

Join fight to
end US rulers'
economic war
against Cuba!

BY RÓGER CALERO

"We've had 12 U.S. presidents enforcing the blockade," said José Ramón Cabañas, Cuba's ambassador to the United States. "This is a state policy," not one associated "with a particular president," as is sometimes said. "Its main purpose is to overthrow the Cuban Revolution."

Cabañas was speaking at the opening of a Nov. 14-15 webinar calling for "Normalization of U.S.-Cuba Relations." Major excerpts from the ambassador's remarks are reprinted on page 6.

Joining Cabañas at the opening session were Josefina Vidal, Cuba's ambassador to Canada, along with panelists from the United States and Canada. The four-part weekend online event was held under the auspices of the U.S. National Network on Cuba, the Canadian Network on Cuba, and the Table de Concertation de Solidarité Québec-Cuba (Quebec-Cuba Solidarity Roundtable).

Pedro Luis Pedros, Cuban ambassador to the United Nations, and Fernando González, president of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), were featured speakers at the

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Workers fight boss attacks
on jobs, wages, conditions



Militant/Naomi Craine

Some 700 workers at 11 Infinity Healthcare-owned nursing homes in Chicago area strike for more staff, safety, higher pay Nov. 23. Above, picket at Southpoint Nursing home in Chicago.

Cuban Revolution sets an
example for working people

Millions of working people in the U.S. and worldwide face an economic, social and health crisis caused by the ruling capitalist families who exploit and oppress us in their greed for profits. They

EDITORIAL

run a for-profit private health industry that denies care to working people. In contrast, the Cuban Revolution provides an inspiring example of what working

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Demand gov't public works
program to create jobs

BY TERRY EVANS

Working people are increasingly finding ways to act together to stand up to the attacks of the bosses and their government as they press to make us pay for the economic and social crisis of their capitalist system. We face both surging coronavirus infections and the scourge of widespread unemployment.

The central questions facing workers today is how to fight to reverse

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Bloody war in
Ethiopia rages
over control of
nation's riches

BY ROY LANDERSEN

A bloody war in northern Ethiopia has continued into a third week as federal forces unleash a heavy bombardment against those led by the regional government of the Tigray People's Liberation Front. Working people bear the cost of the fighting with hundreds killed and thousands forced to flee the Tigray region to neighboring Sudan.

Rising tensions between the government of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and leaders of the TPLF over control of the country's resources preceded the clashes. Leaders of the TPLF, which is based among the Tigray people — some 6% of the country's population — have long dominated Ethiopia's government until Abiy came to office in the wake of widespread anti-government protests in 2018. He is driving to consolidate the central government by ending the TPLF's stranglehold over the country's politics, military and largest capitalist companies.

Days of aerial bombing by government forces

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

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

A victory has been won in defense of the right of *Militant* subscriber Kevin "Rashid" Johnson to receive the paper at the Wabash Valley Correctional Facility in Indiana.

Johnson, a leader of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party, had written the *Militant* Nov. 5 reporting that prison authorities had informed him a

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Fall Campaign to sell
Militant subscriptions
and books

Sept. 26 - Nov. 24 (week eight)

| Country | Sub quota | Subs sold | Books quota | Books sold |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|------------|
| UNITED STATES | | | | |
| Albany | 70 | 75 | 70 | 75 |
| Atlanta | 70 | 78 | 70 | 76 |
| Chicago | 110 | 112 | 110 | 110 |
| Dallas | 30 | 32 | 30 | 32 |
| Lincoln | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 |
| Los Angeles | 90 | 93 | 90 | 100 |
| Louisville | 80 | 79 | 80 | 81 |
| Miami | 25 | 31 | 25 | 35 |
| New Jersey | 70 | 74 | 70 | 74 |
| New York | 85 | 91 | 85 | 90 |
| Oakland * | 85 | 83 | 95 | 98 |
| Philadelphia | 25 | 27 | 25 | 26 |
| Pittsburgh | 40 | 43 | 40 | 40 |
| Seattle | 85 | 86 | 85 | 88 |
| Twin Cities * | 30 | 33 | 25 | 28 |
| Washington * | 60 | 62 | 60 | 62 |
| Total U.S. | 967 | 1,011 | 972 | 1,027 |
| Prisoners | 25 | 43 | | |
| UNITED KINGDOM | | | | |
| London | 40 | 41 | 40 | 42 |
| Manchester | 35 | 40 | 35 | 38 |
| Total U.K. | 75 | 81 | 75 | 80 |
| Canada | 85 | 91 | 85 | 98 |
| New Zealand | 25 | 28 | 25 | 25 |
| Australia | 25 | 28 | 25 | 25 |

| | | | | |
|--------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Total | 1,202 | 1,282 | 1,182 | 1,255 |
| SHOULD BE | 1,200 | 1,200 | 1,200 | 1,200 |
| *Raised goal | | | | |

Drive to expand readership of the
'Militant,' books goes over the top



Militant/Janice Lynn

"Workers control of production. I love that!" David Wilkerson, right, told SWP U.S. Senate candidate Rachele Fruit Nov. 21 in Dallas, Georgia, after reading party's action program. He subscribed to *Militant*, got two books.

BY MAGGIE TROWE

"Workers control of production — I love that," David Wilkerson told Rachele Fruit, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from

Georgia in the Jan. 5 run-off, after he started reading the party's action program Nov. 21 on his doorstep in Dallas, Georgia.

Wilkerson, 25, who started working for Uber Eats when his acting jobs dried up at the start of the pandemic, subscribed to the *Militant*, bought two books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries, and contributed \$8 to the SWP Party-Building Fund.

Party members are completing an eight-week international drive to sell 1,200 *Militant* subscriptions, the same number of books and to raise \$120,000 for the SWP's annual Party-Building Fund. As the *Militant* goes to press, we are at 1,282 subscriptions, 1,255 books.

Every branch of the SWP and the

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Inside

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US gov't extends accelerated pace of federal executions

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The U.S. government executed Orlando Hall Nov. 19, the eighth federal inmate to be put to death over the past four months. The Justice Department resumed use of this barbaric punishment after a 17-year break, as increasing numbers of workers oppose its use. Two additional executions have been scheduled over the next two months.

Hall, 49, who is Black, was convicted of kidnapping, raping and murdering 16-year-old Lisa Rene in Arkansas in 1994. At the time he was involved in a marijuana trafficking operation there.

A district judge issued a stay temporarily blocking Hall's execution Nov. 19, but the U.S. Supreme Court stepped in and overturned it. Hall's attorneys urged the justices to rule the government

shouldn't rush to execute a federal prisoner in the middle of a pandemic that makes it difficult for him to work with his legal team and apply for clemency.

All federal executions take place by lethal injection of the drug pentobarbital at the prison in Terre Haute, Indiana. The drug attacks the brain and central nervous system and is also used to euthanize animals.

"Take care of yourself," said Hall in his last words. "Tell my kids I love them." None of the others involved in the smuggling operation were executed. Three of them, including Hall's brother, cooperated with prosecutors. Another, Bruce Webster, had a death sentence revoked, on grounds of his being intellectually disabled.

The U.S. capitalist rulers use capital punishment to intimidate working people by showing them the brutal tools they have — and will use — against workers who mount resistance to boss and government assaults.

In fact, despite an international outcry, exactly 105 years ago on Nov. 19, 1915, the state of Utah executed Joe



The Tribune-Star via AP/Joseph C. Garza

Protest at Terre Haute prison, Indiana, Nov. 19, against execution of Orlando Hall, eighth federal inmate executed in past four months. Left, Sylvester Edwards, president local NAACP.

