

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Mary-Alice Waters: Tribute to the life of Iraida Aguirrechu
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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Baluchistan protests: 'End death penalty! For freedom!'

BY SETH GALINSKY

Despite stepped-up harassment by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and Basij thugs, thousands of protesters took to the streets in Iran's Baluchistan region Jan. 27 to call for an end to government repression.

The nationwide protests for "Women, life, freedom" that started Sept. 16 have declined since November. These began when Zhina Amini died after her arrest by the "morality" police for violating the country's dress code.

Thousands of protesters were arrested and more than 500 were killed by the regime's repressive forces. Smaller actions still take place, especially at the traditional Muslim ceremonies 40 days after the death of a loved one. The positive impact of the protests on the confidence of workers looking to fight for better wages and conditions, and on oppressed nationalities, continues to be felt.

Substantial weekly actions persist in Baluchistan, one of the poorest and most rural regions of Iran.

Oppressed nationalities, including the Baluch, Kurds, Azerbaijanis, Turkmen,

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Ukraine fighters battle Putin's push in Donetsk

Support Ukraine independence, Moscow out now!



Reuters/Stringer

Woman holds sign, "Ukraine: not our enemies, but our brothers," at monument to Ukrainian poet Lesya Ukrainka in Moscow Jan. 21. Bouquets, toys placed at sites in 50 cities protesting Moscow's deadly Jan. 14 strike on Dnipro apartments show growing opposition to Putin's war.

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Almost a year after Russian President Vladimir Putin launched his invasion of Ukraine, he is intensifying efforts to bomb its people into submission. His regime, whose origins lie in the KGB political police apparatus of the former Soviet Union, aims to reimpose the former czarist empire by annihilating the

country's independence. As assaults on civilians and urban areas expand, working people in Ukraine continue to throw themselves into the fight to defend their country's sovereignty.

Following months of airstrikes on Ukrainian energy facilities, Moscow Jan. 26 targeted the largest cities of Kyiv and Kharkiv, as well as Lviv in the west. Ten regions of Ukraine faced emergency power outages, with 12 people killed from the latest Russian missile and drone barrage.

The damage and death toll from the latest attacks would have been far worse if not for Ukrainian air defenses, which downed all 24 drones and 47 of the 55 incoming missiles.

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Memphis cops charged with murder in killing of Tyre Nichols

BY SAM MANUEL

ATLANTA — Five members of a Memphis police specialized "crime suppression" unit were fired and charged with second-degree murder and other felonies Jan. 26 after city authorities reviewed videos showing them brutally beating Tyre Nichols 19 days earlier. The 29-year-old FedEx worker died three days after the beating. The video was released to the public Jan. 27.

Memphis is 64% African American and both Nichols and the cops who beat him to death are Black. The cops arrested were Tadarrius Bean, Demetrius Haley, Emmitt Martin III, Desmond Mills Jr. and Justin Smith.

Three EMTs have since been fired for violation of department policies and procedures. Two county deputies and two Memphis cops have been suspended pending internal investigations.

Cops from the city's Scorpion unit

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Case strikers defended their union, pushed back some of bosses' attacks



Militant/Dan Fein

Dec. 17 rally in support of United Auto Workers Local 180 members strike against Case New Holland in Mount Pleasant, Wisconsin. Solidarity actions were crucial in union's battle.

BY DAN FEIN

After more than eight months on strike, United Auto Workers members voted to approve a four-year contract with Case New Holland. They pulled down picket lines at plants in Iowa and Wisconsin and returned to work Jan. 30.

Corey Gray, a member of United Auto Workers Local 180 in Wisconsin, told the *Militant* by phone, "We are happy the strike is over," even though

he wasn't happy with some provisions of the new contract. The fact that workers returned to work with their union unbroken was key to Gray. "The company wants more control over us," he said. "That's why we need unions."

The final proposal was approved by a vote of 62%. Before the vote, the company sent out letters to strikers threatening to hire permanent replacements

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Political crises of US capitalist rulers' two parties deepen heading to 2024

BY TERRY EVANS

Disarray and sharp conflicts between and within the Democratic and Republican parties continue over the reorganization of committees in the House, the scandal over classified documents held by Joseph Biden, Donald Trump and Mike Pence, and debates over the U.S. government's debts exceeding the limit set by Congress.

Driving these clashes is the inability of either party to steer a self-confident course for the defense of the ruling capitalist families, much less to pretend they have any way to reverse the deteriorating conditions today's economic crisis is forcing on working people.

President Biden's approval ratings

Continued on page 4

Help get out book by Socialist Workers Party leaders, widen reach of 'Militant'

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Members and supporters of the Socialist Workers Party and Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom are finding a lot of interest from *Militant* readers and others in the new Pathfinder book *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward* by SWP leaders Jack Barnes, Mary-Alice Waters, Steve Clark

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The low point of labor resistance is behind us

THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY LOOKS FORWARD



JACK BARNES
MARY-ALICE WATERS
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Workers across China protest wave of layoffs, unpaid wages

BY JANET POST

Local governments across China are increasingly trying to crack down on protests by workers fighting spreading layoffs and growing unpaid wages. They have “threatened to punish workers who take ‘extremist measures,’ such as protests blocking traffic or outside government offices to get the money they are owed,” reported the *Financial Times* Jan. 24.

Workers’ actions increased in the days leading up to Lunar New Year celebrations, when millions of workers who have migrated from rural areas to work jobs in the cities travel home to visit families and friends. The government in Beijing had largely barred such visits for the last three years during far-reaching COVID-19 lockdowns that have now been lifted.

Bosses at government-run companies conducting mandatory COVID testing amassed fortunes during the pandemic. They are now laying off workers or closing operations entirely since the government ended mass nationwide testing Dec. 7. “Many among China’s armies of ‘big whites,’ low-level government workers charged with enforcing COVID restrictions and named after their signature white hazmat suits, have been let go,” the *New York Times* said.

