

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Thousands protest repression
in Iran, debate road forward
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 87/NO. 8 FEBRUARY 27, 2023

Join our fight against Florida prison ban on the ‘Militant’!

BY SETH GALINSKY

Prison officials at Florida’s privately run Blackwater River Correctional Facility banned an issue of the *Militant* on Feb. 1.

Their reason? According to the rejection notice sent to the paper, they allege that two front-page articles in issue no. 4 — one on a victorious strike by the New York State Nurses Association and the other on the “Women, life, freedom” protests in Iran — present “a threat to the security, order, or rehabilitative objectives” of the prison.

Yes, you read it right. Florida prison officials are preventing the *Militant*’s subscribers behind bars from reading the paper because we reported on a strike by nurses and featured coverage of protests against the death penalty in Iran.

“This blatant violation of the constitutional protections of freedom of the press and the right of inmates to read the news they want cannot be allowed to stand,” said *Militant* editor John Studer. “We call on labor unions, news and

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Disaster in Turkey, Syria fueled by capitalist greed

Profit-driven housing, rulers’ wars set stage



Enab Baladi/Mohammad Nasan Dabel

Volunteers in Harem, in northwestern Syria, carry out victims of earthquake on Feb. 6.

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

As of Feb. 14, the deadliest toll from an earthquake in Turkey in almost a century reached some 35,000 with the bodies of countless others still buried in the rubble. More than 5,500 died so far in northern Syria.

Hundreds of thousands of survi-

vors spend freezing nights in crowded tents with little food. “No electricity, no water, no toilet,” Saba Yigit, a nanny, told the *New York Times*. In Adiyaman, a city of 300,000, families dug graves and they knocked down walls of supermarkets and grocery stores looking for food and water.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan claimed it was “impossible for anyone to prepare for the scale of the disaster.”

But it’s no secret the region lies on a fault line. The number of deaths is not a result of the magnitude of the tremor, but the shoddy housing and other wretched conditions working people live under. Neither the Turkish or Syr-

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Biden brags about ‘State of the Union’ as boss attacks on workers grind on

BY TERRY EVANS

For more than a century following the American Revolution, the Constitution’s provision that presidents regularly “give to the Congress Information of the State of the Union,” was carried out by submitting written reports. Over the past 100 years, the two contending capitalist parties have turned that responsibility into a partisan spectacle where the chief executive touts their party’s program and tries to do damage to their rival.

This Feb. 7, President Joseph Biden’s speech showcased the fractious divisions between Democrats and Republicans, with each sharply focused on positioning themselves for the 2024 presidential campaign. Gridlock in Congress

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Working people in Ukraine fight new war moves from Moscow

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Russian President Vladimir Putin is launching a large-scale new assault in the east of Ukraine on the one-year anniversary of his regime’s invasion. Despite suffering multiple battlefield defeats at the hands of Ukraine’s military and its many working-class volunteer fighters, Putin still aims to crush their

DEFEND UKRAINE
INDEPENDENCE!

— SWP campaign statement p. 9

independence with even more death and destruction.

Alongside missile strikes targeting power plants, infrastructure and civilian housing, Moscow’s larger forces are encircling Bakhmut in the Donbas region. Tens of thousands of Russian conscripts have reinforced the mercenary army of

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As truth about train spill leaks out, rail workers look to fight for safety



WKBN-TV News

Amanda Breshears stands outside coop Feb. 7 where her chickens died shortly after she smelled fumes from toxic chemicals fire after train derailment in nearby East Palestine, Ohio.

BY TONY LANE

EAST PALESTINE, Ohio — Talking with workers, farmers and small-business people in this area, members of the Socialist Workers Party found many have serious questions about the long-term effects of the derailment of 50 cars on a Norfolk Southern train Feb. 3. This included 20 cars containing hazardous material, five of them with liquid vinyl chloride. The derailment caused a mas-

sive fire that threatened to reach the five tankers, which came close to exploding. This would send toxic chemicals and shrapnel out over a mile-wide radius.

Company bosses decided to pierce the five cars, drain their contents into a trench they built, and set them on fire. This released both phosgene — a deadly gas that was used as a weapon in the first imperialist world war — and hydrogen

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Help win new readers for the ‘Militant,’ book by SWP leaders

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Campaigning in working-class neighborhoods in cities and rural areas, members and supporters of the Socialist Workers Party and Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom are finding a lot of interest in the new book, *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party*

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Get this new book!



\$7 until May 31 (normally \$10)
\$5 with ‘Militant’ subscription

Pro-unification forces gain ground in Northern Ireland

BY ÖGMUNDUR JÓNSSON

MANCHESTER, England — Almost 25 years after the Good Friday Agreement, the British rulers’ grip on Northern Ireland is weaker than ever. Cross-border trade in Ireland has increased, pro-unification forces are gaining momentum and pro-British Unionist parties in Northern Ireland are in crisis.

Last year support for unification was registered when thousands attended meetings in Dublin and Belfast called by Ireland’s Future, which campaigns for a united Ireland. Senior figures from all the main capitalist parties in the Republic attended the Dublin event. Speakers at both meetings included figures with a background in pro-British unionism.

The British rulers divided Ireland against the wishes of its people in 1921, clinging onto the northern six counties after a popular war for independence liberated the rest of the country from their colonial domination. British rule in Northern Ireland rested on discrimination against Catholics and pitting Protestants and Catholics against each other, undermining working-class solidarity there and in the rest of the U.K.

Massive struggles against anti-Catholic discrimination in employment, housing, education and voting rights erupted at the end of the 1960s.

To quell the rising movement, the U.K. government sent thousands of troops to Northern Ireland in 1969. In the following years they carried out massacres of unarmed civilians and London imposed internment with-

out trial. Pro-British gangs conducted murderous anti-Catholic pogroms, frequently in collusion with state forces. The Irish Republican Army waged a military campaign aimed at driving British forces out.

Despite the savage repression meted out by their military, successive Labour and Conservative governments failed to crush the struggle for civil and national rights.

The signing of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement registered advances in the struggle against the second-class status of Catholics and for Irish reunification. The British rulers dismantled much of their repressive apparatus. While Northern Ireland remained part of the U.K., an assembly and power-sharing executive were established with devolved power over health, education and other matters. Both pro-British unionists and Irish nationalists participated. The executive collaborated with the government in Dublin on cross-border issues. An all-Ireland economy grew.

Ireland’s Future meetings

Glenn Bradley told participants at the Ireland’s Future Belfast conference that he’d served five tours in the British Army in Northern Ireland because he wanted to “take the war” to the IRA. He later became an officer of the Ulster Unionist Party.

There is now an “intensive debate” on constitutional change in Northern Ireland, he said. “The only people I can see who are denying that those conversations are taking place,” are the pro-



Some 30,000 people marched in Derry, Northern Ireland, Feb. 3, 2002, to demand justice for 14 Irish freedom fighters killed by British troops who opened fire on 1972 civil rights march.

British unionist parties, he said.

As part of the British rulers’ withdrawal from the European Union, the government reached an agreement that kept Northern Ireland in the EU’s customs union, introducing checks on goods to and from Northern Ireland with the rest of the U.K. With trade between the North and the Republic of Ireland unrestricted, an all-Ireland economy continued to grow.

The Democratic Unionist Party, the largest pro-British party, quit the Northern Ireland executive to protest this deal a year ago, blocking the assembly from functioning and forcing an election. This was won by Sinn Fein, an Irish nationalist party, which led the struggle for the country’s reunification for decades and today functions as a bourgeois political party. It is now the largest party in the North and in the South, where it has been prevented from forming a government by a coalition of rival bourgeois parties.

Acknowledging the direction of these changes, Norman Tebbit, a former Conservative Party government minister and staunch opponent of Irish unity, said it was likely “that in the not too distant future the province will become part of the Republic.”

