th May Day International Brigade of Voluntary Work and Solidarity with Cuba, sponsored by Cuba's Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), will run from April 26 to May 10.

A highlight of the brigade will be

**Continued on page 9**

## Inside

**Editorial: Join Asarco strikers at Feb. 24 rally** 12

A debate: Marxism and the fight against Jew-hatred 2

Eyewitness to Iran protests: “They lie, trample our rights” 5

—On the picket line, p. 7—

For second time in 2 months CP oil train derails and burns

Airline catering workers stage nationwide protests



# A debate: Marxism and the fight against Jew-hatred

A debate has unfolded in the *Jewish Press*, the largest Jewish weekly in the U.S., over the origins of Jew-hatred and how to fight it. The Dec. 27 issue reprinted a Dec. 17 statement by Seth Galinsky for the Socialist Workers Party. Two weeks later it printed a letter to the editor attacking the party's views, as well as the book promoted by Galinsky, *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation*, by Belgian revolutionary Abram Leon.

The SWP statement points out that “the scapegoating of Jews for economic and social problems and the violence it breeds is a deadly threat to all Jews, religious and secular, in all walks of life and of all viewpoints.”

The statement was issued in response to the murder of three people at a kosher market in Jersey City, New Jersey, Dec. 10 in an anti-Semitic attack. It called on “working people, their unions and other working-class organizations to join us in speaking out against Jew-hatred and all acts of anti-Semitic violence.” (See Dec. 30 issue of the *Militant*.)

The statement noted that “Jew-hatred plays a unique role under capitalism. When the capitalist rulers’ hold on power is threatened by a rising working-class movement, the bourgeoisie will fund and build up rightist forces and try to convince small-business people facing disaster, demoralized workers and others that their problems are caused by rapacious Jewish capitalists. Their goal is to provide a scapegoat to divert us from seeing the real enemy — the capitalist system itself.”

The SWP statement also took on the anti-Semitism that is rampant in the left,

including under the banner of “Boycott, Divest, and Sanctions against Israel.”

And it encouraged all those who oppose Jew-hatred to read *The Jewish Question*, where Leon wrote that “there is no solution to the Jewish question under capitalism, just as there is no solution to the other problems posed before humanity — without profound social upheavals.”

The editor of the *Jewish Press* wrote that “since socialist literature — especially in light of 20th century history — is often tragically comic to read (and since socialists have on occasion actually helped people), we thought it worthwhile to share Galinsky’s statement.”

One reader of the *Jewish Press*, Stephen Norwood, a professor at the University of Oklahoma, wrote to attack the SWP statement. His letter to the editor was printed in the paper’s Jan. 29 issue.

In the interest of furthering the necessary debate on where Jew-hatred comes from and how to combat it, we reprint Norwood’s letter below and Galinsky’s response.

### ‘Pernicious anti-Semitic tract’

Last month, the *Jewish Press* published a statement by Socialist Workers Party candidate Seth Galinsky, in which he promotes Abram Leon’s *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation*.

That work is actually one of the most pernicious anti-Semitic tracts the Left has ever produced. Ignoring the Christian (and Islamic) theological roots of anti-Semitism, Leon identifies Jewish “usury” as the cause of pogroms from the Middle Ages to modern times.

As I explained in my book *Antisemi-*



**A Socialist Speaks Out On Anti-Semitism**

Editor's note: Socialists claim to stand for the equality of all men even while they have caused misery for untold millions. Many socialists also claim to champion persecuted people like Jews even while they have mocked and persecuted Judaism, regarding it as an opiate of the masses that distracts its adherents from overthrowing their exploitive overlords. Despite their many horrific crimes, though, socialists have on occasion truly stood up for the little man. In America, for example, the Communist Part USA fielded a black man as its vice presidential candidate in 1932 at a time when neither mainstream America nor political party would have dreamed of doing so. Last Thursday, The Jewish Press received a commendation from Seth Galinsky — the Socialist Workers Party's 2019 candidate for New York City public advocate — addressing the anti-Semitic shooting in Jersey City, NJ, two weeks ago. Since we try to provide interesting material — especially on anti-Semitism — we are actually not alone in sharing Galinsky's views.

**A Vile Anti-Semitic Tract**

Last month, The Jewish Press published a statement by Socialist Workers Party candidate Seth Galinsky, in which he promotes Abram Leon's *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation*. That work is actually one of the most pernicious anti-Semitic tracts the Left has ever produced. Ignoring the Christian (and Islamic) theological roots of anti-Semitism, Leon identifies Jewish "usury" as the cause of pogroms from the Middle Ages to modern times. As I explained in my book *Antisemitism and the American Far Left* (2013), Leon went beyond previous Marxist writers in declaring that medieval prohibitions against Jews' owning land or working as artisans were "a fable." He claimed that Jews were psychologically drawn to moneylending. Guilds that excluded Jews were not motivated by "religious animosity or racial hatred," according to Leon. They didn't want Jews because they considered usury and peddling dishonest. A militant anti-Zionist, Leon insisted that the Jewish population had been widely dispersed across the Middle East, North Africa, and the Mediterranean long before 70 CE, with Judea containing only its "smallest" and "least vital part." It is deeply disturbing that many contemporary far leftists and black militants have been attracted to Leon's combination of anti-Zionist invective and crude economic stereotyping of Jews. *Stephen H. Norwood*  
*Professor of History and Judaic Studies*  
*University of Oklahoma*

**Jewish Press ran Socialist Workers Party statement on fight against Jew-hatred in Dec. 27 issue, which drew an attack.**

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*Stephen H. Norwood*  
*Professor of History and Judaic Studies*  
*University of Oklahoma*

### Fight against Jew-hatred

Professor Stephen H. Norwood, in his Jan. 29 letter, tries to discredit the Socialist Workers Party’s uncompromising opposition to Jew-hatred in the statement in my name printed in the Dec. 27 *Jewish Press*. The SWP has combated anti-Semitic persecution and violence from our origins. By falsely claiming the party’s views are anti-Semitic, he sets back the fight against such heinous acts.

Norwood does so by defaming the book the SWP statement points to as an

essential account of the causes of Jew-hatred in the imperialist epoch: *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation* by Abram Leon. Leon, a fighter in underground workers committees in Belgium during the Nazi occupation, completed the book under those murderous conditions. He was arrested in 1944, sent to Auschwitz, and executed in the gas chambers at age 26.

Professor Norwood differs with Leon’s explanation that Jew-hatred is rooted in class society and, as the past century proves, has reached its peak of savagery under capitalism and imperialism. But smearing the book as a “pernicious anti-Semitic tract” is demagoguery pure and simple.

By distorting Leon’s views, Norwood disarms opponents of Jew-hatred. He aims to discourage them from reading how the rulers use anti-Semitism at times of deep social crisis to scapegoat Jews, and to divert attention from the real cause of misery and war for hundreds of millions — capitalism’s dog-eat-dog operations and values.

Worse, Norwood writes off the historic place of the working class in the battle to end Jew-hatred of all kinds. It is the class that can and will lead broad layers of the population to fight alongside Jews against anti-Semitic acts and put an end to capitalism, the source of outrages against Jews, once and for all.

Read the book and make up your own mind! It’s available to order on pathfinderpress.com.

*Seth Galinsky*  
*Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress, 10th District, New York*

## The Militant

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# THE MILITANT

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*From France and Ukraine to the U.S. and Canada, the ‘Militant’ reports on strikes, picket lines and other struggles by workers fighting for better wages and working conditions, and in defense of pensions and other hard-fought gains. Don’t miss a single issue!*



Jean-Pierre Ferraggioli  
Sailors join march against government pension cuts, Marseille, France, Jan. 29.

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# SWP: Back workers' fights

Continued from front page  
Oakland Feb. 15.

When Richter met dental assistant Mayra Mejía at her home, he pointed to the campaign button he was wearing for Kennedy and Jarrett, which includes the call “For Workers Control of Production” and “Build a Labor Party.”

Mejía said she is well aware of the struggle workers are having just to survive, but is unsure what can be done about it.

“What’s key is what we as workers can do together,” Richter said. “A tiny group of billionaires rule this country. Workers need to strengthen our unions, defend our wages and working conditions, and build a labor party that can move toward taking power away from the exploiting class.”

### Homelessness and rising rents

Mejía said there are a lot of homeless people in the nearby town of Manteca. “They have been dumped there by the government in San Francisco,” she said. “That’s really wrong don’t you think?”

“They need jobs that pay enough to have a home and support a family,” Richter said.

The Socialist Workers Party 2020 campaign platform, Richter said, calls for solidarity with workers fighting for higher wages and urges a 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.”

“Even out here away from the city rents are rising,” Mejía said, pointing out that the modest house across the street is renting for \$2,000 a month.

“The problem of homelessness among working people will not be solved without a revolution,” Richter explained. With a workers and farmers government in power, he said, “we could solve these problems quickly. We would see the homeless as part of us, the working class.”

Richter and campaign supporter Libby Kiser said that Cuba is an example of what is possible when working people carry out a revolution and take power away from the capitalist class. Kiser was part of the International May Day Brigade to Cuba last year. (See article on front page on this year’s brigade.)

“Cuba is famous for medical care

that is not bought and sold as a commodity, but is a right,” Richter said. “They sent doctors to Africa to fight Ebola. It wasn’t charity.” They considered the people in those countries as “part of the solution, treating them with respect.”

“If you go to Cuba, you will see this kind of solidarity,” added Kiser. “You see people on an everyday level helping each other.”

Richter and Kiser encouraged Mejía to consider going on the May Day brigade, where she could learn about how workers who made a revolution have changed their conditions and themselves. Mejía subscribed to the *Militant* and bought a copy of *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record: Why Washington Fears Working People* and said she wanted to learn more about the brigade. Richter and Kiser promised to keep in touch.