“Lab testing firms that earlier reaped huge windfalls began reporting that governments were late on payments, leaving them exposed to bad debt,” the *Times* reported. Several provincial governments have now begun charging workers for COVID tests.

In Chongqing hundreds of work-

ers protested Jan. 7, chanting “Pay me back!” They confronted police attacks after being locked out by Zybio, which manufactures COVID test kits. “We have tried every peaceful means to resolve the issue and it didn’t work,” said one protester.

In Hangzhou, workers demonstrated after the Acon Biotech plant told them they would be laid off for two weeks in January leading up to the holiday, leaving them short of the money they’d hope to bring home. When workers threatened to jump off the factory roof, the company finally paid them \$445.

Also in Hangzhou hundreds of workers demonstrated at the Alltest Biotech factory protesting that those hired as temps were being paid less than those hired “permanently.” Dozens were hauled away by the cops.

Construction shutdowns

Another industry wracked by layoffs and unpaid wages is construction, where projects all across the country have shut down. In Zhengzhou, in Henan province, construction worker, Shen, who was owed three months of wages camped out in a construction project’s showroom. “The police said they could arrest me for doing so,” he told the *Financial Times*. “I don’t mind spending a few days behind bars where I can get free food and shelter.”

In Huidong county, Guangdong province, government authorities said workers could face criminal charges for even criticizing government officials or threatening self-harm while protesting. Five workers in Linvi county in eastern



Hundreds of workers at Alltest Biotech factory in Hangzhou, China, protest Jan. 9, part of actions across the country against layoffs, outstanding back pay. Police arrested dozens here.

Shandong province were detained for reporting late wages to city and provincial government departments. “Filing complaints to the upper-level government agencies is absolutely unacceptable,” Linvi police said in a statement. “It will disrupt social order.”

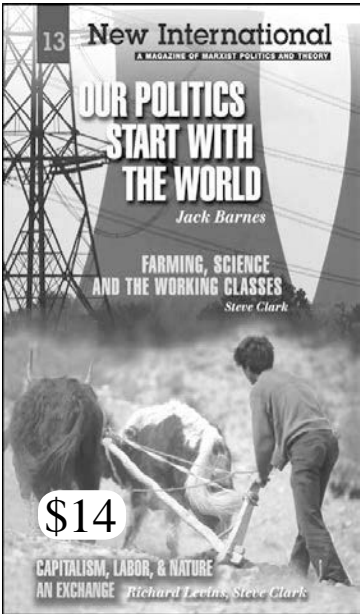
Another significant concern of workers is decent health care in both urban and rural areas. In the first six weeks after Beijing lifted its notorious COVID restrictions, there were 73,000 deaths from COVID in hospitals across the country, and that excludes those who died at home. “Some health experts expect that more than one million people will die from the disease in China this year,” reported Reuters Jan. 23. “As millions of migrant workers return home for the Lunar New Year celebration, health experts are particularly concerned about people living in China’s vast countryside where medical facilities are poor compared with those in the affluent coastal areas.”

With its economy in turmoil, China’s gross domestic product expanded only 3% in 2022, missing the government’s 5.5% target, which would itself have been the lowest in decades. New construction projects in China have declined at an annual rate of over 40% every month since last April. China’s currency, the renminbi, fell to its lowest level since 2008 against the dollar last fall.

For decades China has been a ha-

ven for investment and profits for bosses worldwide, as well as capitalists at home. Its economy is deeply intertwined with production, trade and consumption worldwide. This occurs amid an unfolding capitalist crisis, exacerbated by the fallout from Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine and the sanctions that engendered.

The Chinese Communist Party serves as a dictatorial machine to defend and advance state capitalist interests against workers and farmers. Mass organizations and unions are tightly controlled as agents of the regime. But just like other workers worldwide, the working class in China has begun to resist.



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THE MILITANT

Nothing ‘natural’ about lack of water for small farms

Small farms with dry or contaminated wells in California stand adjacent to the lush fields of wealthy growers who monopolize access to water. The ‘Militant’ explains working farmers and workers face a common enemy, capitalism. Standing together strengthens both.

Militant/Bernie Senter

Frank Ferreira, on his 30-acre California farm, explains capitalist farmers’ deeper wells leave working farmers high and dry.

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Get new book by SWP leaders

Continued from front page

Mary-Alice Waters and Steve Clark.

The campaign to promote this title runs alongside winning *Militant* readers to renew their subscriptions.

In Lake Station, Indiana, SWP members Dan Fein and Leroy Watson visited with Mike Matsey and Tyler McChristian Jan. 28 to talk about the party's program and activities. Both had signed up for *Militant* subscriptions last spring.

"Right-wing forces are dangerous today. We need to strengthen the progressives," said Matsey, who is a CNC machinist at a plastics factory.

"The divisions in society are not between progressives and rightists, or red states vs. blue states, liberals vs. conservatives, or Democrats vs. Republicans," Fein responded. "It's about the working-class vs. the capitalist class. We need a labor party based on our unions to defend our class interests against the capitalist rulers who exploit us."

Matsey responded, "That's a different way of thinking about the division." He said he liked reading *Militant* articles on the fight of Ukraine to defend its independence and on the protests in Iran. Fein showed him *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us*. "I agree with the title, look at the increase in strikes today," said Matsey. He renewed his subscription and bought the book along with four others — *Malcolm X, Black Liberation and the Road to Workers Power*; *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity*; *50 Years of Covert Operations in the US*; and *Workers' Rights Versus the Secret Police*.