U.K. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak’s government is putting pressure on the Democratic Unionist Party to end its boycott of the assembly. It is also negotiating changes to trading

arrangements with the EU, aiming to reduce checks on goods moving between Northern Ireland and the rest of the U.K.

Kyle Paisley, son of Ian Paisley, who was a long-time DUP leader and fierce opponent of Irish unity, told an Irish parliamentary committee that “the Emerald Isle becoming a single political entity is not so easily talked down as it used to be.”

At the Dublin Ireland’s Future meeting, Mary-Lou McDonald, president of Sinn Fein, demanded the Irish government prepare for unification. Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar reiterated his support for reunification, but has taken no steps toward organizing a referendum on it.

Amid these developments, workers in Northern Ireland have engaged in labor actions with fellow workers across the U.K. to fight declining real wages and worsening working conditions. Workers from Protestant and Catholic communities, as well as immigrants, are involved. Some 20,000 health workers, members of Unite, Unison and the Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance, joined a one-day strike on Jan. 26, with lively picket lines across Northern Ireland.

Three unions representing the bulk of teachers in Northern Ireland have announced a joint half-day strike Feb. 21. These include the historically pro-

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THE MILITANT

Back freedom struggle by Crimean Tatars!

Crimea, homeland of the mostly Muslim Tatar people, became an autonomous Soviet republic in 1921 through the Russian Revolution. A counterrevolution led by Joseph Stalin reversed this, a policy continued by Putin. The ‘Militant’ supports the Tatars’ fight for a homeland.



Stalinist regime in USSR deported 200,000 Tatars from Crimea from May 18-20, 1944.

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Telephone: (212) 244-4899

Fax: (212) 244-4947

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

Win readers for ‘Militant,’ book

Continued from front page

Looks Forward by SWP leaders Jack Barnes, Mary-Alice Waters and Steve Clark.

While getting the book out, they’re encouraging *Militant* readers to extend their subscriptions and for those who have never read the paper to get one.

The book highlights “the opportunities ahead for class-conscious workers, as a decades-long retreat by the working class and trade unions comes to an end,” Waters writes in the preface. “The intensified speedup, longer and longer hours, attacks on job safety, declining real wages, lack of steady employment, and spiraling social and moral blight — conditions produced by the ruling class families in the United States and capitalism’s dog-eat-dog social relations — are pressing more and more working people to say, ‘Enough is enough.’ Workers have begun using our collective economic power and class solidarity in response.”

In Vancouver, British Columbia, Feb. 4, Communist League member Steve Penner and supporter Dan Grant contacted *Militant* subscriber Janie Benna, a retired teacher who has been reading the paper over the past four years, to discuss what she thought of recent political developments in Canada and worldwide.

She was particularly interested in the *Militant*’s coverage of the recent fight by Ontario education workers, who defeated the attempt by the provincial government there to impose an anti-strike law and rotten contract on them.

‘A labor party based on our unions’

“Their determined fight shows both the need and the possibility for working people to build a party of our own, a labor party based on our unions,” Penner said, “that can help lead our struggles against the bosses and their parties and put a workers and farmers government in power.”

Benna agreed. “So many times you see a struggle by working people against a repressive government and the fight fizzles out because there was no organized leadership,” she said. In contrast, she pointed to Cuba’s 1959 socialist revolution that was victorious because it had a revolutionary leadership led by Fidel Castro.

Benna renewed her *Militant* subscription for a year and purchased *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us*. She also donated \$18 to help get the *Militant*, the book and other Pathfinder titles around.

Northern Ireland

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British Ulster Teachers Union, the all-Ireland Irish National Teachers Union and a union that organizes teachers across the U.K.

“Decades of struggle dealt an irreversible blow to the divisions between Catholic and Protestant workers,” Peter Clifford, Communist League candidate for Manchester City Council in the May elections, told the *Militant*. “Workers in Britain should demand Britain get out of Northern Ireland and let the Irish people decide their own future. This will put us in the strongest position to fight for workers and farmers governments here and in Ireland.”

Marnie Kennedy in Belfast contributed to this article

“Sign me up!” said Peyton Huia, a warehouse worker and member of the United Workers Union, when she heard there were Communist League candidates standing in the New South Wales state election in Australia. She was speaking with CL member Janet Roth, who knocked on her door in Sydney.

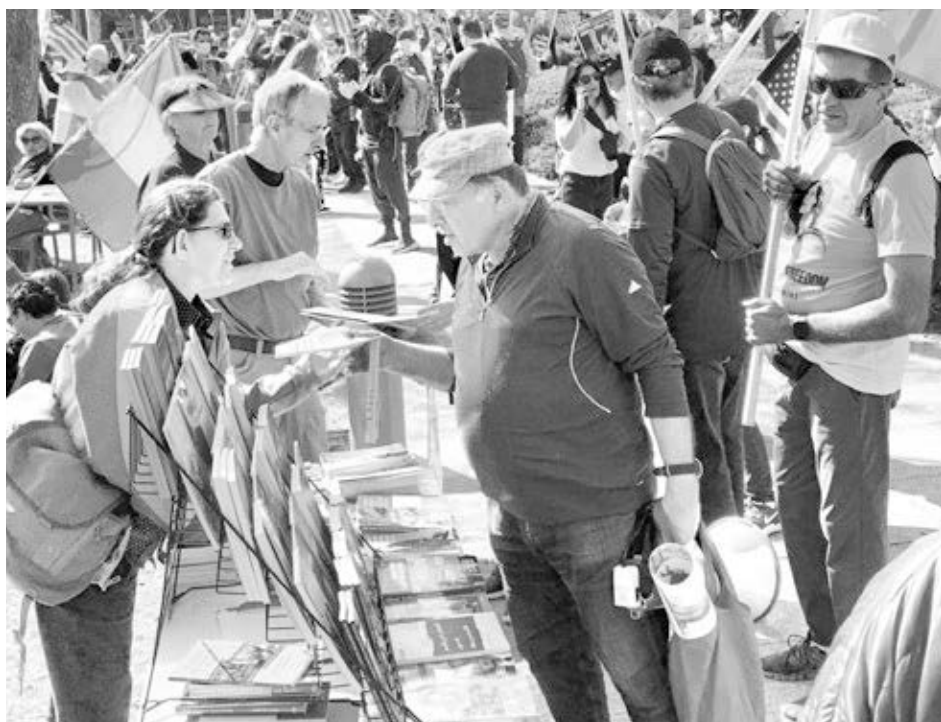
“My job is very strenuous on my body,” Huia said. “I have workmates who have been injured and they can’t do the work the same as before. I tell my husband I don’t know if I’ll be able to keep working till pension age. Those people who set the age so high sit in offices and don’t know what our work is like.”

Roth pointed to the protests taking place in France opposing government moves to raise the pension age. “It is through workers in our unions taking action like this and on the job that we start to figure out how to advance our interests against the capitalist rulers,” Roth said.

Huia bought a *Militant* subscription and signed to nominate Robert Aiken as the CL candidate for Blacktown.

Stone Magagna, a biology student at the University of Pittsburgh who subscribed to the *Militant* last fall, met with SWP members Sergio Zambrana and Candace Wagner at the party’s Pittsburgh branch hall.

“It seems like liberal universities like Pitt are recruitment centers for the FBI and the CIA,” Magagna said. “I hear a lot of bad things about the CIA, but not



Militant/Fredy Huinil

Participants in Feb. 11 Los Angeles protest against ongoing repression in Iran discuss revolutionary political perspective found in new Pathfinder book and the *Militant* newspaper.

much bad about the FBI.”

Zambrana explained that the FBI is being refurbished today by leaders of the Democratic Party and the liberal press as part of their drive to prevent Donald Trump from running for president in 2024.