BY GEORGE CHALMERS

GRAND SALINE, Texas — This *Militant* worker correspondent joined



Militant/George Chalmers

Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for president, told Miguel Martínez that SWP calls for amnesty for all undocumented workers in U.S. on Feb. 18 in Grand Saline, Texas.

Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy to campaign Feb. 18 in this town of 3,000 surrounded by cattle ranches in east Texas.

“The Socialist Workers Party candidates speak for the interests of the working-class,” Kennedy told Miguel

Martínez, who has worked for 21 years for a veterinarian, treating farm animals. “We need to stand up and fight for better conditions. Through this we build up self-confidence that can lead to building a much more powerful movement. That’s what will

Continued on page 4

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

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

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

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

**WORKERS CONTROL OVER PRODUCTION** The bosses and their government lie to working people about their production costs and profits, while they insist they can’t afford to pay higher wages. Demand they open their books for inspection by workers and consumers. To prevent capitalist collusion and thievery — and their production of shoddy and dangerous goods like the Boeing 737 MAX — workers in their millions will need to fight for control of production, a step towards taking political power and a school for running the economy for ourselves in the interests of all.

**“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!*

### Vote Socialist Workers Party in 2020 Alyson Kennedy for president Malcolm Jarrett for vice president Regional candidates:

#### New York/New Jersey

Lea Sherman, US Senate, New Jersey  
Willie Cotton, 9th CD, New York  
Seth Galinsky, 10th CD, New York  
Abby Tilsner, 20th CD, Albany  
Jacob Perasso, 21st CD, Albany  
Candace Wagner, 8th CD, Union City, NJ

#### Mid-Atlantic Region

James Harris, delegate to Congress, D.C.  
Osborne Hart, 3rd CD, Philadelphia  
Ruth Robinett, 14th CD, Washington, PA  
Dave Ferguson, 18th CD, Pittsburgh

#### The South

Rachele Fruit, US Senate, Georgia

See directory on page 10 to contact party campaign office nearest you.

Anthony Dutrow, 27th CD, Miami

#### Midwest

Naomi Craine, US Senate, Illinois  
Maggie Trowe, US Senate, Kentucky  
David Rosenfeld, US Senate, Minnesota  
Samantha Hamlin, 3rd CD, Chicago  
Samir Hazboun, 3rd CD, Louisville  
Helen Meyers, 4th CD, St. Paul

#### Southwest and West Coast

Henry Dennison, Governor, Washington  
Gerardo Sánchez, US Senate, Texas  
Joel Britton, 13th CD, Oakland  
Dennis Richter, 37th CD, Los Angeles  
Deborah Liatos, 40th CD, Los Angeles

### Socialist Workers Party new campaign button

**Alyson Kennedy  
for president  
Malcolm Jarrett  
for vice president**



**\$1** Available from  
SWP campaign offices  
listed on page 10



# SWP candidate talks program with Black farmers in Georgia

BY SAM MANUEL

ALBANY, Ga. — One of the largest workshops at the Federation of Southern Cooperatives 37th annual conference here Feb. 13-14 discussed the challenges Black farmers face in keeping land they inherited from parents or grandparents who had not left wills deeding the farms to their children. Under the Jim Crow racial segregation of those times, Black farmers faced serious difficulties getting trusted attorneys to draft wills or just didn't see any compelling need for it.

Rachele Fruit, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from Georgia, attended the conference to learn more about what working farmers face and to introduce them to her campaign.

The federation was formed in a half-dozen southern states by African American farmers. It assists them in getting credit, legal help to retain ownership of their farms, technical training and other services. Many of the more than 200 conference participants — including both farmers, others who work with them or who want to become farmers — were attracted to the SWP platform, which calls for an alliance of workers and farmers in the face of today's capitalist economic crisis.

"I'm glad I found you," Ken Webb, 27, who grew up on a farm in Chocataw, Mississippi, told this worker-correspondent, who accompanied Fruit to the conference. Webb currently works on soil and water conservation projects. "My family has three farms growing soybeans, cotton and other crops.

"Many Black farmers are getting old and a lot of farms and land are being lost. We need to get more young people farming," he said.

Manuel told Webb that the party is running Alyson Kennedy and Malcolm Jarrett for U.S. president and vice president. The party's 2020 platform says that "to put a halt to farm foreclosures, bankruptcies and skyrocketing rural debt, we demand nationalization of the land." The campaigners described how this was accomplished by workers and farmers in Cuba as part of their revolution.

Webb was interested in books that the SWP campaign promotes by and about Malcolm X and the Cuban Revolution. "When your presidential candidates are in town, just let me know," he said.

Kevin Stanley, a 39-year-old Army veteran, was with a couple of friends who are also vets looking to start a farm. According to a 2017 Department of Agriculture census, 19% of Black farmers had served in the military. Stanley grows peanuts on his father's farm.

Fruit asked Stanley what he thought about Iraq. "We should never have been there," he said, "but I guess we have to finish what we started."

"The Socialist Workers Party calls for the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. troops from the Middle East, for an end to the sanctions against Iran," Fruit said. She pointed to protests today by workers and young people in Iran and Iraq against Tehran's wars in the Middle East and the effect on their lives.

"And 'we' didn't start anything," Fruit added. "There are two main and contending classes. The capitalist rul-



Militant/Sam Manuel

Rachele Fruit, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from Georgia, talks to Kevin Stanley, a U.S. Army veteran and peanut farmer. Stanley agreed with Fruit that what matters in the elections is which class interests a party represents and which class holds political power.

ers send us as cannon fodder to the Middle East to protect their markets and access to oil. It's in our class interests — and those of the toilers in that region — to get out and turn our attention to meeting the attacks of the bosses and bankers here."

"We need younger faces in office to think outside the box," Stanley said.

Fruit, a Walmart worker, noted that her opponent, Sen. David Purdue, who

is up for reelection, is from a prominent agri-business family in Georgia and is a former CEO of Dollar General stores. Working people need their own party, a labor party, Fruit said.

"The issue isn't young or Black or female faces," said Fruit. "It's a class question. What matters is whose interests you represent and which class holds power."

"You're right," Stanley agreed.

## SWP: Back workers' fights for better wages, conditions

Continued from page 3

change our conditions, not the elections."

"I have been involved in several strikes myself in Mexico when I worked at PEMEX oil company in the 1980s and '90s," Martinez said. "There are not many jobs here. Some people work in the agricultural nurseries that grow tomatoes and sweet potatoes getting just \$5 an hour."

Kennedy pointed out that the party's 2020 platform calls for a fight for a federal government-financed public works program to put millions to work at union-scale wages.

Martinez also raised the problems faced by immigrant workers who don't have U.S.-authorized documents. Many can't return to visit their home countries, even for funerals of parents and other close relatives. The SWP calls for amnesty for all 11 mil-

lion undocumented immigrants in the U.S., Kennedy said.

Martinez bought a subscription to the *Militant* and a campaign button.

Kennedy spoke with 85-year-old D. Means who told her, "I get no pension from the church," where she worked as a secretary for 43 years. "I live on Social Security."

"We've always been Democrats. But I did vote for Trump because I didn't like Hillary Clinton and couldn't bring myself to vote for her," she said. "I'll probably vote for Trump again because the Democrats are just putting each other down in the debates," referring to the sharpening battle between the party's socialist and centrist wings for its presidential nomination.

"The job of the president, Democrat or Republican, is to ensure that the wealthy keep raking in profits," Kennedy said, adding that no matter which of the bosses' parties wins the race for the White House, the crisis workers face under capitalism will continue.

That's why the SWP candidates explain that workers need their own party, a labor party, to speak out in the interests of all workers.

"Another reason I support Trump is I like what he has done in building the wall," Means said. "They're blaming Trump for kids being left, but the parents should stop bringing their kids illegally."

Kennedy explained why her campaign supports the fight for amnesty for undocumented immigrants. The U.S. capitalist class depends on immigrant labor, including those who are undocumented and live in fear of deportation, to better compete against its rivals around the world. By paying immigrants less they push down the wages of all workers and increase capitalist profits.

That's why the 2020 campaign platform says that amnesty for all undocumented immigrants is "a life-and-death question for the unions to unite workers and cut across divisions" fostered by the bosses, she said.

Kennedy will be campaigning in Kentucky next and then heads to Arizona where she will join a Feb. 24 protest rally by copper miners on strike against Asarco.

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# Eyewitness to Iran protests: ‘They lie, trample our rights’

The following interview was conducted in December 2019 with a participant in one of the protests by workers and youth that spread across Iran’s cities, working-class suburbs and rural towns in mid-November. It was received by the *Militant* in the mail early this year.

The demonstrations began in response to a Nov. 15 hike in gasoline prices announced by the government. As described below, those who took to the streets were propelled by mounting opposition to Tehran’s military actions and political interference across the Gulf region, from Iraq and Syria to Lebanon and Yemen. With their living and job conditions squeezed by tightening imperialist economic sanctions, more and more working people in Iran are fed up with the bourgeois clerical regime lavishing funds — and forfeiting the lives of young soldiers and militia fighters — to serve the expansionist aims of these privileged classes, rather than meeting economic and social needs of the population.

The November demonstrations were a continuation of Iran-wide mobilizations in December 2017 and 2018, also based among poorer working people in cities and rural areas. (See “Revolution, Counterrevolution and War in Iran: Social and Political Roots of Workers’ Protests that Swept 90 Cities and Small Towns,” by Steve Clark, from the May 21, 2018, issue, posted on the *Militant*’s home page.)

The recent actions in Iran also drew inspiration from large street protests that broke out in Iraq and Lebanon in late 2019, whose key demands included a halt to accelerating violations of Iraqi and Lebanese national sovereignty by Tehran, as well as Washington’s military moves.

Moreover, despite bombast from Iran’s counterrevolutionary rulers that regime-staged public lamentations for Gen. Qassem Soleimani in January would rally Iranian working people around the government (claims echoed by the imperialist media), thousands were back in the streets later that month to denounce Tehran’s failed cover-up of the Revolutionary Guard’s shootdown of a Ukrainian passenger plane. Memories were still too raw from the hundreds shot and killed in November — some reports say as many as 1,500 — by Iranian government security forces and paramilitary squads.