When they met with McChristian, who works at McDonald's, he told Watson, "I don't agree with all these immigrants coming here and getting food stamps, welfare and freeloading." Watson responded, "What you said is an example of the politics of resentment which divides the working class. The immigrants need jobs just like we do. Our unions need to organize them to unite the working class and fight for a shorter workweek with no cut in pay to spread the available work around."

McChristian replied, "You raise important points." He renewed his *Militant* subscription and got *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us*.

The new book is available at the special price of \$7 through May 31 and for \$5 with a *Militant* subscription.

In Montreal, Beverly Bernardo, Communist League candidate for the Quebec National Assembly in the riding of Saint-Henri-Saint-Anne, visited *Militant* subscriber Teresa Pestaña Tamayo at her home Jan. 17. Tamayo, originally from Mexico, said she opposes Quebec Premier Francois Legault's plan to allow only French speakers to immigrate to Quebec beginning in 2026.

"It's very bad," she said. "I think that people who speak different languages must be able to come here because of the difficult economic situation in our countries, and to be able to reunite families living in insecurity. Many workers from Latin America come here looking for a better life."

"The Communist League campaign opposes this measure," Bernardo responded. "It's an attempt by the capitalist rulers to divide working people along language lines, as they also try to do around religion. We call on the unions to campaign against these attacks on workers' rights. Such a campaign includes breaking with all the capitalist parties and forging our own party, a labor party based on the unions."

Tamayo agreed and decided to renew her subscription. She also bought the Spanish edition of *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity: The*



Militant/Leroy Watson

Mike Matsey, right, a *Militant* reader in Lake Station, Indiana, discusses SWP with Dan Fein Jan. 28. He got *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us* and *Militant* renewal.

Long View of History by Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, Mary-Alice Waters and George Novack.

In Manchester, England, Peter Clifford, Communist League candidate for Manchester Council in the May 4 elections, was among the speakers at a Jan. 21 demonstration of 60 people in solidarity with mass protests in Iran. Called by the Red Roots Collective, a group of Iranians in Manchester, the event was joined by the Manchester Trades Union Council, Kurdish groups and other political organizations.

"The wealthy bourgeois-clerical rulers of Iran have been acting for decades as though they were there for good," Clifford told the crowd. "I'm a rail worker. Six months ago we were told unions were dinosaurs, but now hundreds of thousands of workers are saying, 'Enough is enough.' It's a class battle here and in Iran."

To help expand the *Militant's* reach and to get books on revolutionary working-class politics, contact the SWP and CL branch nearest you listed on this page.

Rents, mortgages soar, tighten squeeze on workers' families

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

With housing costs rising faster than workers' wages, those renting apartments or homes are paying on the average 30% of their income for rent, an all-time high. Mortgage rates have doubled in the past year. Underneath these figures is the bosses' callous disregard toward the degrading living conditions confronting millions of workers.

On top of high rents and mortgages, inflation is eating away at the funds working-class families have available for food, transportation and health care. Increasing numbers of workers are working overtime or taking on another job to make ends meet. Those unable to afford a place to live are moving back in with their parents or friends, or renting cheaper apartments that are often smaller and in worse shape.

One consequence is the decline in birth rates, as more young workers struggle to start families.

In some areas the portion workers pay from their wages for rent is much higher — over 68% in New York City and 42% in Miami. A decade ago the average household spent about 26% of its income on rent.

In Fort Myers, Florida, where Hurricane Ian ravaged the area four months ago, soaring rents have prevented thousands from getting a new home. Despite promises of government aid, very little has been received. The storm destroyed 5,000 homes and damaged another 30,000 in the southwestern part of the state. Some workers are still living in campers, trailers or mobile homes, many at sites where their houses used to be.

New York public housing disaster

In New York, the city's public housing system has been the one place where workers on low incomes could afford the rent. But the whole system is falling apart. Increasing numbers face

unreliable heating systems, broken elevators, lead and mold in apartments, rats in the buildings and more.

Little is being done about these horrendous conditions. In fact, the New York City Housing Authority says it would need a further \$40 billion to repair the apartment complexes where 340,000 of the city's residents live.

The squeeze on workers' incomes is so sharp that the Housing Authority collected just 65% of the rent it charged last year, the lowest percentage in the agency's history.

With the pandemic rent moratorium that had been put in place by state officials, many residents accumulated back debts. Stacey Rollins, 56, has lived in the Robert F. Wagner Houses in East Harlem her whole life. She amassed \$15,000 in debt for about 12 months of missed payments. She works overnight shifts for the Housing Authority taking calls from residents about emergencies. Her request for rent assistance was rejected by city authorities.

When New York legislators set up the pandemic rent relief program, "public housing tenants were given the lowest priority of those eligible," noted the *New York Times*. "NYCHA residents still applied for at least \$130 million worth of aid — but they received none."

Rather than improving living conditions, Mayor Eric Adams is pushing to put the city's public housing under private management. Under his plan some 36,000 apartments where city authorities have started or completed renovations will be sold off.

Homelessness has reached record heights in New York. In a city of over 8.4 million people, nearly one in every 120 is homeless — that's 70,000 men, women and children. Some 104,000 schoolchildren, about 10% of all students, were homeless during the 2021-22 school term.

Exacerbating these conditions is rising joblessness. The city's official unemployment rate is 10.5%.

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Political polarization in Brazil grows as economic crisis persists

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

The failed attempt on Jan. 8 by thousands of right-wing forces to provoke the intervention of Brazil's armed forces against recently elected President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva has set the stage for heightened social and political polarization as the country's economy continues in a prolonged crisis.

After da Silva won the race in a close runoff election last October, supporters of outgoing President Jair Bolsonaro camped outside military barracks, set up roadblocks and descended on government buildings in the country's capital, Brasilia, calling for da Silva's removal.

The military and cops swept up the occupiers, with arrests and now investigations against many of those involved.

Da Silva — who is known as Lula — seeks to deal political blows to Bolsonaro and make gains over his opponents in Congress.