Hill by firing squad. Hill was a well-known labor organizer, songwriter and member of the Industrial Workers of the World the authorities framed up on baseless murder charges.

The Justice Department is moving ahead with plans to execute Brandon Bernard Dec. 10. He was convicted of involvement in the murder of two youth ministers in Texas in 1999 when he was just 18 years old.

The execution of Lisa Montgomery, who would be the first woman put to death by the federal government in nearly 70 years, has been pushed back to at least Dec. 31. A U.S. district judge ruled that since Montgomery's longtime lawyers had become infected with coronavirus after visiting her in prison, they should be granted time to recover to prepare her clemency application.

50 Years of Covert Operations in the US Washington's Political Police and the American Working Class

Decades of spying and disruption by FBI targeting working-class organizations and other opponents of government policies. How expansion of "national security" state used to protect capitalist rule had bipartisan backing.

\$10

pathfinderpress.com

Calif. trailer park residents win fight against eviction

BY BETSEY STONE

WEST SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Residents of a trailer park here have been waging a fight to stay in their mobile homes on two fronts — against the callous actions of the California state Department of Housing and Community Development and the equally cruel actions of the company that manages the park.

"A nightmare." That's how Nicky Richards described what she went through after a man appeared at her door with a stack of legal papers, telling her she had to make repairs on her home within seven days or be evicted.

"Many had it worse than me," she told this *Militant* worker-correspondent Nov. 21. More than 50 residents of the Westwind Estates trailer park received notices telling them they were facing eviction because of alleged safety violations.

The nightmare began in March, as the pandemic was picking up steam across the country, when inspectors from the state agency began distributing notices demanding repairs at the complex of over 160 homes.

"Fortunately, I had the \$400 to fix the dent on the pole that holds up my awning," Richards said. "A lot of people don't have this kind of money

and some of their repairs were more costly."

Many elderly, low-income and disabled people in the park weren't able to make the repairs. Some were Spanish-speaking households that received notices in English, while others found the notices too vague or impossible to comply with. When residents called the Housing and Community Development number given to clear up confusions, it went straight to a voicemail box that was full.

Then in October, Leasco Management Company, which operates the property, handed out eviction notices. This was their response to the Department of Housing and Community Development's threatening to pull their license because of the "safety" violations.

The residents decided to fight
Continued on page 9

THE MILITANT

Support fight to bring down regime in Belarus

As millions have demanded the resignation of Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko, over 17,000 people have been detained, some 500 tortured, and teacher Roman Bondarenko killed. The *'Militant'* gives voice to these workers as they continue to intensify their struggle.



Belsat

Protest against government cop killing of Roman Bondarenko, in Minsk, Nov. 13.

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

'Militant' drive over the top

Continued from front page
Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom report they have met or gone over their quotas. The fund is at \$108,789 and also poised to go over, when final charts are published in next week's paper.

"We point to the example of revolutionary Cuba," Fruit told Wilkerson. "It's a society based on human solidarity, not dog-eat-dog capitalism."

She described the openings to build unions as workers fight to improve wages and working conditions.

"Going through working-class struggles," Fruit said, "working people will develop the self-confidence and class-consciousness to form our own party and do what Cuban workers and farmers did. They took political power and ended the exploitation and oppression that comes from capitalism."

"I visited Cuba with my family in 2016 for two weeks," Wilkerson said. "It was eye opening. I felt like we had been lied to about Cuba and that America has a lot to learn from Cuba."

"Workers in the U.S. can learn from Cuba," Fruit said. "The ruling class has tried to overthrow the Cuban government for 60 years. In fact, they have been tightening the economic blockade severely over the past year."

Fruit told Wilkerson about the two-week volunteer work brigades to Cuba where people from all over the world can learn about the Cuban Revolution. The brigades are organized by the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples.

"That sounds awesome," he said. "Keep me informed." The SWP is looking to help build the next brigade, sometime in 2021.

Interest in 'The Jewish Question'

Alyson Kennedy and Hilda Cuzco met waiter Eliot Ovacik when they knocked on his door in East Dallas, Texas, Nov. 20. They showed him the new edition of *The Jewish Question*, written during World War II by Abram Leon, a leader of the communist movement in Belgium. Leon's book gives a class analysis of why Jews have been targets of persecution since antiquity, and why the fight to eradicate Jew-hatred is bound up with the struggle to replace capitalist rule with workers power.

"Anti-Semitism is real," Ovacik, son of a Jewish mother and Turkish father, told the SWP members, as he bought the book. "Six million died in the Holocaust. I'm tired of seeing things on the internet that talk about 'the grand conspiracy of the Jews.'"

Socialist Workers Party members in Oakland, California, drove to West Sacramento Nov. 21, to bring solidarity to residents at the Westwind Estates Trailer Park who fought successfully to prevent their eviction (see article on page 2).

"You came all the way here from the Bay Area to talk to us about this?" Forrest Gardens, one of the leaders of the fight, asked SWP member Carole Lesnick.

"We think it's important to let working people know about this example of people fighting back and reaching out for — and receiving — solidarity," Lesnick said. Gardens subscribed to the *Militant*.

Party branches helped each other out to reinforce teams in cities where SWP members were fighting hard for their subscription and book quotas but could use a boost.

"In Miami, heavy storms for two weeks put a damper on getting out," SWP branch organizer Anthony Dutrow told the *Militant*. "But we went out every day the last week and were joined by Markie Wilson from Atlanta." That boost helped Miami meet all its quotas.

The response to the drive shows there are opportunities to broaden the number of people who know about and work



Militant/Dean Peoples
Alexandria Negrete subscribes to *Militant* in Walmart parking lot in Renton, Washington, Nov. 22 after John Naubert told her SWP fights for workers to forge our own party, a labor party.

with the party. Its action program, originally presented by party candidates during the 2020 election campaign, starts with immediate demands that workers and our unions can fight for today and advances a road forward to lead millions to fight to establish a workers and farmers government.

Members of the SWP are getting back to those who subscribed or bought books during the drive and finding out what they think about what they are reading. They are encouraging new readers to work with the party and join in bringing solidarity to union fights and other struggles in the interests of working people. They ask new readers if they have friends, relatives or coworkers

who would be interested in learning about the party.

To help in this ongoing work, contact the party branch nearest you listed in the directory on page 8.

Know someone in prison who should have a subscription to the *Militant*?

Let them know they can get a reduced rate or complimentary subscription by writing us at:
306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor,
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Donate to the prisoners fund online at: www.themilitant.com

Socialist Workers Party Action Program

THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY PRESENTS A FIGHTING WORKING-CLASS PROGRAM. WE NEED TO ORGANIZE TO FIGHT GROWING EMPLOYER ATTACKS ON OUR JOBS, WAGES AND WORKING CONDITIONS. Build solidarity with workers' struggles to organize and defend themselves. On this course, we can build and use union power on our own behalf, and for all those suffering blows by the bosses and their government. One union for all drivers — taxi, Uber, Lyft and other app-based and car service drivers!

MILLIONS NEED JOBS TODAY! Our unions need to fight for a federal government-financed public works program to put millions to work at union-scale wages building hospitals, schools, housing, mass transportation and much more that workers need. Fight for a sliding scale of hours and wages to stop layoffs and the effects of runaway prices. Cut the workweek with no cut in pay! For cost-of-living clauses in every contract that raise pay and retirement benefits to offset every rise in prices!