Due to political conditions in Iran, names of individuals and places below are not included.

❖

**QUESTION:** Where do you work?

**ANSWER:** I’m a bus driver. I moved here a number of years ago, after I was fired from a factory job in the province where I was born and raised. I couldn’t find work there to support my family.

**Q:** Tell us a little about the protests in November.

**A:** On the first morning of the protests I was on my bus route in a nearby town. A lot of workers live there and travel back and forth to work in factories and other jobs in the city. In one of the town squares protesters blocked my bus. They parked a car in front of me, another behind me. So I got off the bus and joined in.

The protesters told me they knew it would be too risky for me to simply stop driving the bus and join them on my own. So they made sure I’d be

stuck there. It was about 10 in the morning on Saturday [Nov. 16]. There were also other buses that had been passing by and were stopped, closing off the road.

Many people in cars had been blocked too. A lot of them were on their way to work or had other plans for the day. But most didn’t complain. They just turned off their engines and joined the demonstration.

The protesters let ambulances and others carrying out urgent business get through. An Afghan family, all women, were on their way to Qom, a holy city here in Iran, as you know. Not only did protesters let the women through but also gave them directions to the beltway to bypass the city. The protesters helped out travelers with special problems.

People on the streets also served us food and water. Everyone helped out in their own way, from their own pockets and those of their families. One person bought a big box of ice cream. Others brought biscuits, bread, cheese. It was spontaneous. Participants wanted to make sure nobody went hungry.

On one corner demonstrators kept a fire going. They baked potatoes so anyone who wanted to could get one. The weather was cold. I had a flask of tea in my bus so I offered it to someone, who then shared it with several women in the crowd.

## ‘Just regular people’

**Q:** How many and what kinds of people were there? Why did they say they were protesting?

**A:** There were people of all ages — young and old, men and women, children with their parents. I talked with workers from factories, small workshops, street vendors, gardeners, farmers — people from all walks of life.

A number of women had brought large mats to sit on. When the *yegan-e vizhe* showed up [special police units established by the government after protests in 2007], the women pulled their mats in front of the police vehicles, very neatly, and sat down to prevent the



Mostafa Shanechi/ISNA

Sari, northern Iran, Nov. 16, 2019. Sparked by hikes in gas prices, protests mark growing unrest with regime’s expansionist military aims in region, taking big toll in soldiers’ lives and social needs of workers and farmers.

road from being reopened. Although the ground was frozen and cold, the women just talked among themselves nonchalantly, not paying any attention to the *yegan-e vizhe*. It was quite a sight!

If the police tried to open another road, these ladies would move some of their mats and sit there too. They weren’t being controlled by anyone. There’d been no preparations. They were just regular people.

The turnout that day was big, even where I was, near the entrance to the town. But people told us the main street and central square were much more crowded, stretching all the way to where we were. They said women had come out wearing *kafan* [shrouds, a symbol of being ready for martyrdom].

A bus marked with *yegan-e vizhe* insignia came by and pleaded with us to let them through. They said they were carrying people who were sick. But when the passengers got off the bus, we saw they were soldiers. One woman went over and took a selfie with the soldiers, while other protesters took movies of them. The soldiers kept shifting from one part of the square to the other, attempting to reopen a road. But the women followed them and tried to keep them from attacking anyone.

At one point, as the women opened the road for an ambulance, the driver of a pickup truck suddenly gunned his engine and tried to force his way through. One of the women, some-

where between 50 and 60 years old, I’d say, stood in front of the truck to stop it. The driver hit her and went on. People followed the driver and caught up with him, since the roads were very clogged. They gave him a good lesson.

People tried to take the woman who’d been hit to hospital, but she said no. “Even if I broke a hand or foot,” she said, “I want to stay and protest.” Another woman, who lived nearby, got some medical gear and treated her. When an ambulance showed up to transport the injured woman to a hospital, she still wouldn’t let the emergency care workers take her away. So they treated her there in the square. “I’m sitting right here until we get some results,” she said.

**Q:** Was the pickup truck driver alone? Was he a civilian?

**A:** Yes, he was alone. I saw it happen. That’s all I know.

When the government announced the gasoline price increase, protests began right away, all over the country. When my bus was blocked there weren’t yet any army or *yegan-e vizhe* units. They came later, around noon. They didn’t use any violence that day, at least not where I was. They didn’t shoot at anyone, nothing like that.

People were walking alongside them, not even chanting slogans, just silently protesting.

**Q:** So why were some women in the main square wearing *kafan*?

**A:** There had been sharp clashes with the government in this region in the late 1980s. Troops shot demonstrators, and there had been casualties.

## What were people saying?

**Q:** What kind of discussions did you have?

**A:** People said it was a mistake for the government to increase gasoline prices. That affects the price of everything, they said.

The government denied this, of course. “Other prices won’t go up,” the authorities announced. “We won’t let that happen.”

But prices *did* go up, right from day one. Farmers who wanted to transport a load of fruit or vegetables, for example, had to pay more, since gasoline prices were higher. So produce became more expensive at the market, as did other things. Everyone was unhappy about this.

Even a few days later, after the government announced it would subsidize

Continued on page 6

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# Eyewitness to Iran protests

Continued from page 5

people to compensate for the price hikes, everyone thought it was a lie. “They only want to stop us from protesting,” people said.

**Q:** The women who joined the protests, including those who sat down on the mats to block the police, were most of them wearing the traditional veil, the chador?

**A:** Some did, and others wore *mantos* [a long coat with a head scarf]. All of them — both those in more traditional dress, and those wearing what the regime calls “bad hijab,” that is, not fully veiled — sat on the same mats together in front of the *yegan-e vizhe* cars.

In the areas where I was, both on Saturday and later in the week, the proportion of women to men was almost 50-50. The women shouted and chanted more, since men knew they were more likely to be targeted.

Most cars at the protests had both men and women in them. Sometimes only the driver was a man, but there were women drivers too. It’s not like before. Women drive a lot more these days.

**Q:** What were some of your other discussions?

**A:** One person said protests like these don’t get anywhere in Iran, since they don’t have a leader. I replied that many revolutions initially don’t have a leadership. Leaders emerge in the course of the struggle. Meanwhile, if there’s no leader right now, people themselves gather and decide what to do tomorrow, the next day and so on. They take action.

I also mentioned some books to read about lessons learned during revolutions elsewhere. We can bring these experiences to bear in our own country, I said. We need to know which political lessons fit the conditions of this country, of course. Then we can use them to get some results.

I pointed out that certain provocative actions by individuals and small groups in protests over the past year or so are not in the interests of working people. Maybe agents of the government itself encourage some of these acts, in order to create chaos as a pretext for repression. But I didn’t see anything like that where my bus was stopped. Not a single stone was thrown at the *yegan-e vizhe*. No taunts, no insults. And I was there until midafternoon.

**Q:** Did anyone say anything about government policies in the region, in Iraq or in Syria, for example?

**A:** Yes. Some people complained that the government is taking money from us and spending it in Syria. And then hired guns are brought in by the government from Syria, or from Lebanon or Iraq, and used to attack actions by workers and students here.

In fact, most people said something along these lines. We have our own problems here in Iran, people would say. Unemployment and inflation. They cut our wages and benefits. The government’s policies in the region aren’t popular.

## City and small towns

**Q:** You said your bus was stopped in a smaller town near the city where you live. Tell us a little more about the people who live and work there.

**A:** Well, my home is in an industrial city with a large working class. There are construction workers, as well as factory workers who’ve come there from all over Iran looking for jobs. And many others.

The town where my bus was blocked, on the other hand, is semi-industrial as well as agricultural. There are many farmworkers, and other working people too — quite poor, semi-employed, or who haven’t been able to find jobs. In a few neighboring towns there are steel mills or other factories, but many people in the belt surrounding the city are agricultural workers who also find industrial jobs when they can.

**Q:** What happened as you drove home in your bus later?

**A:** I was stuck for about an hour on the highway, which had been blocked by demonstrators. They had erected metal fencing to close the road and also set up speed bumps — to prevent *yegan-e vizhe* from racing through, I think. People had set up some checkpoints, but they just looked quickly at passing vehicles, lifted the barriers, and waved you on. They didn’t damage any cars.

When I got back into the city there were obvious signs of conflict between demonstrators and the *yegan-e vizhe*. I didn’t see any clashes with my own eyes, but you could tell small fires had been set along some roads. There was residue from burnt tires. Streets were still wet where troops had deployed water cannons against demonstrators. And protesters were still congregating on overpasses above the highways.

The *yegan-e vizhe* vehicles were positioned everywhere. Confrontations



Mona Hoobehfekr/ISNA

Jan. 11 candlelight vigil at Amri Kabir University in Tehran for 176 victims of Iranian government shutdown of Ukrainian passenger plane. Action protested government cover-up.

continued the next day and the days afterward in the lower part of the city, the poor and working-class neighborhoods. But in the upper part of the city, the better-off middle-class areas, life mostly went on as normal, except for the special squads on patrol.

As I walked around I saw a group of 60 to 70 people riding motorcycles. The riders were wearing civilian clothes, with helmets and shields. They’d been driving people off the streets. Maybe they were the Basij [a paramilitary auxiliary of the Iran Revolutionary Guard Corps, used along with army units and the police to break up protests and harass people opposed to government policies].

I approached one of the bikers and looked straight at him. He covered his face and turned away. I told him it was impolite to turn his back that way. “Just look where you’ve ended up,” I said. “You’re beating up fellow citizens from your city just because they protest.” He didn’t say anything, looked ashamed and disappeared into the crowd.

All types of people were out on the streets, but mostly young — from early teens through their 20s and 30s. A lot of university students. They were standing around, protesting, confronting the Basij and *yegan-e vizhe*.