Leading up to the October elections, the country's courts, business leaders and army closed ranks, pushing back against Bolsonaro's claim that there would be electoral fraud, reflecting the ruling class's desire for stability.

Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes even invited armed forces representatives to do "inspections" of the voting process, setting a dangerous precedent in a country that until 1985 was ruled by a military dictatorship.

The day after the confrontation, the heads of the Senate and the lower house, as well as all the governors of Brazil's 27 states, joined da Silva in Brasilia to survey the damage.

"We have a new president," said Luciano Hang, retail billionaire and Bolsonaro supporter. "We have a new government. Let's support the pilot, so we have a great flight, because I am inside the same plane."

Lula's coalition government

The election marks da Silva's third stint as president. When he was in office from 2003 to 2011 he presided over an economic boom that allowed his government to put in place cash-transfer programs and other modest welfare reforms that won him broad popularity. Since then, Brazil's economy has been battered by capitalism's worldwide crisis, for which the rulers have no solution other than to pass the burden onto the backs of working people.

Bolsonaro, a longtime right-wing congressman, was elected in October 2018, presenting himself as the anti-system, anti-corruption candidate, tapping into deep distrust among working people toward capitalist politicians.

His presidency was marked by cuts in social spending, high inflation, growing unemployment and a disastrous handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. Bolsonaro's racist and anti-women slurs, as well as his dismissal of police brutality and praising the 1964-85 military dictatorship, also contributed to his electoral defeat. More than 12,000 people were killed by the police in 2020-21.

Last year, metal workers went on strike against job cuts and to demand wage increases. There were also protests by public employees against a wage freeze imposed three years ago by the Bolsonaro government. To win support from ruling circles, da Silva has worked to moderate his image and assure global

markets they can count on him.

He chose Geraldo Alckmin, a well-known capitalist politician and former political rival, as his vice presidential running mate. Large-scale farmers — a group Lula described as "fascists and right-wingers" in an August TV interview — had been solidly behind Bolsonaro. But after Lula picked Alckmin, Neri Geller, the vice president of the agricultural caucus in Congress, endorsed him.

Bolsonaro, Geller had said, is "bogged down in ideological fights with China, for example, our biggest trading partner, whereas Lula knows how to be a leader to reassure the markets."

Brazilian capitalists also hope da Silva's election will reopen talks on a long-sought trade agreement between Mercosur, a South American trade bloc, and the European Union, a deal that has been stalled since 2019.

The actions on Jan. 8 may become da Silva's greatest opportunity to expand his maneuvering room in Congress, where his backers hold a slim minority.

He hopes the focus on "bolsonarismo" as the main threat to "democracy" and stability will take attention away from the giant problems facing

Political crises of US capitalist rulers' parties deepen

Continued from front page

have plummeted since classified papers turned up in his Penn Biden office in Washington, D.C., and in his home and garage. The discovery threw a wrench into Democrats' plans to use similar documents found in a highly publicized FBI raid on Trump's Mar-a-Lago Florida estate to pillory him, part of their efforts to bar him from running for president in 2024.

Suddenly there's doubts in the minds of Democratic kingmakers whether Biden should be their 2024 presidential candidate.

Meanwhile, Republican Kevin McCarthy, fresh from a bruising, strung-out battle within his own party before becoming House Speaker, is now taking steps to bar some Democrats from being seated on House committees. This reflects how each of the bosses' parties — Democrats and Republicans alike — are scheming to use their tiny majorities in the Senate or House as a weapon against the other.

Biden claims Republicans are threatening to use the fact that the debt has hit its Congress-set ceiling to push for default on government payments to bondholders and to slash government programs millions of workers rely on. But actually the Republican caucus is currently unable to overcome its own divisions and has yet to make any proposals.

The deficit in the government's budget has mushroomed under both Democratic and Republican administrations from \$16 trillion 10 years ago to \$31.42 trillion today. Every administration has borrowed or printed money to pay for the U.S. rulers' massive military arsenal, bases that circle the globe and their wars; to fund a massive, intrusive federal bureaucracy, the FBI and other cop agencies; and to maintain Social Security and Medicare programs that were won by workers in past struggles.

Both parties fear deepening strug-



Homeless Workers Movement

Thousands marched in cities across Brazil Nov. 14 demanding lower food and fuel prices. Brazil is the world's third-largest food producer, yet 33 million don't have enough to eat.

working people in Brazil today.

The surge in some of the biggest emerging markets, dubbed BRICS — Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa — plummeted in 2013, a collapse that hit workers and peasants the hardest. And while da Silva has said he plans to relaunch social programs, this will meet a swift backlash from the bosses at home and imperialist investors alike.

Unemployment in Brazil today stands at 14.4%, more than double the rate in 2014. In the last two years the number

of Brazilians who say they can't afford enough to eat has jumped 75%, to 33 million. "Prices are absurdly high," Carla Marquez, a mother of a 5 year old in Sao Paulo, told Reuters. "I've nothing to give her."

"This country is the third-largest food producer in the world, while 30 million of its citizens go hungry," Guilherme Boulos, founder of the Homeless Workers' Movement, told the *New Yorker*. "Of course there's going to be polarization!"

gles by working people for things we need — higher wages, cost-of-living protection against the scourge of inflation, more effective health care, retirement pay we can live on, livable work schedules and more.

Most Republican lawmakers say it's time to stop raising the government debt ceiling, and instead slash programs like Medicare. McCarthy says such cuts must be agreed on before he will let Democrats lift the debt ceiling. On its website, Biden's Treasury Department says moves to block lifting the ceiling would be "catastrophic."