Demand immediate national government unemployment benefits at union scale for *all* those thrown out of work as long as they need it.

WORKERS NEED THEIR OWN PARTY, A LABOR PARTY. For our unions to lead a class break from the parties of the bosses, the Democrats and Republicans. A labor party can organize workers in our millions to fight in our own interest and in the interests of all those exploited and oppressed by capital. It can chart a course to take political power out of the hands of the capitalist rulers and establish a workers and farmers government.

WORKERS CONTROL OF PRODUCTION. Workers need to fight to wrest

control of production out of the hands of the bosses. Employers care about profits, not the dangerous conditions we're forced to work under. This is the only road to take control of and enforce safety and health on the job. Demand the bosses open their books for inspection by workers and consumers. Workers control of production is a school for learning to run the economy ourselves, in the interests of all producers, a crucial step alongside building a labor party to fight to take political power.

FARMERS — WORKERS' ALLIES ON THE LAND. Fight for immediate government relief to fully cover farmers' production costs, including living expenses for themselves and their families. No more foreclosures! Nationalize the land, guaranteeing its use by those who live on and till it, not "repo" seizures by absentee bankers, landowners, or capitalist farmers.

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.

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.

FOR RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL AND OF A CONTIGUOUS PALESTINIAN STATE. The leaders of Arab states, of Israel and Palestinian leaders need to meet and recognize both the state of Israel and an independent 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.

CUBA'S REVOLUTION — AN EXAMPLE. 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. End the US rulers' economic war against Cuba; US out of Guantánamo.

FIGHT POLICE BRUTALITY! Demand that cops who kill and brutalize people be prosecuted. Fight racist discrimination and the entire capitalist injustice system, with its frame-ups, "plea bargains," onerous bail and "three strike" prison sentences, all of which disproportionately hit workers who are Black. For the right to vote for ex-prisoners and all workers behind bars.

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

WOMEN'S RIGHT TO ABORTION. Defend women's right to unrestricted access to family planning services, including the right to safe, secure abortions.

DEFEND POLITICAL RIGHTS. Defend the right to vote, to free speech and assembly and to bear arms, under attack from Democrats and Republicans alike. Defend freedom of worship. Stop FBI and other government spying, harassment and disruption. No to reactionary "cancel culture" and efforts to shut up people by public lynching through social media.

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

| Socialist Workers Party Fund Drive | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Sept. 26-Nov. 24 (Week 8) | | |
| Area | Quota | Collected |
| Albany* | \$7,700 | \$6,878 |
| Atlanta | \$11,000 | \$9,653 |
| Chicago | \$13,000 | \$12,249 |
| Dallas | \$2,750 | \$3,006 |
| Lincoln | \$325 | \$210 |
| Los Angeles | \$12,500 | \$10,929 |
| Louisville* | \$5,400 | \$5,201 |
| Miami | \$3,750 | \$2,572 |
| New York | \$15,500 | \$12,103 |
| N. New Jersey | \$6,000 | \$5,495 |
| Oakland | \$12,750 | \$12,205 |
| Philadelphia | \$3,500 | \$3,635 |
| Pittsburgh | \$3,000 | \$2,300 |
| Seattle | \$12,500 | \$12,083 |
| Twin Cities | \$4,250 | \$4,171 |
| Wash., D.C. | \$6,000 | \$5,600 |
| Other | | \$500 |
| Total | \$119,925 | \$108,789 |
| Should Be | \$120,000 | \$120,000 |
| *raised quota | | |

New Zealand elections masked crisis facing working people

BY MIKE TUCKER
AND PATRICK BROWN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — As the Labour Party enters its second term in government here, having trounced the National Party opposition in parliamentary elections Oct. 17, working people in New Zealand face growing pressure on jobs, wages, housing and health care.

“To defend ourselves against attacks by employers and the government in this crisis, workers must act in our own name and interests,” Patrick Brown, Communist League candidate in the Panmure-Otahuhu electoral district in South Auckland, told an election meeting Oct. 10 organized by representatives of the Tongan community in Otahuhu.

“We think it’s important for workers to organize unions in every workplace,” Annalucia Vermunt, Communist League candidate in Manurewa, said when she took part in a panel of candidates interviewed online by the Manurewa Youth Council Oct. 7 that was posted on Facebook and YouTube. The unions, she said, need to build “a party that speaks and acts in the interests of working people.”

The capitalist economic crisis was exacerbated by the government’s severe anti-COVID restrictions — a lockdown that lasted from late March to mid-May, accompanied by continuing border closures that halted international tourism.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and the Labour Party won a landslide in spite of the crisis bearing down on working people, taking credit for how their lockdowns had kept the number of COVID-19 cases and deaths low — 1,970 and 25, as of Nov. 12.

The campaign of the opposition Na-

tional Party, which has alternated with Labour as governing party over the past 70 years, was undermined by an ongoing internal crisis. Judith Collins is the party’s third leader so far this year. But this landslide vote only masks the depth of the crisis workers face.

Crisis hits workers, migrants

The March-May lockdown saw public transport ridership plummet by over 95% in the capital Wellington and here in Auckland, the country’s largest city. But the crisis hit workers unevenly. In many industrial districts and retail deemed “essential,” work carried on. Agricultural production continued to meet ongoing demand in Asian markets for dairy, meat and other products.

Bosses dipped into New Zealand 13 billion dollar (\$9 billion) special government-funded wage subsidies to keep idled workers on their books. The government also created a 12-week “COVID benefit” for those who lost jobs between March and October, set at double the pittance of the regular unemployment benefit.

These wage subsidies have largely run out. Some 23,000 workers have seen COVID relief end without finding a job.

In a series of protest pickets in June, E Tu and First Union members at Temperzone in Mangere, South Auckland, protested company bosses using the wage subsidy scheme for their own ends. The bosses held off applying for the subsidy, compelling workers to take annual leave payments to get by. When the bosses eventually applied, they ignored workers’ demands to be repaid, and slashed 65 jobs.

The ever-rising cost of housing



Militant/Janet Roth

Annalucia Vermunt, left, one of Communist League’s two candidates in October parliamentary elections in New Zealand, campaigns on workers’ doorsteps in Northcote.

weighs on working people. One Auckland church-based “emergency housing provider” told Radio New Zealand that families he deals with often spend from 60% to 80% of their household income on rent. And the waiting list for government-run rentals has more than tripled in less than three years to almost 20,000.

Migrant workers have been especially hard hit. More than 7,000 workers in the South Island resort town of Queenstown applied for local welfare assistance between May and July, the big majority unemployed migrant workers laid off from tourism jobs.

Tens of thousands of such workers nationwide, who the government deemed ineligible for welfare assistance, were forced to rely on handouts from charities and local governments, or on the generosity of local residents.

Almost 10% of people living in New Zealand are on a migrant visa, in second-class status with less rights.

The pandemic also exposed the decline in the public health system over several decades. “As many as 430,000 children and adults in New Zealand [have] an unmet need for hospital care,” the Association of Salaried Medical Professionals reported before the pandemic hit.

Some staff working within the government’s Managed Isolation and Quarantine system — which uses idled tourist hotels — have contracted the virus from people quarantined there. “It’s alarming that our members working in MIQ still do not have consistent access

to N95 masks,” said New Zealand Nurses Organisation spokesperson Glenda Alexander Nov. 13.

“We need universal, government-guaranteed, cradle-to-grave health care available to all,” the Communist League election campaign platform said.