I stopped at a place where water cannons had been used earlier against people who’d been sitting down in the street. I talked with some protesters still there. They told me that when the sit-down began, it had been quiet, with no problems. But later on, when the police doused them with water and the motorcycles came, protesters defended themselves.

“If they beat us, we fight back,” one of them told me. He said they had a right to do so. I pointed to a guy agitating the crowd — “An eye for an eye!” and so on. He had covered his face, so you could only see his eyes. “Wouldn’t it have been better to continue your sit-down protest?” I asked. The person I was talking with said no, “They beat

us. We had to fight back.”

I walked up the hill to a bridge where a nearby police station had been burned. Then through some other squares and streets, including one where another police station had been set on fire. In one of the poorer districts the streets were still very crowded, and clashes continued for a few days.

There were also many people in cars with their families still on the roads. Not many single men, mostly families. Most hadn’t just gotten caught up in the traffic. They had come from other parts of the city or nearby towns to be with the people. By now, of course, a lot of them were shouting so they could get through, but I didn’t hear anyone complaining about the protests or why the roads had been closed.

**Q:** What about Sunday and later in the week?

**A:** The authorities announced that government trucks and other vehicles shouldn’t go out on the streets. Under no circumstances, they said. On Sunday, which is a workday here in Iran, some government employees were told not to bring their cars to work. The parking lots were used to stage the *yegan-e vizhe* vehicles.

Many workers participated in the mobilizations. But most employees for various companies were at work during the protests. Neither the government nor private bosses ever called off work. I also didn’t hear about workers coming out together from any factories to join the actions.

**Q:** Have any of your co-workers, other bus drivers, had the same type of experiences?

**A:** There was no bus service on Saturday and Sunday. Workers had to walk to work and back home. Most trucks had gotten stopped too, both in the city and surrounding towns. Some truck drivers, when they got to work, just left their vehicles in the garage and went back home. Workers for the government electrical power and gas companies, telecommu-

Continued on page 7



Feb. 11 march in Basra, Iraq, one of many across country challenging government and pro-Tehran militia attacks on protest encampments in Baghdad and other southern cities.

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# For second time in 2 months, CP oil train derails and burns

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL — A Canadian Pacific oil train derailed, crashed and burned near the small community of Guernsey, Saskatchewan, Feb. 6, the second time this has happened there in two months.

With toxic smoke spewing into the air 80 people were forced to evacuate their homes. It took over 36 hours for firefighters to douse the flames. Luckily there were no injuries or deaths.

The derailment of the 104-car train is testimony to the fact that since 2013, when a runaway oil train exploded and killed 47 people in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, the rail bosses' drive for profits at the expense of safety continues.

The day after the derailment, Federal Transport Minister Marc Garneau ordered rail bosses to cut the speed of trains over 20 cars long that carry crude oil and propane, but for only 30 days.

The TC-117J tanker cars that burned at Guernsey were supposed to be puncture-resistant and met "all Transport Canada standards," said Canadian Pacific bosses. They were designed to replace the kind of tanker cars that exploded in the Lac-Mégantic disaster.

Over the past few years the amount

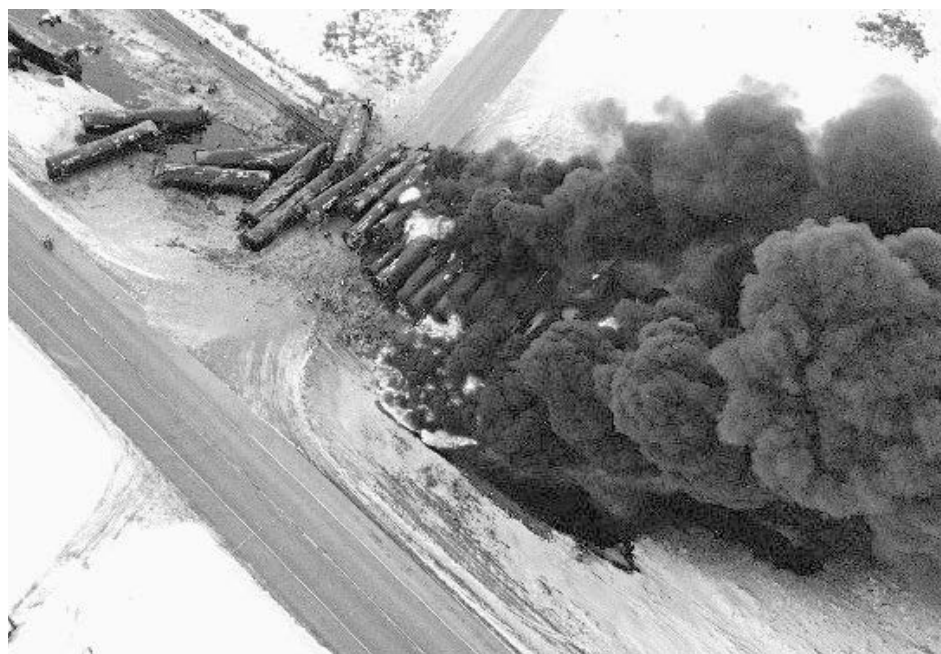
of crude oil being shipped by rail across Canada has skyrocketed — from 126,230 barrels a day in 2013 to 230,960 a day in 2018 — generating huge profits for Canadian National and Canadian Pacific.

"We are transporting bombs running on 1930 and 1940 infrastructure with neglected maintenance," Robert Bellefleur, spokesperson for the Citizens Coalition Committed to Rail Safety in Lac-Mégantic, warned in *La Presse* two years ago.

The derailment at Guernsey shows that dangers to the environment and to working people's lives are not primarily caused by which method is used to transport oil — pipelines or rail — but the fact that bosses control transportation and are indifferent to the impact of their cost cutting and speedup on workers' lives.

Their relentless drive for profits underlines the need for rail workers to organize and use union power to defend themselves. Last December 3,000 Canadian National workers carried out an eight-day "strike for safety."

Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, and



Phillippe Gaudet

Derailed Canadian Pacific oil train burns near town of Guernsey, Saskatchewan, Feb. 6.

Malcolm Jarrett, the party's candidate for vice president, urge a fight to cut train lengths to a maximum of 50 cars and a crew of four — two on the front

and two on the rear of the train — in order to make freight transportation safer for workers and those who live near the tracks.

## —ON THE PICKET LINE—

### Airline catering workers stage nationwide protest

SEATTLE — Nearly 100 airline catering workers and supporters rallied and marched at the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport Feb. 14 demanding

their bosses negotiate a new contract. The workers are part of 20,000 union members at LSG Sky Chefs and Gate Gourmet who prepare and load on airplanes the food served to passengers.

"Major airlines such as American, Delta and United made \$7.4 billion in profits last year but won't share any of this with the catering workers," Eunice How, an organizer for UNITE HERE Local 8, which organizes catering workers at the Sea-Tac airport, told the rally. "We have been in contract negotiations for over one and two years at LSG Sky Chefs and Gate Gourmet, but haven't made any satisfactory progress. Workers make \$13.75 an hour, less than the Washington state minimum wage, and most can't afford health care coverage."

She said workers were demonstrating at 16 airports around the country, including at JFK in New York, San Francisco, Detroit, Honolulu and here in Seattle.

Workers voted to authorize a strike in June, but are considered "essential" under the anti-labor Railway Labor Act that makes their striking illegal unless they get authorization from the National Mediation Board.

— Edwin Fruit

## Iran protest eyewitness: 'They lie, trample our rights'

Continued from page 6

nications — none of them were able to drive their trucks out on the streets.

My co-workers at the bus depot were all for the protests. They thought the government should roll back the hike in gasoline prices. "Why doesn't the government pay any attention to the people?" many said.

In response to the protests the authorities announced they would provide a subsidy to make up for the gasoline price increase. But in the section of the company where I work only two of the 15 workers has gotten the subsidy. I was astonished that I didn't qualify, for example.

The government says it will give the gasoline subsidy to 60 million people. But everyone says that's a lie. When I talk with people waiting in line to buy bread, for instance, most say they haven't received the subsidy either.

Some people say they did get the subsidy, and they're surprised to hear others haven't. Of the two who got the subsidy where I work, one is new; he moved here from out of town and has a contract. The other one is a janitor. But 13 have gotten nothing so far.

**Q:** The fact that not many were wounded or killed in your area seems to be an exception to what happened elsewhere. Hundreds were killed around the country; some sources say well over 1,000. The government even shut down the internet to keep the truth from getting out. What was different where you were?

**A:** Well, there *were* casualties, especially in the downtown areas of the city. I didn't observe any deaths or injuries myself, but co-workers told me about some.

**Q:** One final question. What happened here in November was very important. How have these events affected the thinking of workers and others you know? Their spirit and morale? Has it changed their view of the government?

**A:** I have co-workers of all ages, in-

cluding some who are veterans maimed during the war. [In 1980 Iran was invaded by Iraq's Saddam Hussein regime, supported by Washington, soon after the 1979 revolution that brought down the U.S.-backed Iranian monarchy.] With what's happened in recent years, I no longer hear almost any of these co-workers say they can trust this government. Or that it tells the truth.

Many of these workers are religious. One is very devout, and in the past, when I said anything negative about actions by top government and religious figures, he'd warn me to talk about these individuals respectfully. He insisted on always using their honorific titles, not just their names. Now this very same worker talks about these officials all the time without any

adjectives. He says they don't care about the people.

Such attitudes aren't just about [Hasan] Rouhani, the president. These views are about the entire leadership, no matter who they are. People don't trust them anymore, any of them.

Workers say straight out that these government leaders lie. Most didn't used to say that. Now they do. This includes my own wife, who I couldn't talk with about these questions for many years. Now she says the government lies. That they cheat the people. That they trample on the rights of the people, and don't care about anything but their own pockets.

Before it was impossible to carry on a discussion like that with many workers I knew. That's changing.