This borrowing siphons billions to wealthy bondholders here and to capitalist competitors abroad. The Japanese government is the largest foreign holder of U.S. Treasury bonds, at \$1.08 trillion. Beijing is second, owning \$870 billion. They both seek to keep the value of the dollar higher than their currencies to keep exports to the U.S. competitive and profitable.

'Chained together in their decline'

The continuous increase in the U.S. government debt signals the growing weakness of U.S. imperialism.

"Despite intensifying competition for profits on the world market, the rival national ruling classes are chained together in their decline," a 1988 Socialist Workers Party resolution printed in *New International* no. 10 says, "with the U.S. capitalist rulers at their head."

They are all pushed "to increase the rate of exploitation of the toilers at home and abroad. In advancing these common goals, there is no replacement within the imperialist alliance for Washington's military power, U.S. economic weight, or the dollar as international reserve currency."

Last month Rep. Tom McClintock introduced a bill to make explicit what both parties intend anyway — whatever happens with squabbles

over the budget, they will ensure the wealthy bondholders get paid in full and on time.

Unlike most Republicans, Trump opposes cuts to Social Security and Medicare, making this part of his campaign for the party's 2024 nomination. He hopes this will help position his party as "the party of the working class." But the class character of any party is determined by which class it serves, not who votes for it. Both Democrats and Republicans loyally serve the U.S. imperialist rulers. Neither can nor will be bent to serve the interests of those the rulers exploit.

In addition to an unending assault by the Democrats, Trump will face challenges in his own party as well. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, and former Trump administration officials Nikki Haley and Michael Pompeo are lining up to challenge him for the nomination.

Broader political questions than the handling of classified documents or the debt ceiling lie underneath the mounting clashes between the bosses' parties. Cracks in the imperialist world order put together by the U.S. rulers at the end of World War II are widening. Moscow's war in Ukraine and the worldwide slowdown in production and trade are exacerbating antagonisms between Washington, Beijing and Moscow, as well as tensions between Washington, Paris and Berlin.

In this world, the Socialist Workers Party gets a hearing for its program and working-class line of march forward. The SWP explains that working people have to break from the Democratic and Republican parties.

"Workers need our own party, a labor party based on our unions to unite all working people and others exploited and oppressed by capital to advance the interests we share against the bosses and their parties," Joanne Kuniansky, SWP candidate for New Jersey Senate, said Jan. 31.

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

HarperCollins strikers rally for higher pay, union rights

NEW YORK — More than 150 workers on strike against HarperCollins and their supporters held an enthusiastic protest in front of Rupert Murdoch's News Corp — the parent company of the publishing house — Jan. 18, the 50th day some 200 workers, hourly employees in editorial, sales, publicity, design, legal and marketing, have been on strike. They are fighting for higher pay and union security.

Chants of “One: we are the union; two: a little bit louder; three: we’re out here fighting — for our contract”; “What’s outrageous? No pay raises”; and “People power, workers power, union power” rang out. Another rally is set for Feb. 2.

“We have a right to earn a living wage and decide on our union structure,” Laura Harshberger, a senior production editor and chair of the bargaining unit in United Auto Workers Local 2110, said, welcoming people to the rally. “We drive their profit. We love reading and literature and books. We want to be able to work — but with dignity and for fair pay. We won’t be broken.”

Rachel Kambury, an associate editor in the nonfiction department, is a picket

captain. “We are striking for the future of the industry,” she said. “You can’t afford to live in New York City on the wages we get.”

“It’s hard for anyone who doesn’t have another source of income to make it in the industry. Passion doesn’t pay the rent,” said Deanna Bailey, who works in marketing. The publishing companies claim your first 10 or so years is basically an apprenticeship.

Hundreds of agents and authors are honoring the strike and withholding submissions to HarperCollins. Some of them joined the rally.

On Jan. 26 the UAW and the bosses agreed to federal mediation in hopes of resolving outstanding issues.

— Sara Lobman



Militant/Sara Lobman

Workers on strike against HarperCollins and supporters protest Jan. 18 in New York City in fight for higher pay and in defense of their union, United Auto Workers Local 2110.

Memphis cops charged with murder of Tyre Nichols

Continued from front page

had stopped Nichols that night, allegedly for “reckless driving.” Such “specialized” units are used in cities across the country in so-called high crime neighborhoods. They often drive unmarked cars in plainclothes and employ traffic stops as a pretext to search for weapons and drugs, without probable cause.

Scorpion stands for Street Crimes Operation to Restore Peace in our Neighborhoods.

The video shows the cops are already amped up when they stop Nichols. One cop can be seen on the videos running up to Nichols’ car ordering him to “get the f--k out!” Other cops join in dragging him from the car and throwing him on the ground. He is never asked for his driver’s license, insurance and registration or told what he had done.

There are no signs of resistance by Nichols. He complies with their commands only asking, “What have I done?” The cops repeatedly pepper spray his eyes. Nichols is shocked with a Taser gun and another cop can be heard through police body cameras threatening to break his arm. In fear for his life Nichols manages to break free and run.

Other cops join the chase, recapturing Nichols at a corner just doors from his home. A security camera on a nearby light pole along with audio from the cops’ body cameras provide a striking

record of the savage beating that ensues.

Five cops are directly involved in the beating. Another five can be seen standing around watching. While some cops hold Nichols on the ground two others take turns kicking him in the head. Another cop is heard shouting at Nichols, “I’ll baton the f--k out of you!” Then he strikes the defenseless man twice.

Nichols calls out for his mother.

Two cops stand Nichols up while another punches him in the face. Nichols appears to collapse under the blow, but the cops hold him up to suffer more blows to the face. “Man I was hitting him with straight haymakers, dog,” one cop later boasted.

The cops finally handcuff Nichols and drag him to the side of a squad car sitting him up. For nearly half an hour they show no concern for Nichols’ injuries even though they have to sit him back up several times after he collapses on his side. Instead, one of them complains of hurting his knee during the chase. Another blames Nichols for getting pepper spray in the cops’ eyes.