“But the real target of the FBI has always been the labor movement and social struggles. The SWP denounces the armed raid on Trump’s Mar-a-Lago home as a violation of constitutional rights, rights most important to the working class,” Zambrana said. “We explain that defense of these rights is a central challenge facing the working class today.”

Quebec meeting discusses new book, launches CL campaign

BY STEVE PENNER

MONTREAL — Communist League leader Michel Prairie welcomed close to 30 people at a meeting here Feb. 11 to celebrate publication of *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward*. The new book by SWP leaders Jack Barnes, Mary-Alice Waters and Steve Clark “presents a guide for revolutionary action by workers who want to build their unions into instruments of class struggle to fight the effects of the deepening crisis of the world capitalist system,” Prairie said.

He added that the meeting was being held “to celebrate a weekend of internationalist campaigning to put Beverly Bernardo, the Communist League candidate in the March 13 by-election race in Saint-Henri-Sainte-Anne, on the ballot.” She was introduced at the meeting.

Participants at the meeting and in the petitioning effort came from France, Madagascar, Montreal, Toronto, New Jersey and Albany, New York. Petitioners got 78 signatures over the weekend

bringing the total to 100, with 50 more needed to go over the top. They also sold 11 books, including nine copies of *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us* in English and Spanish, and two introductory subscriptions to the *Militant*. Volunteers in Quebec and France are working on translating the new book into French. Another copy of the book was sold at an action that day in solidarity with the protests in Iran attended by 1,000 people.

Joanne Kuniansky, SWP candidate for State Senate in New Jersey, spoke at the meeting. “Exacerbated by Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine, rival capitalist powers are preparing their militaries for future conflicts — a march toward fascism and world war,” she said. “That’s clearer today for working people to see.”

In order to fight for a different future for humanity, a socialist future, she said, “We need an independent working-class foreign policy, based on the fact that the workers, farmers and oppressed peoples of the world have

common interests — and common enemies in the imperialist rulers and their capitalist allies and rivals.”

She explained that it’s not only in the U.S. and Canada that the retreat of the labor movement is behind us. “The increased confidence and combativity, as well as the anger of working people, is being seen worldwide,” from the Ukraine and Iran to China and beyond. “The future of humanity depends on the world’s toilers entering on the road of bigger class battles.”

The new book puts forward the class against class course of action that’s needed to build proletarian parties and an international communist movement able to lead the struggle to end capitalist rule, Kuniansky said.

Diego Contreras Levesque, an 18-year-old Montreal college student, said what he found most interesting about the meeting is that “there are people in the United States who are part of the communist movement. I think that’s very important because the U.S. is the most powerful country in the world and revolutionary change is needed there as well as here.”

Lovatiana Andriamboavonjy, a 29-year-old Montreal university student from Madagascar, added that it’s “enriching to have speakers from other countries who help us to see our common fight to overthrow the capitalist system and to understand that the low point of labor resistance is behind us around the world,” not only in North America.

Before the meeting participants enjoyed a delicious meal prepared by Communist League supporters and stayed long after it ended to continue discussing the big political perspectives introduced by the speakers.

2023 Socialist Workers Party and Communist League candidates Fight in the interests of the working class Build a labor party based on our unions

Illinois

Ilona Gersh, mayor of Chicago

New Jersey

Joanne Kuniansky, state Senate
Lea Sherman, state General Assembly

Texas

Allyson Kennedy, mayor of Fort Worth

Australia

Bob Aiken, NSW Legislative Assembly
Linda Harris, NSW Legislative Assembly

Canada

Beverly Bernardo, Quebec National Assembly

United Kingdom

Peter Clifford, Manchester City Council

As Washington shoots Chinese balloon down, tensions grow

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Amid rising tensions between the capitalist rulers in the U.S. and China, Washington tracked and then shot down a Chinese balloon Feb. 4, saying it was spying on U.S. territory after it flew over North America.

For years the U.S. rulers have sought to contain the rulers of China and especially limit their acquisition of military technology. Washington views their growing economic, political and military clout as a challenge to its decades-long supremacy in the Pacific, the biggest prize it won when it came out of the second imperialist world war as top dog.

Beijing is asserting its right to take over the self-governing island of Taiwan, if necessary by force, and has expanded its military footholds in the South China Sea. To counter this, the U.S. rulers are reinforcing alliances with capitalist powers in the region and expanding their own military footprint. President Joseph Biden has made clear that Washington will respond militarily to any aggression from Beijing aimed at Taiwan.

The balloon — which Beijing initially claimed was a weather airship — appeared in U.S. airspace over Alaska Jan. 28 and U-2 spy planes were sent to examine it. As it passed over military installations, Republicans demanded Biden shoot it down. He did so after the balloon crossed the Atlantic coastline. Tensions in Washington-Beijing relations, already at a high point, sharpened.

Beijing claims the balloon had blown off course and accuses the White House of the “indiscriminate use of military force.” Washington says sending the balloon was a violation of U.S. sovereignty and “international law.” Yet the U.S. rulers themselves scan the entire world with a massive array of satellites and other tools for spying on their rivals.

After World War II, the U.S. rulers planned to send troops to back ally Chiang Kai-Shek’s war against Mao Zedong’s peasant army and open up China to profit-hungry U.S. investors. That plan was foiled by hundreds of thousands of U.S. troops stationed in the Pacific who refused to fight, demanding Washington bring them home.

Mao’s army took power in 1949 and was pressured to overturn capitalism as Washington invaded Korea. His regime was a copy of Joseph Stalin’s counterrevolutionary government in the Soviet Union. It broke with Moscow in the 1960s over their irreconcilable national interests.

After Mao’s death, the ruling Chinese Communist Party turned toward capitalist market production, overseeing a massive growth of industry and trade.

Today the growth rate of the Chinese capitalist economy has fallen to its slowest since the 1970s. The population has also declined for the first time in 60 years. Beijing recently abandoned its brutal “zero-COVID” lockdowns after unprecedented protests. Like the U.S. and other rival powers, the Chinese rulers also face strikes and growing resistance by working people at home.

Despite Beijing’s increasing weight in the region, Washington has advantages in the conflict over which power will dominate, including the size of the U.S. economy and its vast military might.

The Biden White House has tightened sanctions imposed by former President Donald Trump to block Chinese companies from obtaining semiconductors and manufacturing technology that can also be used by Beijing’s fast-growing military.

US military expands across Pacific

The U.S. rulers are expanding their military presence and alliances around the Pacific. Washington backs the Japanese government’s decision to embark



Artist’s rendering of Chinese Navy fighter cutting across nose of U.S. Air Force spy plane over South China Sea Dec. 21, forcing it to take evasive action. Conflicts between Washington and Beijing are increasing as U.S. rulers seek to maintain their domination of Asia-Pacific region.

on its biggest military buildup since World War II. The U.S. rulers are reactivating a mobile Marine base on Guam and increasing their military aid to the rulers of South Korea.

Washington made a pact with the government of the Philippines Feb. 9 for the U.S. military to have access to four additional bases there — in the north, facing Taiwan, and in the west facing the South China Sea. This arrangement doesn’t include the huge air and naval facilities, Clark and Subic Bay, that Washington was forced to relinquish in the early 1990s. Mobilizations of Filipino working people, who had toppled the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos a few years before, had demanded that the U.S. former colonial masters get out.

Rodrigo Duterte, the Philippine president from 2016 to 2022, sought closer relations with Beijing, hoping to shield the interests of Filipino capitalists in fishing, mineral and other resources in the South China Sea. The Chinese military has fortified 10 artificial island outposts there since 2014, including one that is inside the Philippines exclusive economic zone.

Now under President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., the Philippine government

has tilted back toward Washington to try to counter Beijing.

The Australian imperialist rulers want a closer alliance with Washington as they also face Beijing’s assertiveness. They have agreed to let an Australian air force base in the continent’s north host U.S. B-52 bombers.