## — 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO —



March 6, 1995

PEORIA, Illinois — Members of United Auto Workers on strike against Caterpillar in central Illinois continue to voice their resolve to keep up the fight until they can go back with a contract and their union intact. While 20 to 30 percent of union members have crossed the picket line, the vast majority did so in the first month of the strike last June. Since then all of the company's attempts to get large numbers of strikers to cross have failed.

"We'll stay out as long as it takes," said Charlie Holt, a Decatur striker.

"Cat is using union-busting tactics," said Rick Vespa, a striker at the Mossville plant. "The two-tier is really a union-busting tactic, because it tries to divide the workforce between young and old, economically, physically and psychologically. It's like psychological warfare."



March 6, 1970

NEW YORK — Women's liberation groups throughout the entire East Coast are helping to build the first mass demonstration on abortion in the history of the United States, to be held here March 28.

Around 45 women's liberation groups in New York are helping organize the action. These include college and high school groups, as well as citywide organizations like Red Stockings and the New York chapter of the National Organization for Women.

The demonstration is also sponsored by Women's Abortion Project, the 350 plaintiffs in a suit to have the New York State abortion law declared unconstitutional. One of the purposes is to show through mass action the extent of the support for this suit.

There are signs that the action is catching on outside New York City.



March 3, 1945

Vigilante violence, overtly encouraged by the capitalist press and slyly winked at by the local authorities, raised its head in California last week to endanger the lives of Japanese-Americans returning to the West Coast from inland concentration camps into which they were thrust shortly after America's entry into the [second world] war.

For three years thousands of people against whom no crime has ever been alleged have been forcibly deprived of their civil rights, kept prisoners in stockades. The farms and homes of many of them went under the auctioneer's hammer. Those who managed to hold on to their farms and homes and are presently returning are now becoming victims of a campaign of intimidation and violence organized by the self-same reactionary business interests and their vigilante hirelings.



# ‘Cuban Revolution taught us to go where we’re needed in the world’

## Book on Cuba’s volunteer medical mission against Ebola in W. Africa launched at Havana International Book Fair

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

HAVANA — The successful effort by Cuban medical volunteers to end the Ebola epidemic in West Africa “was not the work of doctors who were on their own. Behind them was an entire country and a revolution that made this possible,” said Enrique Ubieta.

Ubieta was addressing an audience of 100 at a Feb. 10 presentation of his book *Red Zone: Cuba and the Battle Against Ebola in West Africa*, published by Pathfinder Press in both English and Spanish. The event, part of the Havana International Book Fair, was hosted by the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP).

Based on firsthand reporting, the book tells the story of the internationalist volunteers who helped fight the deadly 2014-15 Ebola outbreak in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. It’s told largely through accounts by the Cuban participants themselves.

The “red zone” was the special section of the clinics and hospitals where the sickest patients were isolated and cared for.

The panel presenting *Red Zone* featured Dr. Carlos Castro Baras, who headed the Cuban medical brigade in Guinea. He was joined by Gerardo Hernández, vice rector of Cuba’s Higher Institute for International Relations and known worldwide as one of the “Cuban Five” revolutionaries who spent up to 16 years in U.S. prisons for their actions defending the Cuban Revolution.

Another featured speaker was Victor Dreke, president of the Cuba-Africa Friendship Committee, whose life as a revolutionary fighter in Cuba and Africa goes back more than 50 years. Also speaking on the panel was Martín Koppel, Pathfinder editor of the book.

The presence in the audience of numerous other veterans of Cuba’s proletarian internationalist missions added to the spirit of pride that permeated the meeting. Among them were other doctors and nurses who served in the Ebola campaign in West Africa, as well as leaders and other members of the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution. One was Col. Leonardo Tamayo, known by his nom de guerre “Urbano,” who was part of the revolutionary column that fought in Bolivia in



Above, Feb. 10 book launch, from left, moderator Róger Calero, Pathfinder Press; Gerardo Hernández, vice rector, Higher Institute for International Relations; Enrique Ubieta, *Red Zone* author; Dr. Carlos Castro Baras, headed Cuban medical brigade in Guinea; Víctor Dreke, Cuba-Africa Friendship Committee president; Martín Koppel, Pathfinder Press. Right, Lt. Col. (R) José Gárciga, who served as internationalist combatant in Angola, speaks in discussion period.

1966-67 under Ernesto Che Guevara. Also present was retired Brig. Gen. Gustavo Chui, who fought in Cuba’s revolutionary war as well as in an internationalist combat mission in Angola.

### Product of a socialist revolution

Sandra Ramírez, ICAP’s director for North America, welcomed everyone to the event, which was held at the organization’s Friendship House. Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press and a leader of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party, thanked ICAP for sponsoring and publicizing the book presentation.

“For us, defense of Cuba’s socialist revolution is not only an obligation born of solidarity,” Waters told the audience. “It’s a necessity, inseparable from preparing working people in the United States to emulate the example you have given the world.”

*Red Zone* “gives a vivid picture of how Cuba’s health care system and working-class internationalism are the product of a deep-going social revolution that transformed millions of men and women,” said Koppel. “It can’t be grafted onto the U.S. or other capitalist countries.”

He noted the opportunities to use this book in the U.S. and elsewhere to tell the truth about the Cuban Revolution and refute Washington’s campaign of slanders against Cuba’s medical cooperation abroad — “the bald-faced lie that the Cuban volunteers are victims of exploitation and even ‘human trafficking.’”

That campaign, Koppel said, “is part of the decadeslong economic and political war by the U.S. rulers and their two-faced political party, one Democratic and one Republican, to isolate and strangle the Cuban people.”

### Important tool to counter slanders

Pathfinder editor Róger Calero, who chaired the program, introduced Gerardo Hernández, noting that he was one of the first to urge Pathfinder to publish *Red Zone*, in both English and Spanish, to reach a broader audience outside Cuba. Ubieta’s account of the Ebola mission was first published by Casa Editora Abril, the publishing house of Cuba’s Union of Young Communists.

Hernández saluted the volunteers who waged the fight against the killer disease. “This book is about heroes,” he said. “Not heroes created in a laboratory, but those who were ready to give their lives on behalf of others — who were educated by the revolution.

“It’s not accidental that today these doctors are a target of imperialism’s campaign against Cuba,” he said. “This book is an important tool to counteract that campaign.”

Hernández himself was one of the 425,000 Cuban volunteers who, from 1975 to 1991, served in Angola to defend it from invasions by the South African apartheid regime.

He also spoke of how he had used books published by Pathfinder while the five revolutionaries were locked up on frame-up charges in U.S. federal prisons. “During much of the 16 years we were in prison, the *compañeros* of Pathfinder and the Socialist Workers Party sent us books, as well as the *Militant*,” he said.

Hernández told the audience, “When I saw all the books displayed on the table at this meeting, I recognized how many of them had been in my cell. The same was true of my four brothers.”

After all five had won their release and returned to Cuba by December 2014, Hernández said, “most of those books remained in the prisons, educating others.” He passed on all his contacts to Pathfinder, “and to this day they keep sending them the *Militant* and books, which are circulated from hand to hand in the U.S. prisons.”

One of those interviewed by Ubieta for *Red Zone* was Víctor Dreke,

whose revolutionary record in Africa began in 1965 when he served as second in command under Ernesto Che Guevara of Cuban combatants supporting liberation fighters in the Congo.

When talking about the medical personnel who went to fight Ebola in West Africa, he said, “We should recall that in 1966-67 there were also Cuban doctors in that region, both combating diseases and fighting arms in hand.”

Dreke also headed Cuba’s military mission in Guinea-Bissau, supporting the national liberation movement led by Amílcar Cabral in the war for independence against Portugal. In addition, the Cubans gave military assistance to neighboring Guinea, whose government, led by Ahmed Sékou Touré, faced Portuguese attacks for its support to Guinea-Bissau’s independence fighters.

Washington’s “attacks on the Cuban doctors today are outrageous,” said Dreke. “They’re threatening the lives of African children when they try to expel doctors from places where often there are no other doctors. We can’t keep quiet about this. We won’t use swear words — but we have to say they’re shameless scoundrels!”

### ‘We’re ready to do this again’

“I don’t consider that we’re heroes,” said Dr. Castro Baras. “We’re health workers. The revolution has taught us we have to go wherever we’re needed, whether in Cuba or abroad.” And “if some day we have to return to fight Eb-



ola or whatever, we’ll be there.”

The Cuban doctors and nurses fought to save the life of every single patient in their care. And Castro Baras, as head of the Cuban brigade in Guinea, was responsible for the lives and well-being of the 38 medical volunteers under his direction. “This experience made me a better person,” he said. “You learn not just to think about yourself.” You learn how to work together with others under life-and-death conditions. “We held high the name of Cuba in the world.”

A book by Castro Baras, *Vivir siempre el día 21: cara a cara contra el ébola*, was launched at the book fair the following day. The title, “Always living through Day 21: Face to face with Ebola,” refers to the 21-day incubation period for the disease and how the medical personnel faced the constant uncertainty of whether they had been infected throughout the months they served in West Africa.

Ubieta took up Castro Baras’ remark that he had returned from the Ebola mission a better person. “People ask me, ‘What does Cuba gain from its acts of internationalist collaboration?’ I always answer, ‘The Cubans who go become better people.’ What bigger gain is there?” It’s made possible by a socialist revolution, by “people forged by different social relations.”

Despite concern for the lives of the volunteers, the West Africa mission was extremely popular and a source of pride among Cubans. “It shows that the seeds

of solidarity are alive in Cuban society today,” Ubieta emphasized.

The author thanked Catriona Goss, who was at the meeting, for her careful work translating *Red Zone* to English. He noted that a French-language edition, translated and printed by friends of the Cuban Revolution in France, has also just been published under the imprint of Abril.

### Long record of internationalism

Following the presentations a number of audience members took the floor. José Gárciga, a retired lieutenant colonel of Cuba’s Revolutionary Armed Forces who fought in Angola, described how Cuban military doctors there cared for civilians as well as Angolan, Cuban and even enemy combatants. “It’s an example of our internationalism,” he said.