Brown, Vermunt, and their supporters took their campaign into working-class communities in Auckland and beyond, knocking on doors and talking about the need to fight for jobs, build unions and build their own working-class party. That’s the road, they said, to resist efforts by the bosses to make our class pay for the crisis of capitalism, and to unite and build a movement to overthrow this dog-eat-dog capitalist system.



Militant/Mike Tucker

Patrick Brown, Communist League candidate in Panmure-Otahuhu in South Auckland, speaks at action opposing government threats against Iran.

Bob Cantrick, over five decades building communist movement

BY STEVE PENNER
AND SUSIE BERMAN

MONTREAL — Bob Cantrick, a member and supporter of the communist movement for over five decades, died Nov. 4 in Toronto at the age of 76. He had been hospitalized for a serious respiratory condition after undergoing radiation therapy for throat cancer.

Cantrick joined the Young Socialist Alliance in Bloomington, Indiana, in 1967 and the Socialist Workers Party in Chicago in 1970.

In 1972 he volunteered in the party’s print shop in New York, producing the *Militant* and books by party leaders and other revolutionaries. Cantrick later did German translation for the Pathfinder series, *The Communist International in Lenin’s Time*, and more recently for *The Jewish Question*, *A Marxist Inter-*

pretation, by Abram Leon.

He was a member of several branches of the SWP, building the party’s trade union fractions in auto, garment, machining and steel.

In 1995 Cantrick moved to Canada with his companion, Joanne Pritchard, and was a member of the Communist League in Toronto and Montreal. He had been an organized supporter of the communist movement since the early 2000s.

A meeting to celebrate his political life is being organized Dec. 5 in Montreal. Messages to the meeting can be sent to the Communist League at cllcmontreal@fastmail.com. Any photos of Cantrick and his involvement in labor and political activities would be welcomed in helping to prepare displays on his life.

Thailand protests demand ouster of military regime



AP/Sakchai Lalit

“I saw the police dragging my friends outside violently, trying to stop us,” Thailand student protest leader Patsaravalee “Mind” Tanakitvibulpon told Asia.Nikkei in an interview in Bangkok Oct. 29. “I could not accept it and that has ignited my anger that changed my life forever.”

The regime’s brutality and resistance to change has brought tens of thousands of people into the streets since mid-July, demanding the ouster of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, new elections, a halt to the military regime’s harassment of opponents, and curbing the powers of the country’s monarch.

Prayuth, a former army general, came to power in a military coup in 2014. Despite losing elections in 2019, he stayed on as prime minister, supported by a military-backed political party and the unelected military-appointed Senate.

As parliament met Nov. 17, cops attacked protesters outside with chemical-laced water cannons and tear gas. They fired live ammunition, injuring 55 people. The next day, above, 10,000 people rallied by police headquarters. “I felt I have to come out to tell them I’m not afraid of them,” a 22-year-old protester named Thanisorn told the *Guardian*. “We are stronger than them.”

The protests are fueled by a deep economic and social crisis facing working people that’s been accelerated by government-imposed lockdowns on jobs and trade in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Nearly three-quarters of Thailand’s labor force has suffered major income losses.

— BRIAN WILLIAMS

2020 vote shows ongoing crisis of rulers' two-party system

BY SETH GALINSKY

"The U.S. rulers and their government have begun to *fear* the working class." That's because "working people are beginning to see that the bosses and their political parties have no 'solutions' that don't further load the costs — monetary and human — of the crisis of *their* system on *us*."

That's what Steve Clark wrote about the 2016 elections in his introduction to *The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record: Why Washington Fears Working People* by Socialist Worker Party National Secretary Jack Barnes.

"Never before have the presidential candidates of *both* major capitalist parties evoked such political distrust, disgust and aversion among working people, youth and broad layers of the lower middle class."

The 2020 election shows that this is more true today as working people face mounting job losses, with neither the Democratic nor Republican parties offering any protection from the impact of today's capitalist economic, social and health crisis. Whichever way they voted, millions of working people increasingly distrust the bosses and their two main parties.

The Joe Biden campaign outspent the Donald Trump campaign by some 2 to 1 — one sign that the majority of ruling-class families preferred a Trump defeat. Facebook and Twitter censored pro-Trump postings and all liberal and many not-so-liberal news outlets portrayed him as the most despicable person to ever hold the presidency and a threat to democracy.

Their real target was the workers who voted for him, who — as Hillary Clinton infamously said in 2016 — are "deplorables" and "irredeemable."

Lack of 'blue wave'

The liberals hoped their anti-Trump hyperbole would lead to Democratic Party victories across the board. But there was no Democratic Party "blue wave." They lost seats in the House and likely will fail to win the Senate. This worries editors at the *New York Times*. They have published a slew of opinion

articles to debate what went "wrong."

The left and liberal caricatures of Trump supporters as "bigoted, greedy and somewhat stupid white people" displayed "moral condescension," noted *Times* columnist Bret Stephens, himself an anti-Trump conservative.

According to the media, Stephens wrote, "Trump is the most anti-Black, anti-Hispanic and anti-woman president in modern memory. Yet the CNN exit poll found that Trump won a majority of the vote of white women against both Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden," and "improved his vote share over 2016 with both Latino and Black voters."

Stephens argues against those in the Democratic Party who say race and gender are much more important than class. He says the media underestimated the appeal of Trump's claim he would bring back jobs.

In fact, according to the *Miami Herald*, "Congressional Republicans in 2021 will have the smallest percentage of white males in modern history," as a result of the election of a number of Black, Asian, Hispanic and women candidates.

The Biden "victory" is accelerating the factional warfare in the Democratic Party between the socialist wing personified by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and more mainstream Democrats. *Times* columnist Michelle Goldberg urged both wings of the party to stop "sniping" at each other and come together.

Instead, democratic socialist Bernie Sanders, who lost to Biden in the primaries and then backed his campaign, said Nov. 20 it would be "enormously insulting" if Biden included Republicans and conservative Democrats in his cabinet but "ignored the progressive community."

Patrisse Cullors, a self-appointed leader of the Black Lives Matter Global Network, sent a letter to Biden demanding to be part of his "Transition Team's planning and policy work." So far, Biden hasn't got back to her.

The Republican Party has its own divisions, one wing led by Trump and the other by "Never Trumpers," who yearn for a return to the days before



Lexington Herald-Leader/Ryan C. Hermens

Hundreds wait to file for unemployment benefits in Frankfort, Kentucky, June 17. Only solutions both Democrats and Republicans advance to solve jobs, health crisis attack working class.

2016. Real estate mogul Trump presented himself as a champion of the working person, and called for "draining the swamp" in Washington.

While the pro-Trump *New York Sun* hailed him for forging a "Republican Workers Party," others fear this will stir workers up. The election results ratcheted up these tensions.

"The former stability of the two-party shell game will not be restored," Clark noted in his 2016 introduction.

The fact is neither the Democrats nor Republicans are capable of advancing a course in the interest of working people in the face of the massive unemployment that is a persistent feature of today's capitalist crisis.

US 'left' blinds itself to class

Virtually the entire left called for a Biden victory. Typical is *Workers World*, the newspaper of the party of the same name, which is shocked that "even among white union members, a significant number backed Trump." Why? Echoing the stance of liberals, their answer "simply put, is racism." To make that case, they ignore the fact that nearly one in five Black men and one in three Latinos voted for Trump. They see everything through the lens of gender and race, as opposed to the class divisions that underlie all oppression and exploitation.