In 2021, Washington, London and Canberra formed a new defense pact, AUKUS, establishing closer military collaboration and technology sharing. Under its terms Washington will assure the Australian navy gets nuclear-powered submarines. The U.S. rulers also sponsor the Asian and Pacific-based QUAD military alliance with the governments of Australia, India and Japan.

The U.S. Navy and Marine Corps began scheduled joint exercises in the South China Sea Feb. 11. Some 30% of world trade, valued at \$5.3 trillion a year, goes through those waters. Beijing responded by sending its warships and planes into the waters and airspace around Taiwan. Beijing claims most of that sea, which is subjected to various counter claims by other capitalist governments from Vietnam and the Philippines to Malaysia, Indonesia and Taiwan.

Shooting of Calif. immigrants shows need for amnesty

BY BETSEY STONE

HALF MOON BAY, Calif. — As you drive into this small town on the California coast south of San Francisco, you see tree nurseries, flower greenhouses and mushroom farms, all crops the area is famous for. You also see the shacks, broken down trailers and other ramshackle housing that many workers who tend these crops are forced to live in.

When seven mushroom workers

were killed by fellow farmworker Chunli Zhao Jan. 23 at two different farms, it put a spotlight on the conditions many workers here face.

At Terra Garden, the farm where Zhao worked and lived, workers were housed in rundown trailers, shacks, a shipping container. Bathrooms were port-a-potties. The workers, Chinese and Latino, earned \$9 an hour, below the minimum wage. Zhao began the shooting rampage after his supervisor demanded he pay \$100 to repair a damaged fork lift.

There are laws prohibiting such abuse, but as United Farm Workers union Communications Director Antonio De Loera-Brust told NBC News, they aren’t enforced. If you complain, there’s always the threat of a call to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency, the government’s deportation police.

“A lot of them are living on site. That’s another point of leverage. Your boss is also your landlord,” De Loera-Brust said.

On Feb. 11 this Socialist Workers Party member and party supporters visited Half Moon Bay to talk with workers.

We spoke with Maria Amezcua, who worked for 15 years at a flower farm and most recently at a donut shop. The flow-

er job was the hardest, she said, made worse by the fact workers lacked papers.

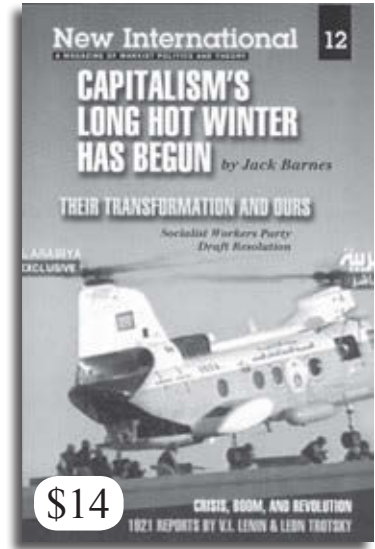
Her family has been one of the lucky ones, she said, securing a home in a housing project built especially for farmworkers. For many others the situation is becoming impossible, with rents in the area climbing and the waiting list to get into the housing project growing.

When we raised the need to strengthen the unions, and for the unions to fight for amnesty for immigrant workers without papers, Amezcua agreed. Fighting to end the abuse of workers who lack papers is in the interests of all working people, we said. It’s necessary to unite workers to take on the bosses.

Contributing to the housing crisis is Half Moon Bay’s proximity to Silicon Valley. Tech employees working from home are moving in, driving up rents. Others, drawn to the beauty of this town nestled between the ocean and coastal mountains, are buying up real estate for second homes used only in the summer.

Half Moon Bay is Exhibit A for why working people need unions, and a labor party based on those unions, to defend ourselves and fight to establish a government in the interests of workers and farmers.

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Int’l US-Cuba Normalization Conference

Sat., March 11, noon to 6 pm — Sun., March 12, 11 am

Hear speakers from Federation of Cuban Women and the Cuban Mission to the U.N. at opening session

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Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz Memorial and Education Center
3940 Broadway at 165th Street, New York City

For more info visit US-Cubanormalizationconference.org.

Thousands protest repression in Iran, debate road forward

BY ARRIN HAWKINS

WASHINGTON — Several thousand people rallied here Feb. 11, part of an international day of action to protest the ongoing repression by the reactionary bourgeois-clerical regime in Iran. Participants came from across the East Coast and from as far away as Houston. There were similar protests in Los Angeles, Chicago and Paris.

Among the signs were ones saying “Women, life, freedom,” one of the key slogans in the protests in Iran, and “For a secular, democratic, non-nuclear Iran.” Others displayed photos of political prisoners in Iran, as well as those of four protesters executed by the Iranian government on charges of “enmity to God.”

“My mother was caught by the morality police three times for improperly wearing the hijab. The last time she was locked in Tehran’s Evin prison,” store owner Sariayah Cheharzai, who came to the march from Detroit, told the *Militant*. The Iranian upsurge began after the regime’s notorious “morality” police arrested Zhina Amini, who died three days later.

“My grandfather put up the deed to his house so that my mother could flee the country,” Cheharzai said.

One group of young Iranians who came to the Chicago protest carried signs with a photo of Tyre Nichols, who was beaten to death by cops in Memphis in January, and opposing police brutality. The sign also said, “No superpowers invasion in Iran.” They told the *Militant* that the struggle for freedom in Iran had to be carried out by the Iranian people, and they opposed any intervention by Washington, or by Moscow or Beijing.

Some protesters here carried signs that said, “The 1979 insurrection was the cause of today’s poverty,” blaming the popular movement of millions that overthrew the bloody dictatorship of the U.S.-backed shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, for the repressive regime headed by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei today.

That shah’s son, Reza Pahlavi, who calls himself the crown prince, appeared

on the stage at the protest in L.A.

In fact, the government that rules Iran today is the result of a bloody counter-revolution. It was consolidated in 1983 based on attacking the rights won by working people and oppressed nationalities in the 1979 revolution.

“I left Iran in 1983 when it got harder and harder to say what you thought. We want freedom,” Nader Aziz, an engineer from Virginia, told Chris Hoepfner, a rail worker and member of the Socialist Workers Party, at the rally here. Hoepfner asked him about the posters in the crowd supporting Reza Pahlavi. “He says he’s for democracy and anything would be better than the government we have now,” Aziz said.

“Reza Pahlavi is covering up the brutality of the dictatorship under the shah,” Hoepfner responded. “Workers and farmers in Iran need to look toward a new revolution, like took place in 1979, and to taking political power.”

In the Baluchistan region of Iran,



Militant/Arrin Hawkins

Thousands march in Washington, D.C., demand end of repression by reactionary regime in Iran Feb. 11, part of international day of protests, including in Chicago and Los Angeles.

where weekly protests of thousands continue, a common chant is “No monarchy, no Supreme Leader! We want democracy. Equality.”

The Baluch people have never forgotten how the shah’s hated Savak political police tortured tens of thousands of his opponents and viciously attacked those

who were fighting for equal rights for Kurds, Baluchs, Arabs, Azerbaijanis, Turkmen and other oppressed nationalities of Iran. Their fight was an important part of the 1979 revolution.

Naomi Craine in Chicago contributed to this article.

ON THE PICKET LINE

Cemetery workers strike over staff cuts, wage raises

MONTREAL — Some 40 outside and office workers on strike at Montreal’s Notre-Dame-des-Neiges cemetery held a joint action at the office of the Catholic Archbishop of Montreal here Jan. 26. The Notre Dame Parish runs the cemetery.

Patrick Chartrand, a groundskeeper and president of the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery Workers’ Union — the outside workers — told the *Militant* the two unions with a total of about 120 members, both affiliates of the Confederation of National Trade Unions, have formed a common front for negotiations.