As the cops mill around fist bumping and congratulating themselves they began to put together their story to justify the beating. “He’s got to be on drugs to take those punches and the Taser,” one of them claims. Another says Nichols tried to reach for his gun.

In an interview with ABC News,

RowVaughn Wells, Nichols’ mother, describes how police attempted to cover up the extent of the injuries to her son. She said police told her that he was stunned by a Taser and pepper sprayed. When she saw him in the hospital, she knew the encounter was much worse.

“They had him on all these breathing machines. He’d already went into cardiac arrest and his kidneys were failing,” she said. “He was a human piñata for those police officers. Not only was it violent, it was savage.”

Scorpion unit disbanded

Under growing pressure Memphis Police Chief Cerelyn Davis announced Jan. 28 that the Scorpion unit had been deactivated. She had set up the unit and had insisted the day before that she wouldn’t shut it down because a few officers committed “some egregious act.”

“The whole idea that the Scorpion unit is a bad unit, I just have a problem with that,” she said.

Scorpion was launched in October 2021. The unit had 40 cops in four teams concentrating on crime “hot spots” and targeting drag racing, car theft, gangs and other crimes.

In its first few months Scorpion made 566 arrests — 390 for felonies — and seized tens of thousands of dollars and over 240 weapons. There were many complaints of disrespect and brutality.

As part of a “transparency program,” the Memphis police department publishes accountability reports that include the race of people subjected to the use of force each year. The reports from 2019 to 2021 show that Blacks were disproportionately targeted, making up 86% of the victims in 2021.

A sixth cop, Preston Hemphill, who is Caucasian and was part of the initial traffic stop of Nichols, was relieved of duty but not charged or fired. According to ABC News, he deployed his Taser during the stop. As Nichols attempted to run away, Hemphill is heard saying, “I hope they stomp his ass!” But he wasn’t present at the actual beating.

Nichols’ stepfather, Rodney Wells, told the press that all those involved in any aspect of his son’s death should be charged.

Modest protests against the murder took place in Memphis and nationwide, reflecting the fact the cops involved had been charged with murder and face up to 60 years in prison. Nichols’ parents urged people to protest, and urged them to do so without violence or disruption, a request that was largely followed.

Rents soaring

Continued from page 3

employment rate of 5.9% is nearly double the national level. The percentage of the population aged 16 or older who are not employed or looking for work is 39.5%.

Housing shortages, overcrowding, deterioration of the housing stock and periodic gentrification have been faced by workers in cities across the country for decades. “The housing crisis is a permanent feature of workers’ lives under capitalism,” Lea Sherman, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New Jersey General Assembly, told the *Militant*. “It’s organized for profit, not housing.”

“But workers are using union power to strike for higher wages. Every union struggle needs the support of fellow workers and our unions. We need to fight for cost-of-living clauses in all contracts and benefits — so our wages rise automatically whenever prices go up — and a shorter workweek with no cut in pay to share the work available around and prevent layoffs.”

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



February 16, 1998

From speech by Cuban President Fidel Castro at January 25 ceremony concluding the visit of Pope John Paul II.

“Cuba does not know fear; it despises lies, it listens with respect, it believes in its ideas, it steadfastly defends its principles, and has nothing to hide from the world.

“If that solidarity you proclaim is extended throughout the earth, and the abundance of wealth that humans are capable of producing with their skills and labor are equitably shared among all human beings currently inhabiting the planet, a world without hunger or poverty could really be created; a world without oppression or exploitation, without humiliation or contempt, without injustice or inequalities.”



February 16, 1973

DERRY, Northern Ireland — Tens of thousands marched through the streets of Derry February 1 to fight to uncover the truth about the massacre of 14 civil rights protesters by British troops on Bloody Sunday, Jan. 30, 1972.

There was a mood of achievement and continued determination throughout the march. Three days before, British prime minister Anthony Blair had announced a new judicial inquiry into the killings.

Addressing the rally, Sinn Fein chairman Mitchel McLaughlin said, “The British were forced to acknowledge that the cover-up could not hold. They were forced to admit that British justice, as reported by the Widgery Tribunal, had been a total fraud and that the world had come to realize it.”



February 16, 1948

The 200-man Wage Policy Committee of the United Rubber Workers meeting Feb. 8 voted to demand a sliding scale cost-of-living bonus, in addition to a basic wage increase of 30 cents an hour. The Packinghouse Workers presented a similar demand.

An important decision of the Wage Policy Committee was to serve the wage demands on the entire industry. The policy was laid down to confront the rubber corporations with the solid and unified power of the entire union of more than 200,000 members. The policies adopted by the Rubber Workers point the way for the kind of program which the CIO as a whole should adopt. The sliding scale cost-of-living bonus can be made a national rallying-cry of the entire CIO.

Mary Lou Montauk, 78 years a builder, supporter of the SWP

BY JOEL BRITTON

OAKLAND, Calif. — More than 50 people gathered here Jan. 21 to celebrate the life and political contributions of Mary Lou Montauk, a member and supporter of the Socialist Workers Party for 78 years. She died Jan. 5.

“Mary Lou stayed the course,” SWP leader Betsey Stone told the gathering. “She was a cadre of the Socialist Workers Party, ready to do whatever was needed to strengthen the revolutionary party and the working class.”

Born in 1930 in Minnesota, Montauk grew up during a time of labor battles and approaching war. Her father, Farrell Dobbs, was the central organizer of the Teamsters’ 11-state over-the-road campaign in the Midwest and later served as national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party.

“We got a feeling of the solidarity, the power, the potential strength of the union movement” at large Teamster rallies, Montauk recalled about her childhood.

During a buffet reception organized by party supporters, participants studied a panel display depicting her life, and read 18 messages to the meeting, including from the Communist Leagues in Australia and Canada.