"An honest assessment of the con-

sciousness of white workers can be demoralizing, to put it lightly," the paper said. The accusation that working people who are Caucasian are "white supremacists" can only be made by a party that holds workers and farmers in contempt and has little connection with them.

Rigged elections

In the introduction to the *Clinton's Anti-Working-Class Record*, Clark points out that the 2016 election exposed the fact that the "bourgeois electoral system in the United States is rigged ... on behalf of the propertied owners and their large rent-collecting meritocracy." The 2020 election was no different.

The liberal media and the middle-class left ran a semi-hysterical campaign to try and oust Trump by any means possible from the day he took office.

The Socialist Workers Party — on the ballot this year in six states — knows more than a little about rigged elections.

Election laws aim to preserve both capitalist parties' monopoly and make it as difficult as possible for a workers party to get its candidates on the ballot in most states.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo rammed through changes in New York State last year that made it even harder, increasing the number of signatures needed for third parties to get on the ballot from 15,000 to 45,000.

Much of the bourgeois press refuses to cover SWP campaigns.

Despite this the Socialist Workers Party presidential slate of Alyson Kennedy and Malcolm Jarrett, along with a couple dozen local candidates, ran a bold campaign, finding widespread interest in the party's action platform from working people around the country — in large cities, small towns and farming regions. They exchanged views with thousands about what working people can do together to defend ourselves, regardless of who those workers planned to vote for, or if they planned to vote at all.

Starting with the interests of the working class, SWP campaigners raised demands that workers and our unions can fight for today. This includes a government-funded public works program to put millions to work building and repairing needed infrastructure, cutting the workweek with no cut in take-home pay to prevent layoffs, and workers control of production.

Workers need to forge our own party, a labor party, based on fighting unions, to fight for political power and a workers and farmers government.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



December 11, 1995

DUBLIN, Ireland — On November 24, the Republic of Ireland held a referendum on whether to allow civil divorce. By a narrow margin divorce became legal. The votes from working-class districts in Dublin weighed heavily in the outcome. Even in rural Ireland the vote against the reform was 15 percent lower than in a similar referendum in 1986.

The result reflects changes in social attitudes in what is still a predominantly agricultural and rural society with a 93 percent Catholic population.

The position of all the main political parties was in favor of change, but most politicians did not campaign. The Supreme Court ruled it was unconstitutional to use public funds for only one side of the debate. That decision was popular, including with activists campaigning to legalize divorce.



December 11, 1970

The Nixon administration took steps this week to underline the fact that the Nov. 21 weekend bombing attack on North Vietnam represented a reescalation of the war. The disclosure constitutes a brutal declaration of intention to continue bombing North Vietnam.

Government spokesmen had flatly denied that bombings had occurred north of the 19th parallel, in a deliberate attempt to deceive the American people.

Despite severe repressions, including jailing and torture, the South Vietnamese student antiwar movement in Saigon demonstrated its opposition to Nixon's renewed escalation of the war. A statement by the Vietnam National Student Union said the U.S. bombing of North Vietnam "is a sign of reescalation ... and a reinforcement of the lackey government of South Vietnam."



December 8, 1945

The General Motors strike is the spearhead of a monumental struggle between labor and capital that will continue to rage in the whole period ahead.

The ruling class of America feels that its whole world position remains insecure and may at any moment be endangered by this labor movement, which can challenge its rule and at a moment's notice halt the wheels in its far-flung economic domain.

What the Wall Street "brains" seek to accomplish is to deal a strong blow at the unions, and force them to retreat from their present fighting positions. They aim to dishearten the working man and woman, to tame their fighting spirit.

Labor has the power to win a decisive victory in this fight. All that is necessary is that this power be employed wisely, courageously and firmly.

End economic war against Cuba

Continued from front page
closing session.

Cabañas and the other Cuban representatives focused on opposition to Washington’s six-decades-long economic war aimed at weakening and overturning the socialist revolution. “President-elect Biden and his entourage must know,” said Vidal, “that the U.S. blockade is the main obstacle to developing a sustainable relationship between Cuba and the United States,” as it has been during every U.S. administration since the 1959 revolutionary victory.

If that fundamental U.S. government policy is not ended once and for all, said Cabañas during the question-and-answer period, “we’ll have executive orders in one direction for four years. Then the next administration will have executive orders in the opposite direction for four years.”

“No other country has endured for so many years such a comprehensive set of economic sanctions by any power as Cuba has,” said Pedrosó. “Eighty percent of the Cuban people were born and have lived their entire lives under the effects of the blockade. Three generations of Cubans have suffered for freely choosing our political, economic, and social system, exercising our right to self-determination.”

Fernando González encouraged opponents of Washington’s hostile policies against Cuba to build actions around the May 2021 U.N. General Assembly session, where the Cuban government will present an annual resolution for an end to the U.S. embargo, which has been adopted overwhelmingly since 1992.

He urged participation in picket lines against Washington’s policies on the 17th of each month in front of U.S. consulates or government buildings. The date is associated with Dec. 17, 2014, when Cuban President Raúl Castro and U.S. President Barack Obama announced talks aimed at restoring diplomatic relations between Washington and Havana. That same day the last three of the Cuban Five revolutionaries, who spent up to 16 years in U.S. prisons, were released after a worldwide campaign on their behalf.

González said ICAP is preparing, as soon as conditions allow, to host brigades from the United States and other countries to visit Cuba, as in previous years. These include the May Day International Brigade, the Venceremos Brigade, and the IFCO/Pastors for Peace Friendshipment Caravan. ICAP and other Cuban mass organizations are ready to welcome young people, trade unionists, and others who want to see for themselves the truth about the Cuban Revolution, González said. He also encouraged efforts to get city and state legislative bodies and trade unions to pass resolutions opposing the U.S. embargo.

The webinar kicked off with a concert Friday evening featuring prominent Cuban artists from the island who were joined by musicians and poets from the U.S. and Canada. The weekend included a Saturday night session on Cuba’s medical system and internationalist solidarity, including the importance of Havana’s Latin American School of Medicine and brigades of volunteer Cuban doctors and nurses who have joined the fight against the COVID-19 epidemic in some 40 countries.

‘Embargo against Cuban Revolution has been US state policy for 60 years’

BY JOSÉ RAMÓN CABAÑAS

The U.S. blockade against Cuba is the largest, the most comprehensive economic war — and not only in economic terms — against any country. Its main purpose is to overthrow the Cuban Revolution.

We always quote from the Mallory memorandum. Lester Mallory was a bureaucrat in the U.S. State Department back in 1960. He wrote a memo saying, in essence, that the Cuban Revolution had broad support among the Cuban population, that there was basically no opposition, domestically, in Cuba. And that to overthrow the Cuban Revolution, the United States needed to make the Cuban people surrender by hunger, by imposing economic pressure.

That was well before the [1962] proclamation decreed by President [John F.] Kennedy imposing the embargo on Cuba. If we read that Proclamation 3447, the main argument used to impose the embargo on Cuba was about the relationship between Cuba and the People’s Republic of China as well as the former Soviet Union. But today the Soviet Union is not there anymore, and China is the largest trade partner with the United States.

This is a state policy. Sometimes people associate the blockade against Cuba with a particular president. The fact is, we’ve had 12 U.S. presidents enforcing the blockade. I just want to mention how complex the whole structure of the blockade is. Several pieces of it are related to the Trading with the Enemy Act of 1917. And to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.

I mentioned Proclamation 3447 decreed in 1962 by President Kennedy. There are also the Cuban Assets Control Regulations of the Department of the Treasury imposed in 1963. You have the Export Administration Act of 1979.