“The bosses always try to divide us,” Chartrand said. “However their attacks have brought us closer together.”

The office workers, whose contract ran out five years ago, have been on strike since Sept. 20. They were joined by the outside workers, who walked out

Jan. 12. The cemetery is only offering a 14% wage raise over five years, with no increase for the past four years. Chartrand said that comes to 14% over nine years, less than 2% a year. With inflation at 6.3%, the “raise” is a wage cut.

“The labor movement is at a turning point,” Chartrand said. “At the same time as prices are going up the bosses are attacking working people’s rights. We have to fight back.”

Eric Dufault, president of the Office Employees’ Union, said the bosses have been cutting their workforce and services since 2019. The total number of workers is half what it was five years ago.

“There aren’t enough workers to properly take care of the grounds and the grave plots” that cover 343 acres, he said. “The cemetery looks abandoned” with uncut grass, weeds and garbage.

Last year the cemetery cut 23 workers, and the union has been fighting to have them rehired. “We’re fighting not

only on behalf of the workers but also for the families,” Dufault said.

Maurizio Duganiero, an outside worker for 15 years, said, “They want to cut back even more. It will mean more work, more burnout, more injuries. Some days we have to do two or three jobs.”

— Steve Penner

New Jersey sanitation workers strike is ‘solid’

CAMDEN, N.J. — “Now they’re playing hardball,” Ivan James, Teamsters Local 115 shop steward, told the *Militant*, describing how Waste Management of New Jersey bosses are conducting their negotiations with the union.

One hundred thirty sanitation workers at the yard here, on strike since Jan. 31, voted down the latest contract proposal 101-2 Feb. 10. “That shows how unified we are,” James said.

The union seeks over a 5% wage increase each year over a three-year contract. The company now offers 3% the first year and 2.5% in each of the last two. It took a signing bonus off the table.

The bosses are pushing to increase the percentage workers pay for health care. “In the last 10 years they have gone from 90/10 to 80/20 and now we’re at 70/30, and they want us to pay more,” he said. Management refuses to budge on its demand to turn on video cameras in the truck cabs whenever they want.

“So far we’ve won one thing,” James said, “arbitration for disciplinary matters must be within three months, not nine months to a year like the company wanted.”

In the last few days UPS workers from Lawnside and truckers from Teamsters Local 676 have come by to bring support. Area residents have also visited the pickets to wish them well. If you want to show solidarity, their picket line is up at 1001 Fairview St., here from 3 a.m. to 7 p.m. six days a week and Sunday mornings.

The next negotiating session is set for Feb. 17 with a federal mediator. “We’re solid,” James said. “We’ll stay out until Christmas if need be.”

— Janet Post

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



March 2, 1998

William Jefferson Clinton, in his second inaugural speech proclaimed the United States “the world’s indispensable nation.” The message is that Washington — acting unilaterally and relying more and more on military force — will target for brutal punishment “those people” who don’t “follow the rules” it sets.

The U.S. capitalist rulers are hell-bent on unleashing a slaughter against the Iraqi people.

A campaign within the working class to tell the truth about the employers’ war drive must focus on explaining and opposing imperialism — the worldwide system of capitalist exploitation and oppression whose workings inexorably lead to bloody wars. In face of the patriotic war propaganda, working people must unconditionally defend Iraq’s sovereignty.

Stop the imperialist slaughter!

U.S. hands off Iraq!



March 2, 1973

PHILADELPHIA, Feb. 20 — The announcement of plans for a general strike in support of the striking teachers here capped the most dramatic day so far in the six-week-long walkout by the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers. The Philadelphia AFL-CIO executive council, in conjunction with the Teamsters and other unions, has set Feb. 28 as the date for a labor march and rally in support of the teachers.

The call for a general strike was precipitated by the jailing of PFT President Frank Sullivan and chief negotiator John Ryan, followed by the refusal of the courts to set bail for them and the arrests since Feb. 15 of 778 teachers. Yesterday 373 teachers were charged with contempt of court for violating an injunction barring picketing. This morning 500 teachers demonstrated, chanting “No contract, no work,” and “Free Frank Sullivan and John Ryan.”



March 1, 1948

Wall Street’s candidates will be opposed in the presidential election by a working-class slate standing on the program of revolutionary socialism. As candidate of the Socialist Workers Party for President of the United States in the 1948 election the National Committee nominated Farrell Dobbs. For Vice President, the NC chose Grace Carlson.

Dobbs came to the fore as a capable, fighting labor leader during the Minneapolis Teamsters strike of 1934. In 1941 he was framed up in the Minneapolis Labor Case. Sentenced for the “crime” of opposing imperialist war and advocating socialism, he served 13 months in Sandstone Federal Penitentiary.

Carlson has a similar active record in the labor movement. The only woman among the 18 defendants in the Minneapolis case, Carlson served 13 months at the Alderson Federal Penitentiary for Women.

Disaster in Turkey, Syria

Continued from front page

ian governments, nor Washington, Moscow, Tehran and other powers that intervene in the region have any intention of changing that. Moreover, their conflicts and wars for territory and influence hamper aid efforts.

The effects of the earthquake are turned into a social disaster by the profit-driven workings of capitalism.

In northern Syria the Feb. 6 earthquake piled hardship on top of the 10-year civil war in which more than half a million people have been killed. It began after President Bashar al-Assad's regime attempted to crush a popular uprising for political rights in 2011. Moscow and Tehran intervened, providing military force that was decisive to propping up his dictatorship.

Tens of thousands of civilians are homeless in northern Syria. Buildings in the rebel-held areas were already weakened by years of bombardment from Assad's and Moscow's forces. Their assaults have also destroyed hospitals and health centers.

Since 2016 the Turkish rulers have launched four military incursions into northern Syria, largely targeting the Kurdish-based People's Protection Units (YPG). The YPG won control over much of the area where some 2 million Syrian Kurds live. Ankara views Kurdish control as a threat because of the example it sets to Kurds in Turkey who have fought government attacks on their national rights for decades.

Some 30 million Kurds are an oppressed nationality spread across Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey. Each of the capitalist rulers there has suppressed Kurds' struggle for a homeland, with the complicity of Washington. The U.S. rulers keep 900 soldiers in northern Syria to protect their own strategic interests in the Middle East.

In recent years Erdogan has stepped up his regime's repression of Kurds in Turkey, attacks on Syria and assaults on political rights. Less than a week after the earthquake, Turkish forces carried out a deadly drone strike on the city of Kobane in northern Syria.

Some aid has begun to arrive in Turkey. Ukraine sent 88 emergency responders Feb. 9. "There is a war in our country, but we understand that we have to help," said Oleksandr Khornunzhyi, a spokesman for the State Emergency Service of Ukraine. "We sympathize with the Turkish people, the families of the dead and wounded."

On Feb. 12 a 32-person specialized medical brigade from Cuba arrived. The Henry Reeve International Contingent was established by Fidel Castro in 2005 to offer help to residents in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina — an offer the U.S. government rejected. Since then the brigade has assisted populations affected by earthquakes in more than a half-dozen countries, from Pakistan and Peru to Haiti.

Volunteers from Turkey have stitched together a makeshift health care system. One medical student hitchhiked 375 miles to the disaster zone. A plane full of doctors and nurses arrived from Istanbul. "I just stay at home," Mumtaz Buyukkoken, 27, a medical intern told the *New York Times*. The Turkish government dispatched 141,000 aid workers to search for the dead, distribute food, blankets and diapers and help erect tents.

In areas hit by the disaster with large Kurdish, Alevi and Arab populations, people are organizing mostly without government help. Turan Zorlis, a Kurdish volunteer for the Refugee Workers Cultural Association in London, told the *Militant*. The government discriminates, he said, concentrating its efforts primarily on areas populated by supporters of AKP, the government party.