“Mary Lou had a serious approach to every party task, small or large, based on her understanding of the stakes in what the party is dedicated to — organizing the working class to take power out of the hands of the capitalists,” Stone said.

She joined the youth branch of the SWP in New York toward the end of World War II when she was 14. Her father was in prison, one of 18 leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and the Teamsters union framed up by the Roosevelt administration and the FBI under the Smith Act — a gag law making revolutionary ideas a crime. “Their real crime was winning workers to oppose U.S. war aims in World War II,” Stone said.

During the strike wave that swept the country after the war, party members who were merchant seamen in New York city, where Montauk was a member, were part of a maritime strike that shut down the docks on both coasts.

She moved to Chicago in the early

1950s, as Joseph McCarthy’s anti-communist witch hunt unfolded, but within a few years the Black-led movement for civil rights took off. SWP members were part of protests against the lynching of Chicago youth Emmett Till in Mississippi. They built labor support for the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the defense of Black families in Chicago who were attacked when they moved out of overcrowded segregated areas into all-white neighborhoods.

In 1960, Mary Lou moved to California with Paul Montauk, who became her husband and companion until his death in 1998.

Osborne Hart was a leader of the SWP branch in San Francisco in the 1990s. Montauk regularly staffed its bookstore, he said. “She welcomed workers who dropped in, explaining this is a place to learn about the working-class movement.”

A photo on the display showed Montauk marching to back the fight of strawberry farmworkers to organize and against deportations of workers without papers in Watsonville in 1996.

Way before the rise of the second wave of feminism in the late 1960s, Montauk was a champion of women’s rights. “As a working-class fighter and mother of four children, she understood the pressures coming down on working women, what it takes to care for children, hold down a job and be politically active,” Stone said.

“She drew on the writings of Frederick Engels, Lenin and Evelyn Reed to understand women’s oppression, its roots in the rise of private property and how it can only be ended by a socialist revolution. This continuity is the foundation of the working-class course the party is on today, joining union fights for sustainable hours, child care and other measures to lift from women the burden of child care and housework.”

A message from Helen Meyers from Minneapolis explained that in the late 1960s Montauk helped win Meyers and other young people to “building a movement of the broadest forces to oppose the war in Vietnam.” Montauk “taught us in word and deed you always upheld your principles and put forward the party’s program regardless



Mary Lou Montauk, front, in 1973 protest organized by Socialist Workers Party in the Bay Area against French government arrest of leaders of Ligue Communiste, a sister party of the SWP.

of the pressure you faced.” She helped build a contingent of 500 active-duty GIs in a 1968 San Francisco protest.

Solid confidence in the working class

“How did Mary Lou Montauk stay the course for 75 years?” SWP leader Norton Sandler asked.

“First, you can’t do it without conquering the communist program. Mary Lou was never light-minded about theory, the history of the SWP and the importance of programmatic and leadership continuity. “Second, you have to be part of activity true to the program you advance and defend.

“This only works if you live a disciplined life commensurate with the goals and the program,” he said. “Mary Lou had rock-solid confidence in the working class and the capacities of working people. She knew none of this was possible without the Socialist Workers Party.”

Montauk lived through several internal struggles in the party, Sandler said.

In the mid-1950s, she was part of an important fight in the party. Under the pressures of the Cold War witch hunt that targeted union militants, and the retreat of the labor movement, Bert Cochran in Detroit and a layer around him recoiled from revolutionary activity. They aligned themselves with an international current that was convinced that the capitalist expansion would last for a long time. They lost confidence in the working class.

Montauk and other party members did the opposite, continuing to carry out revolutionary activity, taking part in union struggles, standing up to the witch hunters, joining the battle for Black rights and running SWP candidates. Just a few years later, Fidel Castro led workers and farmers in Cuba to make the first socialist revolution in the Americas.

Turn to the industrial unions

She was part of a second battle in the party in the early 1980s over the party’s turn to the industrial unions. Developments in the class struggle, including the 1974-75 recession, the defeat of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam, the Boston school desegregation fight and the Steelworkers Fight Back campaign for union democracy, marked a shift in consciousness of the working class that convinced the SWP it was now possible to carry out union-building work on a wide-ranging scale and organized to get a big majority of party members into the industrial unions.

A layer of party members opposed this. Montauk defended the party and its turn to the industrial unions when some

of her generation in the party abandoned them, Sandler said. During the early ’80s she took part in the party-wide classes to systematically study the writings of V.I. Lenin, the central leader of the 1917 Bolshevik-led Russian Revolution.

At the same time, revolutionary upsurges led to workers and farmers governments coming to power in Nicaragua and Grenada. Party members who recoiled from the turn also refused to recognize the importance of the revolutionary advances in Central America and the Caribbean. They split from the party in 1983.

Montauk was deeply involved in the party’s work to fight extradition of the H-Block 4, Irish freedom fighters who had escaped from prison in Northern Ireland and made their way to the Bay Area where they were arrested by the FBI. “Montauk had real standing among those fighters,” Sandler said. “Their extradition order was dropped with the signing of the 1998 Good Friday accords.

“And the party helped link up fighters from different labor and social struggles,” he said. “The party arranged for touring Puerto Rican independence fighters Rafael Cancel Miranda and Luis Rosa to meet Terry Kirby, one of the H-Block defendants fighting extradition.” Sandler noted to applause the presence of Puerto Rican independence fighter Willie Rivera at the meeting.

In 2003, as age and health challenges increased, Mary Lou Montauk settled in North Carolina, where her daughter, Juliette, resided. She decided to become a party supporter, helping to produce books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries.