There is the so-called Cuban Democracy Act, or Torricelli Act, of 1992. The U.S. government says this is simply a bilateral issue involving the United States and Cuba. Well, if you read the Torricelli



In 1960, workers’ initiatives nationalizing U.S. and other capitalist firms were backed by Cuban revolutionary government. Havana May Day banner in 1961 declared “Workers in power.”

Much of the weekend program was aimed at drawing opponents of the U.S. government’s effort to punish the Cuban people for their revolution into capitalist electoral politics and lobbying. Some lauded the retreat of many Cuba solidarity forces into the virtual world of webinars and online “activities” as a major expansion of outreach efforts.

Others, however, focused on the need for actions — in the streets and at

public meetings, where people mobilize, meet each other, exchange experiences and debate a way forward — as the road to educating about the Cuban Revolution and winning broader layers of the population to join in opposing Washington’s decadeslong policies.

The Sunday session of the webinar closed with reports from leaders of Cuba solidarity groups in Latin America and other countries.



Cuban Ambassador José Ramón Cabañas.

bill, it’s quite clear they try to implement the blockade to apply to third countries. The Torricelli bill aims to limit trade relations with Cuba by American companies in third countries.

Then you have the so-called Helms-Burton Act, or Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996. That name is a bad joke. It is probably the most comprehensive piece of legislation in regards to the embargo.

And you have Section 211 of the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act of 1999. That section is unique. Its purpose is to not recognize Cuban brand names in the United States.

Finally, there is the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000, with new regulations for the blockade.

This blockade has been there for 60 years. Several senators and representatives in U.S. Congress have been trying to change the whole thing, or at least some part of it. So far they haven’t been successful.

That blockade remained in place during the Obama administration years. Even though we had then what is called a rapprochement — we established diplomatic ties and signed 22 Memorandums of Understanding covering different areas, from agriculture to the environment, and public health.

But the blockade — which is the core of United States state policy against

Cuba — was implemented. During the Obama administration we had sanctions, other measures. Fines imposed on foreign banks to limit financial transactions against Cuba.

It’s important to remember. Even at probably the most positive moment we’ve had in bilateral relations in the last several years, the blockade was enforced and implemented.

Now, what has happened during the last four years under Trump’s rule? We’ve had roughly 235 new actions implemented against Cuba in a variety of sectors. It’s a policy to make the Cuban people surrender by economic pressure — by limiting the supply of oil and other commodities to Cuba.

The blockade is something that impacts every single sector in Cuban life, from education to public health to agriculture, to trade.

It also limits possibilities for people in the United States. Just to mention one example, the possibility to export U.S. agricultural commodities to Cuba, which would be a natural market.

You have seen how U.S. travel to Cuba had expanded. Roughly five and a half million Americans and Cuban Americans visited Cuba between 2015 and early 2019.

There is a large community of Cuban Americans in the United States, and they have suffered the impact of these regulations. Just in the last two years, 121 decisions were implemented by the U.S. government to limit travel to Cuba, to limit family remittances.

Sixty years of blockade is too much. Sixty years of a failed policy, of a fiasco — it’s a moment to try something else.

Mutual respect and reciprocity

You probably have questions or comments in regards to the outcome of the last elections in the United States. There is a renewed hope among Americans in terms of a new kind of relationship that can be built with Cuba.

We remain open to any kind of talks — if the principles of mutual respect

Workers fight boss attacks on jobs, wages, conditions

Continued from front page
these assaults, and the effects of the way the capitalist rulers respond — with lockdowns on production, trade and all aspects of small business. Workers need to be on the job, alongside their fellow workers, to discuss and decide how best to act together and win allies.

It’s why the Socialist Workers Party says workers need to organize and fight for a government-funded public works program to create jobs to put millions back to work at union-scale wages building hospitals, schools, and housing.

As workers resist they set an example for others, showing that through struggles we wage at work, we can win victories, unite in solidarity with others and build and strengthen a union movement of millions.

Nurses and other medical workers are increasingly going on strike to demand more staffing and higher pay. They struck at St. Mary Medical Center in Langhorne, Pennsylvania, Nov. 17-18, over these issues. At Unitek Corporation in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, one of the largest hospi-

Workers fight boss attacks on jobs, wages, conditions

tal laundry and medical uniform companies in the New York metropolitan area, workers walked out Nov. 18-19 over threats to fire union members.

Some 700 nursing home workers — members of the SEIU Health Care Illinois Union — went on strike Nov. 23 at 11 Infinity elderly care facilities in the Chicago area. They are demanding reinstitution of pandemic hazard pay and improved working conditions in facilities that have some of the highest coronavirus cases in the state. Infinity bosses stopped the extra pay in July.

Workers in other industries are fighting back. In Fargo, North Dakota, 70 workers, members of Teamsters Local 120, struck the Cash-Wa food distribution center Nov. 18. They are protesting the company’s refusal to provide safe working conditions to limit the spread of the virus and are demanding bosses negotiate a new contract with the union.

As a “second wave” of coronavirus is surging, hospitals that did little to prepare for this are overflowing, and medicines and protective equipment are scarce. The only thing city and state governments are doing is reimposing shutdowns on restaurants, gyms, and other services and telling people to stay in their homes. The government reported nearly three-quarters of a million new applicants for unemployment for the week ending Nov. 14.

Despite the high death toll from virus infections in meatpacking plants earlier this year, federal guidelines advise bosses that they only have to keep workers in these factories six feet apart “if possible.” So bosses continue packing them in closely together in order to run production lines as fast as possible.

Work can be carried out safely, but only if workers and our unions wage a fight to wrest control of production from



Some 70 workers in Teamsters Local 120 struck Cash-Wa, a Fargo, North Dakota, food distribution service Nov. 18 over stalled contract talks and unsafe working conditions.

the bosses, including line speeds and all other aspects of health and safety.

The disdain of the bosses for workers’ lives was exposed by a lawsuit filed against the Tyson pork plant in Waterloo, Iowa, by the son of Isidro Fernandez, a worker there who died of COVID-19 in April. While some 1,000 workers got the disease — which the bosses tried to deny at the time — management started a “winner take all” pool for whichever supervisor guessed closest to the number who got sick.

Seizing on the fact that workers face rising competition for jobs, bosses are telling workers and their unions to “trade” wage cuts to keep their jobs. Construction bosses at L+M in New York announced a deal Nov. 19 with officials from Laborers Union Local 79 that cuts wages by 35% for union members on four new construction projects.

The SWP calls for unions to fight for a cut in the workweek with *no cut in pay* to prevent layoffs and protect workers’ incomes.

The federal government reported Nov. 18 that some of the largest and most profitable companies in the country are also those whose low wage levels force workers to apply for food stamps and other assistance to get by. Walmart, for instance, was one of the

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top four employers of workers on food stamps and Medicaid in all 50 states.

As hospitals in some parts of the country reach full capacity, the horrific consequences of the for-profit health industry for the working class becomes ever more apparent.

Nurses and doctors in rural areas in Kansas spend up to eight hours before they can find a bed to send patients to — as far away as Kansas City, Denver or Omaha. “By the time you transfer these patients out they already are very ill,” nurse Perry Desbien told the press.

With deaths mounting in El Paso, Texas, bosses at morgues in the city are protecting their bottom line by hiring prison inmates at \$2 an hour to stack corpses in refrigerated trucks.