Anger directed at Erdogan

Across Turkey grief is turning into anger, directed toward the government, which consolidated control over the country's disaster-relief programs. It collected \$38 billion from taxes levied on these programs after a 1999 earthquake killed 17,000. Like the Red Cross in the U.S., only a smidgen of the billions raised actually reach those that need help.

Between 2018 and 2019 the government also allowed building owners to pay to register properties without installing safety provisions that are supposed to offer protection



AP/Baderkhan Ahmad
Syrian Kurds at funeral after killings by Turkish airstrikes in Al Malikiyah, northern Syria, last November. Rulers in Turkey, Syria, Iran, Russia, U.S. have been involved in wars in the region.

against earthquakes. As a result, the government raked in another \$3.1 billion. Facing swelling complaints, Erdogan's government turned on company owners, arresting dozens and blaming them for inferior construction. In the Saraykint neighborhood of Antakya, residents pointed to a newly built luxury 14-floor building that collapsed. "The concrete is like sand," one man told the *Times*. "It was built too quickly."

Erdogan, who faces a re-election challenge this spring, claimed he will rebuild affected areas in one year and pay rents for millions of displaced people.

The first aid to the rebel-held area of Syria was delivered Feb. 9 by a United Nations convoy crossing from Turkey. For years, capitalist powers deliver-

ing assistance to the 4 million people living there have done so via Turkey. Assad and his backers in Moscow want to crush the rebels and say aid deliveries violate Syrian sovereignty.

They insist that any aid goes through only one border crossing between Syria and Turkey, at Bab al-Hawa. But following the earthquake the Syrian government approved opening up other crossings. At the same time, Assad has reiterated his demand for all aid to be coordinated with his government.

Washington has announced that it was suspending its sanctions on Syria for six months. These penalties fall hardest on workers and farmers, compounding the widespread social and economic collapse due to the civil war.

there smelled and made her eyes water. "My video camera footage shows my chickens were perfectly fine before they started this burn," she told WKBN-TV, "and as soon as they started the burn, my chickens slowed down and died."

"They may just be chickens," she added, "but they're family."

Some of the chemicals released got into area creeks and streams. People pointed to pictures of dead fish and frogs.

Dead fish were seen in Leslie Run Creek, which runs down through Negley into the Ohio River. People told us about a sign at Negley saying, "Thank You Norfolk Southern for killing all of our fish." Further south, West Virginia Gov. James Justice announced the city of Weirton had switched water supply to a different source after chemicals were found in the Ohio River.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources reported that as of Feb. 8 it knows of 3,500 fish killed by chemicals in area streams so far.

Can't trust rail bosses, government

Outside of town we met Tub Parker, who has worked for 70 years on the farm that has been in the family for over 100 years. His daughter, Missy Smith, alerted him to the fire from the derailment. He described how "the flames were higher than the trees on the top of the hill behind my house."

Smith, who has a candle-making business in town, said, "We need independent testing of the water and air. The contractors at present are all paid for by

the railroad. They are not being transparent. While we may not be affected, others are. It affects us all.

"Administration after administration in Washington cave to special interests and lobbyists," Smith said, "and the railroads come out on top."

Other working people we spoke with raised concerns about how the railroad was handling the cleanup. Norfolk Southern bosses started running trains here even though the work is far from completed. Rail maintenance workers are being unnecessarily exposed to potentially harmful chemicals.

Videos captured by businesses along the track 20 miles west of East Palestine show a train axle on fire, which the National Transportation Safety Board says was the likely cause of the derailment. As one worker here explained to us, "It's a good argument for putting the caboose back. Then someone at the end of the train would have smelled and seen something."

Workers need a voice

Both major rail unions, the SMART-TD conductors' union and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, have responded to the derailment by raising the need to fight for safety measures over the rail industry.

"The workers know the truth as to what happened in that derailment and employers are the voice of the cover-up and the employers' instincts is to blame workers for these types of derailments," John Samuels, president of the Transport Workers Union, which represents

Biden brags about 'State of Union' as boss attacks on workers grind on

Continued from front page
largely precludes passage of any major legislation.

Biden's speech came as Republicans were using their razor-thin majority in the House to launch partisan hearings into Hunter Biden, the president's son, and other Democrats. The Democrats, on the other hand, continue to prosecute their seven-year assault against former President Donald Trump, seeking to block him from running in 2024. Special counsel Jack Smith has subpoenaed an array of Trump campaign fund contributors, as well as former Vice President Michael Pence. Smith's "investigation" into the Jan. 6, 2021, riot continues.

As they conduct this assault, Democrats are doing damage to constitutional protections working people fought for and need. Both parties are working hard to pretty up the FBI, the capitalist rulers' political police, to use as a partisan weapon.

Biden's address repeatedly referred to "fellow Americans," glossing over the irreconcilable class differences between the ruling capitalist families and the millions of working people. The Commerce Department says corporate profits have surged more than 80% in the last two years. At the same time, working people face falling birth rates; having to work two or three jobs to provide for families; rising drug and gambling ad-



Jeff Schuhrke
Rail workers and their supporters rallied in Galesburg, Illinois, July 30, protesting rail bosses' refusal to address inhumane work schedules, crew sizes, safety conditions during national negotiations, discussion on strike action. Biden administration led Congress to impose ban preventing rail workers from walking out, forced rejected contract down their throats.

diction; and declining life expectancy.

"For too long, workers have been getting stiffed. Not anymore. We're beginning to restore the dignity to work," Biden proclaimed. This is a sham. Biden showed his true colors when he led a bi-partisan Congress to ban rail workers from striking and forced a contract they had rejected down their throats.

Rail workers continue to look for ways to resist the bosses' drive to cut jobs, impose grueling schedules, unsafe conditions and harsh attendance policies, and to fight for control over their jobs.

Biden also claimed his administration is responsible for an "unemployment rate at 3.4%, a 50-year low," and

that "inflation has fallen every month for the last six months while take home pay has gone up." Both figures cover up the real impact of the capitalist economic crisis on workers, farmers and other exploited producers.

According to the government's Bureau of Labor Statistics, real wages declined last year. There are some 5.5 million workers who would like a job today, but after years of struggle have given up looking. Rents and food costs are soaring across the country. On top of this, the bosses are on the offensive, pushing speedup, two-tier wages, ever-more inferior health coverage and more.

"This has prompted a series of strikes and labor protests, which need the support of all working people and our unions," Ilona Gersh, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Chicago, told the *Militant*. "The low point of labor resistance is behind us. Support for unions is growing.

"To protect our living standards, our unions need to organize workers to fight for cost-of-living clauses in all contracts and all government programs like Social Security — so every time prices rise, wages automatically go up to match," she said.

Biden's speech featured long-time Democratic proposals that he knows have no chance of passing a divided Congress. This includes tax reform, gun control and abortion, all of which are aimed at boosting his campaign for re-election.

Arkansas Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders gave the Republicans' rebuttal. She focused on criticizing Democrats' "woke" anti-woman policies on gender and promotion of "critical race theory"

— policies that are detested by millions of workers. She claimed "Biden's weakness puts our nation at risk" in the face of mounting competition and conflicts with Moscow and Beijing.

During his speech Biden taunted Republicans, saying that some in their party want to cut Social Security. Several Republican representatives shouted out he was lying.

Won as a by-product of the rise of working-class struggles and the industrial union movement in the 1930s, Social Security today is relied on by millions for retirement.

When the capitalist parties first passed these measures into law, they never intended to pay much out. In 1935, the year the Social Security Act was adopted, life expectancy was below 62, and just below 60 for men, but you weren't eligible for the program until you reached 65! This meant most workers were dead before they saw a dime.

Today, as workers live longer, more are getting benefits. But this only returns a token of what our lifetime of labor produces.