Dr. Iván Mora, director of Havana’s psychiatric hospital, who previously took part in medical missions in Nicaragua and Venezuela, noted that the internationalist record of the Cuban Revolu-



Enrique Ubieta  
Cuban medical volunteers with Ebola patients who recovered in Coyah, Guinea, in 2015.

tion goes back to May 1960 when the new revolutionary government sent a volunteer medical brigade to Chile following an earthquake there.

With the battle against Ebola, “the whole world learned about what Cuban doctors are doing,” and that’s why they’ve become a special target of Washington, he said.

Dr. Jorge Delgado, who headed Cuba’s medical brigade in Sierra Leone, the largest of its three anti-Ebola contingents in West Africa, also spoke. In response to the Ebola outbreak, he asked, “What did the U.S. give? Money. What did France give? Money — to its former colony in Guinea. What did the British give their former colony in Sierra Leone? Money.” In contrast, he said, Cuba sent what was most needed — more than 250 medical personnel.

“The doctors are Cuba’s best ambassadors,” said Rob Miller, director of the Cuba Solidarity Campaign in the United Kingdom. “This book is very important” in telling the truth about Cuba’s example,” he said, thanking Pathfinder for publishing it.

“We can never forget the army in

white coats that Fidel sent to our continent,” said Evrard Carlin, a fourth-year medical student from the Republic of the Congo, also known as Congo-Brazzaville. Carlin was one of 10 African medical students — from Chad and the Congo — who took part in the meeting. Over the decades Cuba’s revolutionary government has provided free medical training to tens of thousands of youth from countries in Africa, Latin America and elsewhere.

After the program, participants bought dozens of copies of *Red Zone*, or *Zona Roja*, as the Spanish version is called. They also picked up other titles published by Pathfinder on the Cuban Revolution and subjects ranging from working-class politics in the U.S. to speeches by Thomas Sankara, leader of the 1983-87 revolution in the West African country of Burkina Faso — in Spanish, English and French.

Prensa Latina and other Cuban news agencies reported on the presentation of *Red Zone*, and ICAP posted an article on its website. Cuban TV featured it in a 10-minute news segment the following day.

## Sign up to go on 2020 May Day Brigade to Cuba

### Continued from front page

joining over a million Cubans in the annual May Day mobilization in support of their living revolution and to celebrate the 61st anniversary of its triumph. It’s a powerful way to tell U.S. imperialism, “Hands off!”

The brigade takes place as the U.S. rulers have stepped up their economic war against the Cuban Revolution, seeking to isolate and punish the Cuban people. The brigade also provides a unique opportunity for supporters of the revolution in the U.S. and elsewhere to meet and talk with Cuban workers, farmers and youth, to become better armed to return home armed with the facts to counter Washington’s lies.

“When I heard about the May Day international brigade, I started to think that maybe I should go,” construction tool delivery driver Amelie Lanteigne told the *Militant* while attending a reception in Montreal to celebrate the Cuban Revolution Jan. 25. “When we come back from Cuba, we can make a difference in getting out the truth about the situation there.”

The reception was organized by the Communist League in Canada and endorsed by the Table de Concertation et de solidarite Quebec-Cuba, the Cuba

solidarity organization in Montreal.

Communist League leader Philippe Tessier encouraged everyone there to consider joining the brigade. Supporters of the revolution need to take its example and lessons to working people here at home who are resisting the effects of the capitalist crisis today, he said, to show how it points the way forward for workers and youth.

Tessier suggested those present get a copy of the newly published Pathfinder book *Red Zone: Cuba and the Battle Against Ebola in West Africa* by Enrique Ubieta Gómez. “Reading it will give you a better understanding of the internationalism of the revolution and the kind of men and women it has produced,” he said.

This is especially invaluable now as the U.S. government ramps up its slander against the courageous Cuban internationalist medical volunteers who have served in West Africa and elsewhere throughout the world for six decades.

The brigade also provides an opportunity to discuss with other participants the reality of the class struggle in their countries and political activities they’ve been part of.

Brigade participants will be based at the Julio Antonio Mella camp in Cai-

mito, outside Havana. They will join in volunteer labor alongside Cuban farmers in the fields and meet and discuss with leaders of Cuba’s women, youth and trade union organizations. Brigadistas will visit health care centers, factories, universities, farm cooperatives, museums and cultural venues in a number of cities to learn more about the revolution.

Some of the events are co-sponsored by the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC), Cuba’s national labor union. The May Day action will be followed the next day by participating in an international solidarity meeting in Havana.

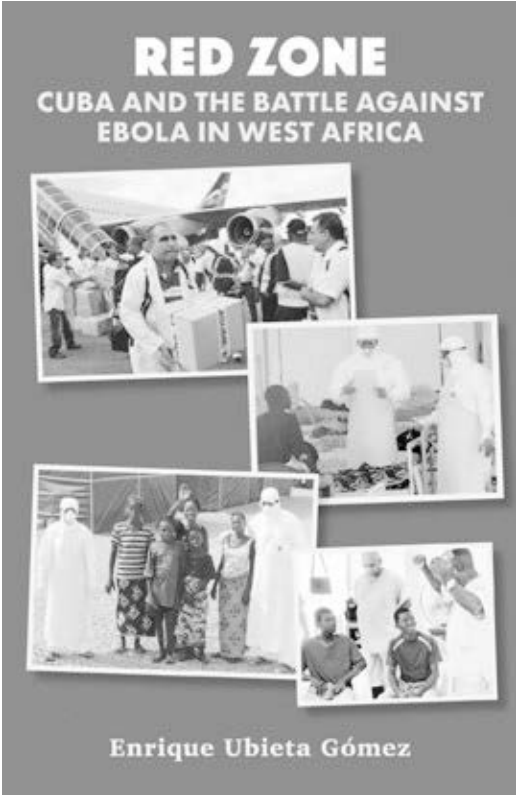
Jordan Carpenter, a fast-food worker in Stephenville, Texas, is planning to go on the brigade.

“This is a chance to hear from the people of Cuba, and to learn from them how we might emulate their achievements,” he told the *Militant*. “I for one am proud to have been given the opportunity to participate in this unique event.”

Travel arrangements are being organized in accordance with U.S. guidelines by Marazul Tours travel agency. Total cost, not including airfare to Cuba, is \$725. For the forms and more information go to [www.nnoc.info](http://www.nnoc.info) or email [iCanGoToCuba@nnoc.info](mailto:iCanGoToCuba@nnoc.info).



Participants buy Pathfinder book *Red Zone* in Spanish and English after meeting.



**Get your copy today!**  
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**“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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# Asarco strikers Feb. 24 rally

Continued from front page  
going to take it any more.”

Murphy told the *Militant* by phone Feb. 16 that the strikers are keeping up a spirited picket line and continue to get real community support. He said the local will be sending members to the Phoenix rally.

Some 1,700 workers from seven unions have been on strike since Oct. 13 at the Mission and Silver Bell mines near Tucson; the Ray Mine and Hayden smelter complexes in the “copper triangle” east of Phoenix; and Asarco’s refinery in Amarillo, Texas.

The workers are fighting against a vicious union-busting drive by the bosses, who refuse to negotiate. The company boasts it will impose steep concessions, including extending a decadelong wage freeze for most of the miners, tripling health care costs, and restricting the unions’ right to protect workers on the job.

Arizona is the heart of the copper industry in the U.S. and the owners have fought for decades to break the unions and boost their profits. Miners lost a three-year pitched battle in the 1980s with Phelps Dodge bosses at the Morenci mine, the largest in the state. The company was backed by sharpshooters and National Guard sent in by the governor.

While the strikers have shut down Asarco’s Amarillo refinery and Hayden smelter, the company continues some production at other complexes. It advertises for personnel on its website and uses supervisors, non-union contractors and some workers who have crossed the picket line.

“Right now, for the scabs, there’s a high potential for injuries,” said Murphy. “The supervisors are doing the training for the jobs. It’s not proper training. They don’t even know how to do the jobs. We know there was a bus of scabs that got dropped off at the Kearny clinic to get examined to start work at the mine.”

## Buses, car caravan to Feb. 24 action

“There will be a bus from Tucson to bring people to the strike support action in Phoenix on Feb. 24,” Eduardo Placencio, a striking worker and recording secretary of USW Local 937 in Tucson told the *Militant* by phone Feb. 14.

“Four of us are coming for the protest in Phoenix,” Leonardo Segura, on strike at the refinery in Amarillo and vice president of USW Local 5613, told the *Militant*. “We’re getting a lot of support from the AFL-CIO and the community but not much support from elected officials in the area. We always have people drop off breakfast burritos, donuts and coffee.”

Segura traveled over 700 miles with three other strikers to participate in the miners’ contingent at the Martin Luther King Day march and

rally in Tucson Jan. 20.

“We have inflation going on and we are still stuck at the same amount we were making 10 years ago,” Jason Goeke, a military veteran and single dad with three children who’s now on strike at the Mission Mine in Sahuarita, Arizona, told News 4 TV in Tucson Feb. 10.

That day Rosie Lamey brought a pie to the picket line there. “It is the right thing to do. I feel that if we see a need, we need to do it. And they need food,” she told the TV crew. It is her third week bringing food to the miners. “I have done two different casseroles and I made sandwiches and Friday I am bringing out salmon.”

Solidarity for the strike is crucial — and well deserved. The miners welcome supporters joining their picket lines, and to the dinners and movie nights they organize every week, as well as donations to their food pantry and strike fund.

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



United Steelworkers Local 937

Copper miners on strike against Asarco picket Mission Mine in Sahuarita, Arizona, Feb. 6. The workers deserve — and need — solidarity in standing up to company’s union-busting drive.

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://paypal.me/palfcommunityservice). Solidarity messages to the strike can

be sent via [palfchair@gmail.com](mailto:palfchair@gmail.com). For strikers at the Amarillo refinery, send to USW Local 5613, 4230 Texas Hwy 136, Amarillo, TX 79108.