For-profit hospitals, nursing homes

Nowhere is the capitalist rulers’ immoral indifference to the lives of working people more evident than in the conditions hundreds of thousands of elderly face today in nursing homes. Crammed into overcrowded and understaffed facilities, more than 97,000 long-term care residents have died from COVID-19, so far.

But the numbers dying in nursing homes from other causes — neglect and lack of adequate care — has also risen in recent months. Governments and the bosses barred residents from receiving any visitors, including family. This meant they didn’t get help with feeding, bathing and dressing, care that the bosses take into account in setting staffing levels. Residents were subjected to periods of prolonged isolation.

Instead of admitting that these are the real factors in many deaths of those who didn’t catch coronavirus in elderly care, death certificates have started listing the cause as “failure to thrive”!

When workers get older, and the bosses can no longer profit off their labor, the capitalist class no longer cares if they live or die.

The Socialist Workers Party says the greatest problem facing the working class is that we have no political instrument of our own that we can use to discuss, debate and, above all, to *act* on the crisis we face. We need our own political party, a labor party.

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How US combat troops turned against the Vietnam War

Out Now by Fred Halstead is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for November. Halstead, an active participant in and leader of the international movement against the U.S. war in Vietnam, visited and talked with GIs at a U.S. military base in near Saigon as the Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate in 1968. The Vietnam War was the first time U.S. imperialism went down to defeat, thanks to the determination of the peoples of Indochina, the growing opposition of U.S. troops to the war and the solidarity and anti-war protests by tens of millions around the world. The excerpt is from chapter 23, "The Crumbling of U.S. Military Morale." Copyright © 1991 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY FRED HALSTEAD

Until 1968, most American GIs in Vietnam still rationalized that the war had some good purpose. But when they returned to the U.S. after the regular one-year tour of duty, they inclined to turn against the war, in part because they could now think about it without the psychological trauma of admitting they were facing death for no good reason, and in part because by 1968 the antiwar sentiment had penetrated deeply among the American youth population.



N. J. Brown

Over 500 active-duty GIs joined San Francisco protest against Washington's war in Vietnam, Oct. 12, 1968. GI opposition to the war, disintegrating morale was a key factor in U.S. defeat.

After the spring of 1968, the rank-and-file replacements to Vietnam tended to be antiwar, or at least very doubtful before they went over, and their experience on the scene tended to reinforce this attitude. While the U.S. troop level did not exceed 550,000 in South Vietnam, because of the one-year tour of duty some 3 million American military personnel served there in the course of the Second Indochina War. From 1968 on, this constant coming and going reinforced the antiwar sentiment among Americans both in Vietnam and at home, and by 1971 it reached a critical point in Vietnam itself.

This crucial interrelationship between the antiwar movement in the U.S. and the antiwar sentiment in the army in Vietnam was expressed in a letter sent to President Nixon in early 1971 by forty young army officers, mostly infantry, en route to Vietnam. Of civilian antiwar activists it said:

Many of these "troublemakers" at home are our younger brothers, or our friends, our girl friends, our wives. We share many of their views.

Now we are asked to lead men who are unconvinced into a war in which few of us believe ourselves. This leaves us with only survival — "kill or be killed" — as a motive for our mission. If the war continues much longer, young Americans may simply refuse to co-operate. You must have us out of Vietnam by then. ...

The American operation in Viet-

nam was always top-heavy, with only about 10 percent of the men sent out on combat missions on any particular day. The great bulk of the remainder were rear-echelon troops, manning bases, handling supplies, maintaining aircraft and other machinery, and so on. To be stationed at some big base in Vietnam, like Cam Ranh Bay, was not much different from being on duty at a comparable base at home, except that boredom, frustration, drug addiction, and the atmosphere of colonialist corruption saturated the place. ...

For the ordinary combat soldier ("grunts," as they were known) it was another story. The draft supplied only a small part of the U.S. military personnel around the world. In combat infantry units in Vietnam, especially after 1968, the ratio of draftees was far higher, sometimes 90 percent, and heavily weighted toward the poor, the Black, and other oppressed nationalities. ...

It was the habit of the American command to count progress in terms of "body count," supposedly the number of NLF and NVA soldiers killed. These statistics were notoriously exaggerated, sometimes including simple falsifications on paper as commanders sought to make themselves look "good." On many operations there was little if any distinction drawn between combatants and the civilian population in "VC territory." These areas were frequently designated "free fire zones." ...

But the moral disintegration ... was

only one side of the story. I know of an artillery spotter who made his choice when a commander radioed him to place a barrage on a village where he could see many civilians, including children. After he reported this situation, the order was reiterated. He directed the strike to an empty area and reported a heavy "kill." From then on he misdirected fire as a matter of course, except when the lives of GIs were at stake. Solidarity with his buddies was still the cardinal rule, and if it hadn't been, he wouldn't have lasted very long.

It was a common occurrence for a patrol out of sight of the command to fire their weapons in the air, then report "kills" where there had been no action at all. For all these reasons, the American ground-combat force in Vietnam had become a net liability by 1971, and this reality, above all, forced Nixon to continue the withdrawals in spite of the failure of "Vietnamization."

Col. Robert D. Heinl, Jr., (Ret.), a marine corps historian, was one of the many American military experts who considered the force the U.S. had in Vietnam in 1967 to have been the best American army ever put into the field. Yet, in the June 7, 1971, *Armed Forces Journal*, he made the following astounding statements:

The morale, discipline and battle-worthiness of the U.S. Armed Forces are, with a few salient exceptions, lower and worse than at any time in this century and possibly in the history of the United States.

By every conceivable indicator, our Army that now remains in Vietnam is in a state approaching collapse, with individual units avoiding or having refused combat, murdering their officers and non-commissioned officers, drug-ridden, and dispirited where not near mutinous.

Elsewhere than Vietnam the situation is nearly as serious.

The author cited some evidence to substantiate his conclusions and then continued:

All the foregoing facts — and many more dire indicators of the worst kind of military trouble — point to widespread conditions among American Forces in Vietnam that have only been exceeded in this century by the French Army's Nivelle Mutinies of 1917 and the collapse of the Tsarist armies in 1916 and 1917.

November

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The Militant December 7, 2020

Cuban Revolution sets example for workers

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people can accomplish when we take political power into our own hands.

That example is one the U.S. rulers have fought to overturn for 60 years, fearing the more workers learn about the Cuban Revolution, the more they will be won to emulate its example.

Since the pandemic struck, Cuba's revolutionary government has acted as it has for decades, mobilizing working people to tackle whatever challenges they confront. As a result, Cuba has the highest success rate treating those stricken with COVID-19 and the lowest death rate from it in the world.

Thousands of volunteers — medical students and members of Cuba's mass organizations — have mobilized to visit millions in their homes daily to see if they need help or have gotten sick, and organize rapid and free medical care. *Everyone* gets the best treatment available.

Preventative measures have been organized at workplaces, including spreading out work stations, something unthinkable for profit-hungry bosses here.

Staffing for elderly residents in care homes has been expanded, the opposite of what happened in the U.S., where the capitalists discard the elderly as expendable, as they're no longer a source of profit.

Simultaneously, Cuba's revolutionary government has sent thousands of medical volunteers to any country that requested help to combat coronavirus.

The mobilization of Cuban working people today cannot simply be grafted onto other countries where working people have yet to replace capitalist rule. These feats were accomplished not because Cuba had a better plan. They are the result of the mighty revolution Cuba's working people made in 1959 and the way

they were themselves transformed, then and over decades of advancing and defending the revolution from U.S. imperialist assault. So when coronavirus struck, they were prepared to respond in their millions.