'Union-led fight for jobs'

"Central today is a union-led fight for jobs," Gersh said. "We call for a government-funded massive public works program to provide jobs for millions at union-scale pay, building the houses, hospitals, child care centers and other things working people need. We need a shorter workweek with no cut in pay, with regular schedules, to prevent any layoffs.

"Many working people need a government-guaranteed supplemental income for their families to maintain steady employment, as the labor movement fights for universal child care and medical care," she said.

"This is the opposite of 'means-tested' welfare programs that shame and stigmatize recipients, block people from holding a job and foster dependence on the government dole," Gersh said.

There is nothing for working people in the political demagoguery and endless partisan battles between the bosses' twin parties.

"We need to build and expand our unions, to defend our class interests and fight for political power, for a workers and farmers government," Gersh said.

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Intercontinental Press
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Cuba's working people made a socialist revolution, set example for all

Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War, 1956-58 by Ernesto Che Guevara is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for February. Guevara, at Fidel Castro's side, became one of the central leaders of the world-changing 1959 Cuban Revolution. He describes how Cuba's workers and farmers made their revolution, setting an example for working people throughout the world. He explains how "the war revolutionized us." Below is an excerpt from the book's introduction by Socialist Workers Party leader Mary-Alice Waters, who edited the book. Copyright © 1996 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

Without pretension or exaggeration Ernesto Che Guevara provides a firsthand account in these pages of the final two years of the revolutionary struggle in Cuba that culminated January 1, 1959, in the destruction of the brutal U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista.

The workers and farmers government consolidated in the following months rapidly became what Guevara calls "the hope of the unredeemed Americas." It opened the door to the first socialist revolution in the hemisphere, a reality that almost four decades later still stands at the center of world politics.

Episodes of the Cuban Revolution-



Wide World Photos

Fidel Castro greets residents of Colón, Cuba, Jan. 7, 1959, as Rebel Army forces head to Havana after victory, to reach out to the tens of thousands of toilers who wanted to join the revolution.

ary War, written with clarity and humor, is also about the education of Ernesto Che Guevara, the young Argentine rebel who became one of the central leaders of the Cuban revolution. It is a book that reveals Che's political coming of age — often to his own surprise — as he is transformed from a serious student of Marxism with little practical political experience into a seasoned combat leader of men and women. We watch him as he takes on greater and greater responsibilities. We follow his growth, his education, and his transformation by the Cuban workers and peasants alongside of whom he is engaged in a life-and-death struggle. From a determined revolutionary intellectual imbued with a spirit of adventure, a self-described Quixote, one of the great communist leaders of the twentieth century begins to emerge.

"Some time ago," Guevara wrote to his parents from Mexico in July 1956, "I met a young Cuban leader who invited me to join his movement, dedicated to the armed liberation of his country. I of course accepted." Guevara's letter, which appears here in full for the first time in English, continued, "My future is linked to the liberation of Cuba. Either I will triumph with it, or I will die there."

The young Cuban leader was Fidel Castro, twenty-nine years old but already a well-known political figure in Cuba. ...

As Guevara explained on several oc-

casions, he did not foresee the opening of the socialist revolution in the Americas as the outcome of the revolutionary war in Cuba. Based on his knowledge of the history of Latin America, and his reading of books, including those written by Marxists, he was convinced that the forces being assembled under the leadership of Fidel Castro could bring down the Batista tyranny, one of the bloodiest yet seen in the long list of Latin American dictatorships. That was an objective for which he was willing to give his life. But he thought that imperialist dollars and bourgeois greed would then once again assert their dominance, and the revolution would go the way of all movements trying to reform capitalism.

The workers and peasants of Cuba would teach Che that a different outcome was possible.

As the war transformed the Rebel Army, and the July 26 Movement as well, Guevara's assessment of the social and class dynamics of the revolution, including the course of the central leadership of the movement, changed also. ...

The Rebel Army was a political vanguard organization, built around an expanding cadre that was painstakingly selected and tested in battle. As the revolutionary war advanced, these cadres became more educated and more politically homogeneous in the process.

Out of the eighty-two combatants who participated in the *Granma* expe-

dition, Fidel Castro told Italian journalist Gianni Minà in 1987, "there were many young men who, had they survived the initial expedition, were well suited to become leaders. At least fifteen or twenty outstanding leaders could have emerged from our group — because a man needs both the opportunity and responsibilities to distinguish himself." The accuracy of this judgment, Fidel noted, was confirmed by the fact that "out of those few who survived, several brilliant leaders emerged," men such as Che, Raúl Castro, and Camilo Cienfuegos.

Fidel, like Che, first "looked for men and women who are made of good timber," is the way a former Rebel Army combatant, today a brigadier general in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces, explained it. If the human material is there, "it can be shaped. Leaders who are forged in adverse conditions develop a deep sense of fraternity, of comradeship. ... [T]o really be able to fight, one has to be part of a collective effort. In such a context human qualities are born, allowing future leaders to be forged."

Throughout the pages of the *Episodes*, we are introduced to hundreds of the men and women whose courage and capacities made possible the Cuban revolution; and we see in turn, how they grew into the fighters and leaders they became.

"Men may contribute to the making of history," Castro tells the people of San Miguel in Santiago de Chile in the speech about Che at the opening of this volume, "but history also makes men." ...

Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War deals with the greatest challenge facing humanity at the dawn of the twenty-first century: it chronicles the forging of a revolutionary cadre able — and willing — to lead a mass armed insurrection to power and establish a popular revolutionary government.

The war whose episodes are the subject of this book was not the end but the beginning of the greatest historic event of the second half of the twentieth century, the opening of the socialist revolution in the Americas. ...

This book is dedicated to a new generation of fighters around the world for whom the example of the Cuban revolution and the line of march of its victorious Rebel Army still show the way.

February
BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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CANADA

QUEBEC: **Montreal:** 7107 St. Denis #204 H2S 2S5. Tel: (514) 272-5840. Email: clcmontreal@fastmail.com

FRANCE

Paris: BP 10130, 75723 Paris Cedex 15. Email: militant.paris@gmail.com

UNITED KINGDOM

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Defend independence of Ukraine!

Statement by Joanne Kuniansky, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New Jersey state Senate, Feb. 15.

A year ago on Feb. 24 Russian President Vladimir Putin launched an all-out invasion of Ukraine, expecting to rapidly conquer Kyiv, the capital, arrest and kill its elected authorities, and install a puppet government. Instead, tenacious Ukrainian resistance, including thousands of working-class volunteers, stopped the Russian army in its tracks and pushed them back from the capital. In subsequent months more embarrassing retreats followed from around Kharkiv and Kherson.

Working people took the lead as Ukrainians fought courageously, determined to defend their country's sovereignty and independence. The Socialist Workers Party hails their resistance and calls for the defeat of Putin's invading forces in Ukraine, *all* of Ukraine.

Putin aims to obliterate the Ukrainian people, language and national identity, and resurrect the Russian empire, a prison house of nations, with himself as the czar. Putin's excuses for the invasion, charging Ukrainians and their government are Nazis, is a lie. The heart of Ukraine's resistance is the country's working class. A sovereign and independent Ukraine posed no military threat to Russia of any kind.

His invasion set in motion the first major conflict between two state powers on the European continent since the second imperialist world war. It has upset the capitalist "world order" and sent ruling classes around the globe reconsidering their alliances, the best course to defend their interests and scurrying to increase their military might. This portends more wars and the threat of nuclear conflict.

The SWP opposes the sanctions imposed on Moscow by Washington and other imperialist powers. These sanctions fall most harshly on working people in Russia, and put obstacles in the way of solidarity

between working people there and in Ukraine.

Putin is mobilizing for a new offensive, hoping that the numerical superiority of conscripted Russian forces and his country's larger resources will outweigh the Ukrainian people's determination. His relentless bombardment of civilian centers across the country, like the firebombing of Dresden and Tokyo in World War II, have no military object but are meant to devastate the Ukrainian people.