Ellie Garcia contributed to this article.

## Chicago judge throws out Gerald Reed’s acquittal

BY JOHN HAWKINS

CHICAGO — In December 2018, Cook County Judge Thomas Gainer overturned Gerald Reed’s 1991 conviction on murder charges, ruling his “confession” had been extracted through torture. Still Reed languished in jail, because prosecutors objected to his release prior to a new trial.

In a new blow to Reed and to the Bill of Rights, Circuit Court Judge Thomas Hennelly flat out reversed Gainer’s ruling Feb. 14 and ordered Reed to serve the remainder of a life sentence. Hennelly was assigned to take over Reed’s case after Gainer retired.

The nearly 80 family members and supporters of Reed who were at the hearing, expecting to hear when a new trial would begin, were stunned by the judge’s decision.

Hennelly not only brushed aside Gainer’s quashing of Reed’s conviction, but called into question the findings of the Illinois Torture Inquiry and Relief Commission that statements by Reed that were used to con-

vict him were gotten through torture. The torturers were detectives who worked under notorious Chicago Police Cmdr. Jon Burge.

In 2012, the commission found that cops had beaten Reed so badly that they broke a metal rod in his right leg and knee, put in after an earlier fracture.

But Hennelly insinuated the torture claims were fake and characterized Reed’s decadeslong fight to clear his name as merely an attempt to “ghost ride” on similar brutality proven against Burge and his henchmen.

Chanting “Free Gerald Reed,” Reed’s supporters marched to the lobby of the Leighton Criminal Court building where they spoke to reporters.

“I never would have thought that this judge would do what he did today,” Reed’s mother, Armanda Shackelford, told the press. “This disregard for the lives of the victims of police torture has got to stop.”

“The era of Jon Burge is not over, the cover-up continues,” said Aislinn Pulley, co-executive director of the

Chicago Torture Justice Center. “If they were really about justice, Gerald Reed would be free today.”

Reed’s attorney, Elliot Zinger, challenged Hennelly’s assertion that Gainer’s decision barred only a verbal statement to detectives, not the written confession. “Where does it come from that Gerald’s right to a new trial has evaporated, and now he’s basically called a perjurer and sent back to the penitentiary?”

Special Prosecutor Robert Milan backed the judge’s decision, claiming that there is other “extensive” evidence that Reed is guilty.

Mark Clements, himself a police torture survivor who spent 28 years behind bars and is now with the Torture Justice Center, told the *Militant*, “If someone is forced to confess and that confession is used to convict them, then the entire prosecution is tainted and the defendant should receive a new trial.”

Family members and supporters of Reed plan to continue the fight for his release for as long as it takes.

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## — CALENDAR —

### ARIZONA

#### Phoenix

**Stand with Asarco Strikers in Phoenix!** Mon., Feb. 24, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. National Conference of the Society for Mining, Metallurgy and Exploration at Phoenix Convention Center. 100 N. 3rd St., near Monroe Street. Hosted by Arizona AFL-CIO, Pima Area Labor Federation, Maricopa Area Labor Federation, Teamsters Local 104, United Steelworkers Local 937.



# Toll is result of for-profit system

Continued from front page

claimed over 2,000 lives, mostly in the province of Hubei. The number of those infected has soared past 70,000. And the disease has spread to dozens of countries, including Africa's first reported case in Egypt.

There are currently 81,000 African students in China and up to 2 million Chinese living in Africa.

After a Jan. 31 World Health Organization alert, the U.S. government closed the border to anyone arriving from China, except U.S. citizens, everyone of whom will be quarantined for two weeks. Washington's allies, from the rulers of Japan to Australia, have taken similar measures. The Chinese government complained, but imposed even more draconian measures, locking down some 70 million people, and enforcing some kind of quarantine for 700 million, almost half the country's population.

While the new virus is front-page news, the fact is that every year tens of millions in the U.S. catch the common flu and tens of thousands die, mainly among the elderly and more vulnerable. The 2019-2020 flu season isn't over, but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that over 12,000 people have died so far. They say 31 million people have caught the flu and over a quarter million were hospitalized.

They also report the flu vaccine put out this year wasn't made to deal with the most common strain people have gotten.

Stores like Walgreens, CVS and Walmart post ads saying you can get the flu shot there for free. But in small print they clarify that's only true if you have insurance. If not, the cost averages \$40. Walmart is cheaper, only \$39.88. And even if you do have insurance or Medicare, many will have a copay.

Left on their own to decide whether to get the shot — at whatever cost — only half of the people plan to get one, the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases reports.

This is all an indictment of the for-profit health care system. You're left on your own, and then charged for it. Or you could pay with your life.

The highly contagious Covid-19 is up to 40 times as lethal as the flu, killing about one in 50. Already stretched thin by this year's serious flu outbreak, hospitals would be thrown into severe crisis by any new surge, with shortages of facilities, medical staff, protective gear and medicines.

## Chinese medics on the front line

The epidemic is spreading fast inside hospitals in China's quarantine zone, infecting patients who went in with other maladies as well as health workers. Over 1,700 medical work-

ers, mainly in Hubei province, have contracted the disease, with seven dying. The first was Dr. Li Wenliang, who was detained, slandered and silenced by authorities after trying to sound the alarm.

There was broad public anger and resentment at the government after Li died, and calls for freedom of speech broke the country's online censorship.

Dr. Zhang Hong, of Wuhan University's Zhongnan Hospital, wrote in the *Lancet* medical journal that supplies of protective equipment across the hospital system are severely deficient, and made worse by traffic controls in sealed-off cities. Hospitals have been forced to turn patients away, increasing the death rate.

Chinese President Xi Jinping admitted Feb. 15 that his government was responsible for "shortcomings and deficiencies," and warned that stepped-up law enforcement and "societal control" was needed. A Chinese court issued a warning the same day that anyone hiding virus-related symptoms was in danger of a lengthy jail term, even the death penalty.

Increasingly concerned about the effects of the disease on profits, the State Council is now urging the "resumption" of production. Xi instructed subordinates to avoid any "overreactions" to control the epidemic and to avoid mass layoffs.

Cranking up the factories is the order of the day, say both the Chinese government and foreign bosses attracted to China's lower wages,

# Assad regime offensive in Syria brings devastation

Continued from front page

es Feb. 12 after its troops to the east came under fire, a reminder that the U.S. rulers remains deeply embroiled in the conflicts across the Mideast, with the largest air force in the region.

Idlib today is held by different armed groups, including reactionary jihadist forces, that have fought Assad since mass mobilizations for political rights in 2011 were viciously assaulted by the regime and grew into a civil war.

Working people and others in Syria fought heroically against Assad's forces, and the regime was being driven back across the country, facing certain defeat. But Tehran mobilized militia forces and its ally Hezbollah from Lebanon to intervene on the ground, while Moscow moved in with its air power and long-range artillery in 2015, shifting the relationship of forces.

The fighting created a vacuum into which the reactionary Islamic State drawn from all over the world coalesced and created a brutal caliphate that spread over largely Sunni areas in both Syria and Iraq. Washington intervened and, alongside allied Kurdish-led forces on the ground, routed the Islamist combatants.

As Assad's coalition advanced against the rebels, many fled to Idlib, most under "deconfliction" agreements with Moscow that promised them refuge there. The population swelled to some 3 million, who now, in violation of the agreements, have come under heavy bombardment.

The rebel area is largely controlled by the reactionary jihadist group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, though their supporters are only a minority of the population.

Idlib is "the last area where these peo-



Chinatopix via AP

Nurse attends coronavirus patient in Wuhan, central China, Feb. 6. Chinese government admits responsibility for "shortcomings, deficiencies." Seven medical workers have died so far.

like General Motors, Caterpillar and iPhone producer Foxconn. But they're all hindered by many workers remaining under quarantine.

The prolonged shutdown in China has sent economic shivers among profit-thirsty bosses around the world.

## Cuba's revolutionary example

In contrast to the capitalist world, Cuba has prioritized health care for six decades since workers and farmers made a revolution there in 1959.

*Red Zone: Cuba and the Battle Against Ebola in West Africa*, is a graphic description of Cuba's internationalism, detailing the way volunteer Cuban doctors and nurses led in defeating the Ebola virus in West Africa in

2014-15. Donning protective gear, they would enter the highly infectious area of suffering patients — the "red zone" — to treat the human beings afflicted.

Cuba's system of primary health care and medical treatment, at no cost to individuals and their families, is a conquest of the revolution that Cuban people justly take pride in. The opposite of a costly commodity, it starts from saving lives; from the right to health care for everyone, not "health insurance" for those who can afford it; and from basic human solidarity at home and abroad.

To paraphrase Cuban revolutionary leader Che Guevara, to revolutionize health care, you must first make a revolution.

ple can be free," Jomana Qaddour, co-founder of the Syria Relief and Development agency, told the *Financial Times*. "The fate of Idlib is so important — not just to the people that live there but to all Syrians that went out demanding their freedom and dignity."

The conditions for those running from Moscow's bombings and Assad's murderous assaults have grown significantly worse since May 2018 when the Turkish government closed its border to refugees from Syria. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said his regime had had enough, with some 3.6 million Syrians who fled the civil war to Turkey.

Now, in the middle of a harsh winter, refugees are left fighting for places in overcrowded and unheated camps near the Turkish border, or setting up makeshift camps themselves, where many are dying from exposure to the cold. Muadh al-Ahmad told Al Jazeera that his home city of Saraqib was turned into a virtual "ghost town" in the days before Assad's recent offensive.

Hospitals, warehouses of aid, schools and camps of fleeing refugees have all been hit by Syrian airstrikes. As Assad stepped up the onslaught on Idlib, the Turkish government has deployed 6,500 more troops to the province. Erdogan threatened to retaliate against Assad's forces "anywhere" in Syria after 13 Turkish soldiers were killed in early February.