We are determined to organize here in the U.S. to get out the truth about Cuba's revolution and to build actions demanding that the U.S. rulers end their economic war against Cuba's people!

Working people in the U.S. have the same capacities. The long history of courageous and disciplined mass struggles by workers and farmers here is proof of that, a history the capitalist rulers try to keep hidden from us. Struggles like the fight that built powerful industrial unions in the 1930s and the Black-led working-class movement that brought down Jim Crow segregation and changed forever working people's views of each other.

Cuban revolutionary leader Che Guevara told medical students in 1960 that before he met Fidel Castro and joined the Cuban revolutionary movement, he had "wanted to help people through my personal efforts" and become "a revolutionary doctor."

But his experiences in the Cuban Revolution taught him "a fundamental thing: to be a revolutionary doctor, or to be a revolutionary, there must first be a revolution." Through the fight to make, defend and advance their socialist revolution, Guevara said, new men and women were forged.

That is the road forward. As our experiences in struggle grow, it will become increasingly clear we need to follow the Cuban people's example. We will break from the twin parties of the capitalist rulers, the Democrats and Republicans, form our own party, a labor party, and set a course to lead working people here to take political power.

Ethiopia war rages over control of nation's riches

Continued from front page

ment forces have destroyed Tigray's electrical grid and hit fuel supplies in the region. The TPLF said an airstrike hit the university in Mekelle, the Tigray capital, on Nov. 19 and that federal forces target civilians, homes and churches, claims that the government denies.

By Nov. 21, Ethiopian ground troops had captured the cities of Aksum and Adigrat. Abiy said they were advancing on Mekelle, intending to surround it and force the TPLF's surrender.

Some 36,000 refugees have poured across the border into Sudan to escape the assaults. The offensive is exacerbating crisis conditions in a region where 600,000 people were already dependent on food aid to stay alive.

TPLF forces have fired long-range rockets at an airport in Eritrea in the north and into the neighboring Ethiopian state of Amhara, where local militias have joined the federal military offensive. The governments of Eritrea and Ethiopia deny any Eritrean military involvement in the hostilities.

At stake in the conflict is control of Ethiopia's underdeveloped but rapidly expanding capitalist economy. Both sides are resisting attempts by foreign governments to meditate and establish a truce.

Legacy of class struggles in Ethiopia

Under Emperor Haile Selassie, the government in Ethiopia was one of U.S. imperialism's closest regional allies. In 1974 an uprising by peasants and workers, headed by junior military officers, toppled the Selassie regime. A deep-going social revolution unfolded, aimed at ridding the country of the semifeudal social relations that had long hampered its development.

Nearly 20 years later, in 1991, popular protests led to the ousting of the military regime of Lt. Col. Mengistu

Haile Mariam that had ruled since 1974, bringing a coalition of different ethnic-based fronts to power. The TPLF dominated this coalition, going on to extend that control over the state and the country's economy.

Abiy came into office in 2018 promising to govern for all Ethiopians and develop the country. He is the first Oromo, the country's largest ethnic group, to become prime minister.

He ended the state of emergency, freed political prisoners and lifted the ban on three opposition groups. He also normalized relations with the government of Eritrea, ending two decades of bloody war between the rulers of the two neighboring countries — a move widely welcomed by working people.

He set about dismantling the TPLF control of the military by arresting security officials. He undercut their practice of enriching themselves through control of state-owned companies, turning over sugar plants, industrial parks and railways to private ownership.

In a country of about 100 language groupings, local capitalists and landlords for decades appealed for political support along ethnic lines. Abiy moved to dissolve the ruling coalition and imposed a single party, the Prosperity Party, not based on any one ethnic group. The TPLF refused to join it.

Beijing, Washington rivalry

Abiy has encouraged competition between rival foreign investors, pitting renewed interest by capitalists from the U.S. and Western Europe against the growing influence of Chinese capital, which backed the former TPLF-led government.

Chinese capitalists have invested in large-scale infrastructure projects in Ethiopia aimed at extending their access to trade and sources of raw materials across the African continent.

They have been central to building hydroelectric infrastructure, part of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, on the Blue Nile. This project controls the supply of more than 85% of the water flowing into the lower Nile, on which tens of millions of people living downstream in Sudan and Egypt are dependent. The rulers in Sudan and Egypt oppose the project. Washington urges talks between the governments of Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan to settle the dispute.

'Militant' ban victory

Continued from front page

recent issue had been "disallowed due to safety and security of facility."

He subsequently learned that it was issue no. 44, with a banner headline, "Vote Socialist Workers Party!" In violation of its own regulations, prison authorities didn't say why the paper was impounded, what article they objected to, nor did they inform the *Militant* about the impoundment.

Militant attorney David Goldstein contacted Jon Ferguson, the Indiana Department of Correction chief legal officer, urging the ban be overturned, otherwise the paper will challenge the suppression.

"[P]ublishers such as the *Militant* have a First Amendment right to send publications to inmates, particularly to disseminate political views," he said.

"Thank you again for forwarding this to my attention," Ferguson wrote back Nov. 19, "Mr. Johnson will be receiving Vol. 84, No. 44 shortly."

Johnson is a well-known political activist. He has been repeatedly transferred as authorities try to isolate and harass him. He was first incarcerated in Virginia in 1990, then sent to Oregon, Texas, Florida, back to Virginia, and now Indiana, where he was held at Pendleton Correctional Facility before being moved to Wabash Valley in September.

At the end of last year authorities at Pendleton impounded four issues of the *Militant* from Johnson. This was reversed after Goldstein filed a protest on behalf of the paper and several people sent letters urging this violation of prisoners' right to free speech be overturned. Ferguson informed Goldstein that the impoundments at Pendleton "was determined to be in error. Staff have been retrained in the matter." But it seems "retraining" had only gone so far, with Wabash Valley attempting to do the same thing after Johnson was transferred there.

Johnson reports that prison officials at Wabash Valley have also suppressed his subscriptions to the *San Francisco Bay View* and *Socialist Viewpoint*.

"For the second time we've succeeded in reversing attempts by prison authorities in Indiana to prevent Johnson from getting the *Militant*," said John Studer, the paper's editor. "These are victories and set an important precedent to be used by others. The *Militant* will continue to fight to reverse any ban of the paper on behalf of the growing number of *Militant* subscribers behind bars.

"Prisoners have the right to read the political materials they choose," he said, "to think for themselves and form their own opinions over how to deal with today's deepening economic and social crisis."

Calif. eviction fight

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back. "When I saw one of the eviction notices, the thought of them doing this killed me," Forrest Gardens, one of the organizers of the fight, told Carole Lesnick and Joel Britton when they told him the *Militant* wanted to cover their fight.

Gardens, a resident of the complex who works for the state and is a member of Service Employees International Union Local 1000, went door to door talking with residents about getting organized. "We had already begun to fight" on other issues, he said, including ending the situation where emergency exits to the park were chained shut. The residents wanted to meet at the park's clubhouse, but when management denied their request on COVID grounds, they held meetings online, he said.

They were able to get coverage in the media, including interviews with residents who feared being made homeless in the midst of a pandemic. They reached out and won public support. Volunteers came forward to help with repairs. By Nov. 15, \$4,940 had been contributed to a GoFundMe site from 76 people.

The state agency and park management backed down. A statement from the Department of Housing made no apology, but said that as of Nov. 13 "we expect the residents will, in fact, be able to clear the remaining violations, and we expect we will not have to issue a notice of suspension of the park."

'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