Thousands of Russian troops have lost their lives in Ukraine, increasingly sacrificed as cannon fodder in human-wave attacks. Growing numbers are deserting, speaking out against Putin's war. Despite fierce repression, Russian workers at home continue to find ways to protest.

The Ukrainian people have paid a heavy price too, with tens of thousands of deaths and injuries, millions of refugees, and devastated cities, industries and infrastructure. But out of their struggle for survival has emerged a steely determination to win.

In the U.S. and elsewhere a Stalinist popular front falsely presents itself as a "new peace movement" opposing "NATO's proxy war." These apologists for Putin, like the Russian autocrat himself, have contempt for the Ukrainian people's independence struggle. Their goal is to aid Putin's war aims.

In the early years of the 1917 Russian Revolution, Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin explained how Moscow's oppressive rule under the czar had deepened the nationalist sentiments of Ukrainians and other oppressed nationalities. He championed the right of national self-determination. The SWP's position is squarely in this continuity.

Join us in raising an independent working-class voice, to win support for the just cause of the Ukrainian people. On this road, working people will see the necessity of taking political power into our own hands — as workers and farmers did in Cuba in 1959.

Ukraine working people fight Moscow war moves

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the pro-Moscow Wagner Group. Over months they have made incremental advances, threatening Ukrainian control of the city, which is largely destroyed. So far fierce resistance has prevented Putin's forces from fully occupying the Donbas, which Moscow first invaded in 2014.

To avoid heavier losses, Ukrainian defenses have pulled back in some areas. Moscow's tactics of sending human waves of poorly trained and inadequately armed Russian soldiers against well dug-in Ukrainian combatants has pushed the death toll among its troops to the highest rate since the start of the war.

Showing the regime's utter contempt for its own troops, almost a third of wounded Russian soldiers in Horlivka hospitals in Donetsk are suffering from frostbite because they hadn't been supplied with adequate winter uniforms. Tens of thousands of Wagner mercenaries were recruited from Russian jails. Promised freedom if they survived the fighting, they know they'll be shot if they disobey orders.

"We are nobody and have no rights," a Wagner convict named Sergei, who was captured by Ukrainian soldiers, told the *New York Times*.

Moscow's various forces are not the only Russians fighting near Bakhmut. Several hundred soldiers from the Free Russia Legion of the Ukrainian army are defending the city from Putin's attempt to seize it. The unit is made up of Russians who live in Ukraine or who decided to move there after Putin's invasion and are proudly defending the country's sovereignty.

Moscow threatens Moldova

The repercussions of the largest war in Europe since World War II continue to spread. Charging that Washington and its allies in Europe are making Moldova "anti-Russian," Moscow's foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, Feb. 4 threatened that the country could become "the next Ukraine."

The Moldovan government is holding talks to join the European Union. Since its invasion of Ukraine, Moscow has severed gas and electricity supplies to

Moldova. The country's foreign trade has collapsed and inflation has hit 30%.

The Kremlin is using about 2,000 troops it stations in Transnistria — an enclave in western Moldova controlled by pro-Moscow separatists — to pressure Moldova's government. President Maia Sandu accused Moscow of plotting to overthrow her rule Feb. 13, days after Prime Minister Natalia Gavrilita resigned, citing "many crises caused by Russian aggression."

Delivery workers strike in Russia

Despite jailing political opponents and protesters against his war, Putin has been unable to stamp them out. In fact, protests have increased in the last month, since Russian bombs killed dozens of Ukrainians in a housing complex in Dnipro. Despite the war drive, Putin has been unable to prevent workers organizing to defend themselves from bosses' attacks.

Some 3,800 food delivery workers, members of the Courier union, staged a strike in more than 15 cities Dec. 20-25, to fight for better wages and conditions. Their employer, tech giant Yandex, owns the country's monopoly food delivery service, Yandex.Eats.

When Yandex acquired its main competitor, Delivery Club, in September, bosses' cut workers' pay from 110 rubles (\$1.59) per order to 70 rubles. The company's profits soared 124%. Yandex bosses — like app company bosses worldwide — treat workers as self-employed in order to try to deny them benefits and rights. Yandex forces the drivers to cover all their own expenses. Without any labor rights, the drivers have no redress if Yandex cuts them off from its app.

In a further example of Putin's repressive rule, two Crimean Tatar leaders, Kostiantyn Shyrinh and Dzhemil Gafarov, died in prison after brutal treatment, it was revealed this month. They were framed up on charges of spying and terrorism. Their real crime, in the eyes of Russia's rulers, was their opposition to Moscow's 2014 annexation of Crimea and their defense of the Crimean Tatars' decadeslong struggle for national rights. Although both men were gravely ill, prison authorities denied them medical treatment.

Fight 'Militant' ban!

Continued from front page

press-freedom organizations, and others outraged by the ban to send protest letters to the Florida prison system's Literature Review Committee demanding the suppression of the paper be reversed."

Florida prison authorities have attempted to ban the *Militant* on numerous occasions over the last decade, but the socialist newsweekly challenged each attempt and in the overwhelming majority of cases the bans were overturned. This is the first time Florida officials have tried to impose a ban in nearly two years.

Blackwater River is part of the Florida prison system but is managed by a private company, Geo Group Inc., the second-largest private prison company in the U.S. Formerly known as Wackenhut Corrections Corporation, the Florida-based company owns or manages 106 prisons worldwide.

Geo Group touts its commitment to "Corporate Social Responsibility" and "enhanced rehabilitation." Apparently its definition of those terms does not include respect for the Constitution.

In 2013 Blackwater River authorities tried to ban five issues of the *Militant*, arguing, "The entire publication is viewed as a threat to security." But after the American Civil Liberties Union joined with the paper to challenge the ban, Geo Group reversed itself, claiming it was just a clerical error.

While most of the *Militant*'s subscribers in some 23 Florida prisons have not indicated any problem with getting their paper, inmates at two of the state's facilities — Wakulla and Charlotte prisons — say their papers have been impounded without officials informing either them or the *Militant*. This would be a serious violation of the Florida Department of Corrections' own rules.

As David Goldstein, the *Militant*'s attorney, files the challenge to Blackwater's attempt to suppress it, he will also ask for an end to any improper ban elsewhere.

Militant readers can join the fight to reverse the ban, sending letters and talking co-workers, fellow unionists and others about sending letters to Florida prison authorities requesting the ban be reversed.

Letters can be emailed to Charles.Huber@fdc.myflorida.com and Melvin.Herring@fdc.myflorida.com or via post office mail to Florida DC Literature Review Committee, 501 South Calhoun Street, Tallahassee, FL 32399-2500.

Please send a copy to the *Militant*.

Amnesty for immigrants

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Farmers in the agricultural communities here and nearby are being squeezed. Billionaires are buying up the land, pushing up land prices. Competition from crops grown in other states and abroad, where costs are lower, has cut down the number of farmworker jobs and made it harder for small farms to survive.

We went by the home of the Serrano family to pay our respects to this brave family who helped organize protests against the brutal cop killing of their mentally ill daughter, Yanira, in 2014. We found the house sandbagged, furniture stacked up on tables inside and workers fixing it, because it had been flooded in recent heavy storms. Other homes nearby had also flooded, as well as a school.

At least 21 people in California were killed in the floods created by the heavy rains. In Half Moon Bay, Watsonville and other nearby towns workers and farmers bore the brunt.

Rising housing costs have forced workers to move to more dangerous areas, nearer to streams and floodplains. Many find it difficult to recover from flood damage. Farmworkers lost pay when there was no work because of rain-drenched fields.

The government bureaucracies set up to distribute aid are hard to negotiate, especially for those without papers. This just underlines once again the importance of the fight for amnesty.

'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