Washington says it backs the Turkish government. U.S. special envoy James Jeffrey was dispatched to Ankara where he referred to the 13 slain Turkish soldiers as "martyrs."

The U.S. rulers want to use the conflict between the Turkish and the Rus-

sian-backed Syrian governments to pull Ankara away from developing relations with Moscow. Ankara had increased its collaboration with Moscow as Washington allied with the Kurds in both Syria and Iraq to crush Islamic State. The Turkish government views the Kurds as a deadly threat. Some 30 million Kurds comprise an oppressed nationality, living in Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria.

## US get out of the Middle East!

The misery inflicted on the Syrian people by the Assad dictatorship and its backers is part of broader conflicts, wars and rivalries throughout the region, as Washington, Moscow, Tehran, Ankara and other capitalist regimes jockey to protect their political and economic interests.

"U.S. intervention in Syria and Washington's sanctions on Iran are an extension of the bosses' assaults on working people at home," Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for president, told the *Militant* Feb. 16. "My campaign demands the immediate withdrawal of U.S. forces from the Mideast and an end to the sanctions on Iran. These fall hardest on workers and farmers who continue to fight government assaults and to protest the impact of the Iranian rulers' wars."

"Our starting point is solidarity with the struggles of working people across the region, whether it is the fight for political rights in Syria in 2011 or the decadeslong struggles of the Kurdish people for their independence and sovereignty," she said. "And we back those in Iran and Iraq who are protesting today against their governments and against Tehran's military interventions in the region."

"U.S. imperialism was unable to achieve its goals in the Gulf War, confirming the sharpening interimperialist conflicts of the post-Cold War world."

— Jack Barnes

"U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War" in *New International* #11

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# Join Asarco strikers at Feb. 24 rally!

Workers forced out on strike by Asarco copper bosses in Arizona and Texas are coming together Feb. 24 to protest outside the national conference of the Society for Mining, Metallurgy and Exploration at the Convention Center in Phoenix. Some 6,000 industry people will be at the conference, sponsored by Freeport-McMoRan, one of the world's largest copper companies and operator of the nonunion Phelps Dodge mine in Morenci.

Some 1,700 copper miners have been on strike since October against Asarco bosses' efforts to bust their unions, with no negotiations or end in sight.

This important labor battle is little known outside of the Southwest. The mines are located in rural areas and the boss press keeps a near blackout on coverage of the fight.

The strikers need — and richly deserve — solidarity and support of other workers and their unions. They should be invited by unions across the country to speak about the stakes in the strike. They need financial and other donations to continue to staff the picket lines and provide for their families.

Alyson Kennedy, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, will be joining the miners at the protest and visiting their picket lines afterwards.

She'll be speaking about this important struggle and soliciting support as she tours around the country.

While many Democratic Party politicians in Arizona pledge support to the strike, they have done little to put real pressure on Asarco. The road forward is not to tie workers' interests to the Democrats — or to any capitalist political party. Only growing independent working-class action and solidarity can make a difference in this or any labor battle.

From one end of the country to the other, workers know that we face ongoing attacks from profit-driven bosses, in the mines, mills, factories, warehouses, transport companies, retail behemoths like Walmart and Amazon, and their governments in Washington and the 50 state capitals.

The strength we have is our numbers and the fact that workers produce all the wealth in this country from our labor. If we use this power on our own behalf and in solidarity with others, here and around the world, we can begin to make gains.

Join us Feb. 24 in Phoenix! If you can't make it, help get out the word about the miners' fight. The *Militant* carries firsthand coverage, help get it around. Invite the strikers to come to your city and speak.

Their fight is all of our fight.

## Democrats crisis deepens in fight over candidate

Continued from front page

nomination and still appear “progressive,” despite his record as a Republican New York City mayor who targeted African Americans with “stop and frisk” policing.

Bloomberg is reportedly considering Hillary Clinton — who called working-class Trump voters “deplorable” in 2016 — to be his running mate. Bloomberg shares her low opinion of the abilities of working people. “I could teach anyone, even people in this room, no offense intended, to be a farmer,” he told students at a University of Oxford business school meeting in 2016. But to get a job in today's hi-tech economy, “you have to have a lot more gray matter.”

Sanders and others on the party's left think the only way for the Democrats to win is to run on a platform of democratic socialism, of reforms to regulate capitalism while keeping the bosses in power.

The middle-class left is coalescing around Sanders' campaign. A group of anarchists, Stalinists and Democratic Socialists of America leaders wrote an open letter to the Green Party urging it not to run for the presidency and to back whichever Democrat ends up with the nomination — to stop Trump. The Party for Socialism and Liberation says its presidential candidates won't run in “swing states,” where they say the Green's vote in 2016 cost Hillary Clinton the presidency. They'll back Sanders there if he gets the nomination.

The schemes of Sanders and the left — like Medicare for all — are a set of ideas to ameliorate the worst effects of capitalist exploitation. But this isn't what workers need — nicer exploitation — but a course to combat the bankers, bosses and their capitalist system, to build their own party, a labor party, to fight for political power.

Sanders has defended capitalist rule at home and imperialist interests abroad. He voted for the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 and endorses the rulers' hatred towards the Cuban Revolution. He demands Cuba's workers and farmers get rid of their government and “move towards a more democratic society,” Washington's code words for overthrowing the socialist revolution.

In fact, neither Trump nor any of the Democratic

hopefuls offer anything for workers. All are billionaires themselves or firmly committed to the system of the ruling rich.

Democrats consider Trump a special breed of illegitimate and evil president. They continue to search for new ways to oust him, overturn the 2016 election and prevent him from running in November. Rep. Adam Schiff, a central leader of their failed impeachment drive, accused Trump of a new “abuse of power” Feb. 11 — following the president's tweets about a reduced sentence for his former associate Roger Stone.

Much of the legislation passed by Democrats in the House is purely aimed at embarrassing the president, not at passing laws that could provide some relief for working people. The toothless War Powers resolution passed Jan. 9 had the stated purpose of preventing Trump from using military force against Iran without congressional approval. But House Majority Leader Nancy Pelosi insisted the resolution be nonbinding, saying she doesn't want this gesture to be “diminished” by Trump being able to veto it.

### The working-class road forward

All the candidates seeking the Democrats' nomination complain that the uptick in jobs and the U.S. economy still leaves millions of people struggling, because of the president's policies. Trump, on the other hand, speaks as if his administration has directed a “great American comeback” and happy days are here again.

But workers and farmers don't need convincing about what we face — we know that only too well from our own experiences. The question is what to do about it, for a working-class road forward.

The Democrats share Trump's blindness to the capacities of working people to fight to change our conditions and an unwillingness to ever consider that those whose labor produces all wealth should run society.

They too view workers as too stupid to be trusted with making any important decisions. These have to be taken out of their hands, by having their rights cut back or being “nudged” until they vote the right way.

Only the Socialist Workers Party and its presidential ticket of Kennedy and Jarrett call for organizing workers to fight for higher wages and better working conditions today. They point to the capacities of working people to join together in their millions and to transform ourselves as we engage in the kinds of struggles necessary to take power into our own hands.

Many workers recognize there *are* more jobs today and sense we have more room to stand up to the bosses and still find another job if we need to. After years of declining real wages and worsening conditions, they are looking for how to use union power effectively and advance working-class solidarity.

## Walmart turns loose its robot delivery cars



BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

While Amazon is gearing up to begin drone deliveries directly to customers' doorsteps, Walmart has partnered with robotics company Nuro and is building self-driving vehicles to deliver groceries. They plan to run these vehicles in Houston early this year.

These retail behemoths are locked in cutthroat competition to speed up processing orders and making deliveries. They hope to deal blows one against the other as well as to maximize profits off workers' backs. And Walmart's computer-driven delivery vehicles could pose a serious safety hazard to working people as they scurry around our cities and towns.

In February, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration granted approval to Nuro to operate its robotic vehicles, and to do so without having to meet federal safety standards that apply to cars and trucks driven by humans. Nuro's vehicles won't have side and rear-view mirrors, nor windshield wipers, steering wheels or brake pedals, as well, of course, no people.

They are equipped with laser, camera and radar sensors, and will travel interspersed in regular traffic on public roads, making curbside deliveries. If something should go wrong, the bosses insist, human monitors would supposedly be ready and able to intervene remotely.

Nuro announced its autonomous vehicles — called “R2” — were also testing deliveries for Kroger in Arizona and Houston. (The *Militant* doesn't know if this “R2” is related to the “R2-D2” in the “Star Wars” movies.)

“The company said it plans to deploy fewer than 100 vehicles this year,” The Associated Press reported, “but has permission from NHTSA to eventually run as many as 2,500.”

“By replacing heavy passenger vehicles,” Nuro bosses gushed in a public statement, the company “is ushering in a new era of neighborhood-friendly and socially responsible zero-occupant vehicles.”

In March 2018, a woman in Tempe, Arizona, was struck and killed by a self-driving Uber test car traveling at 40 mph while she was walking her bike across the street.

## LETTERS

### Sinister precedent

The article about Maya Forstater's legally upheld firing for “offensive speech,” which the U.K. tribunal decreed a violation of mandated language (Feb. 17 *Militant*), accurately highlights the corrosive effects of such actions on freedom of speech and thought.

The contemporary obsession with uncovering prejudices, including “invisible white supremacy,” has gone one step further: Harvard and Washington university researchers devised a “test” in the late '90s that employers now use to determine the “unconscious biases” of their workers. It has even been suggested by the test creators that potential jurors be subject to the test.

No boss or bureaucrat should be given the right to rummage around in our thoughts, conscious or otherwise, under any circumstances. Under the guise of optimizing “fairness” and “diversity” and reducing racist and sexist attitudes, this test sets a sinister precedent indeed, one that workers should resist strenuously.

Jenny Kyng

Hobart, Australia

### 'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

The fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. Send a check or money order payable to the 'Militant' and earmarked “Prisoners' Fund” to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018. Or donate online at [www.themilitant.com](http://www.themilitant.com)

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