Over 30 copies of the just-released book, *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward* by SWP leaders Jack Barnes, Mary-Alice Waters and Steve Clark were bought by meeting participants. Sandler pointed to party members in the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union and in the rail unions who are part of struggles with fellow workers to push back against the employers’ attacks on wages and working conditions and a growing willingness of workers to extend solidarity to other union fights.

“Cadres like Mary Lou are essential to the continuity and stability of the communist movement,” Sandler concluded. “She appreciated the different generations of the party and knew the human material that makes up the party consists of ordinary people who work at it over a lifetime.”

A collection raised more than \$4,000 for the SWP in honor of Montauk.

Growing up in the 1930s and 40s, a time of labor battles and war

“We got a feeling of the solidarity, the power, the potential strength of the union movement.”

— Mary Lou, recalling how when she was in grade school, she and her sister Carol attended mass rallies in Minneapolis during the Teamster struggles to organize truckers across 11 states.

Mary Lou, right, with sisters Carol, left, holding baby, and Sherry, in Minnesota in the 1930s.

Mary Lou's school photo.

Leaders of the SWP and of Midwest Teamsters battles — including Mary Lou's father, Farrell Dobbs — marched to U.S. marshal's Minneapolis office to begin prison terms after they were framed up on federal "subversion" charges. These were the first convictions under the Smith Act, which made it illegal "to teach, advocate and encourage" communist ideas.

Mary Lou joins the party near the end of World War II

High school student Mary Lou joined the youth branch of the Socialist Workers Party in New York City in 1944. In the post-war period the party was deeply involved in a massive strike wave that swept the country. In New York, members of the party who were merchant seamen participated in the maritime strike in 1946 that shut down the coastal ports.

JOIN US IN FIGHTING FOR:

1. Military training of workers, financed by the government, but under control of the trade unions. Special officers' training camps, financed by the government but controlled by the trade unions, to train workers to become officers.
2. Trade union wages for all workers drafted into the army.
3. Full equality for Negroes in the armed forces and the war industries—Down with Jim Crowism everywhere.
4. Confiscation of all war profits. Expropriation of all war industries and their operation under workers' control.
5. A rising scale of wages to meet the rising cost of living.
6. Workers Defense Guards against vigilante and fascist attacks.
7. An Independent Labor Party based on...

THE ONLY VICTOR

Iraida Aguirrechu, a life made possible by Cuba's revolution

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

Iraida Aguirrechu was one of the hundreds of thousands of Cuban women and men whose entire life trajectory was shaped — and made possible — by Cuba's socialist revolution. A revolution that has defied more than six decades of attempts by the strongest imperialist power in history to destroy it.

She died in Havana on Dec. 27, 2022, age 87, after several years of declining health, accelerated by the social isolation of the COVID pandemic. Her ashes were placed in the honored space of Havana's historic Colón Cemetery reserved for men and women whose lives of revolutionary activity earned them that recognition. (See my accompanying remarks.)

Iraida was not one of the leaders of the Cuban Revolution whose names are known throughout the world. Without women and men like her, however, that revolution would not have triumphed, and never would have endured.

She was born in 1936 into a comfortably well-off landowning family in what is now the Cuban province of Artemisa. Her parents were Basque emigrants, and she often remarked she had a “strict” upbringing, as well as the benefits of a good education. She earned a bachelor's degree in teaching and a doctorate in pedagogy, philosophy and mathematics.

As a student and then volunteer teacher, she joined the revolutionary underground in Havana, working to supply food and medicine for the Rebel Army in the mountains. On one occasion she was arrested by the police, fingered by an informer.

After the victorious overthrow of the Batista dictatorship on Jan. 1, 1959, Iraida proudly turned over the land inherited from her father to INRA, the National Institute of Agrarian Reform.

She enlisted in the newly formed revolutionary militias and then joined the ranks of the FAR, the Revolutionary Armed Forces. She served in many different educational and administrative capacities under Camilo Cienfuegos, Armando Hart, José Ramón Fernández and other central leaders of the revolution. By the time she resigned her commission in the FAR in 1973 to take on an internationalist mission, she held the rank of first lieutenant.

Soon after the triumph of the revolutionary war, Iraida married Hermes Caballero Carreras, a cadre of the July 26 Movement underground from Santiago de Cuba. The underground there was led by Frank País and, after País was assassinated by the dictatorship, by Vilma Espín. Hermes was a veteran of the Nov. 30, 1956, uprising in Santiago, which had been planned to coincide with the landing of the Granma, the boat carrying 83 combatants of the Rebel Army, including Fidel Castro

and Che Guevara, to launch the armed struggle in the Sierra Maestra mountains of eastern Cuba.

Together Hermes and Iraida raised three children, as they also carried out two internationalist assignments. The first, beginning in 1973, was as part of the Cuban diplomatic mission in Equatorial Guinea. The second, from 1976-79, was in Mexico, where Iraida served as the consul general of Cuba's embassy.

From the mid-1980s until she was well into her eighth decade, Iraida was the senior editor at Editora Política, the publishing house of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party. She was responsible for the editing and publication of speeches and writings of Fidel and Che, as well as the texts and documents of the congresses of the party, the Union of Young Communists (UJC) and others.

As if that were not enough, she also volunteered her time and editorial abilities to take on work for Editorial Capitán San Luis, the publishing house of the Ministry of the Interior.

It was during her years at Editora Política that leaders of the Socialist Workers Party came to know and work with Iraida, beginning with the publication of Che Guevara's *Bolivian Diary* in 1994. By then the book had been long out of print in English. In the course of that editorial work, in order to clarify details and ambiguities in Che's account, Iraida introduced us to Cuban



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Iraida Aguirrechu, right, of Editora Política, at Feb. 6, 2006, Havana International Book Fair presentation of *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution*. From left, Cuban Vice President José Ramón Fernández; generals Gustavo Chui, Armando Choy and Moisés Sío Wong; Pathfinder President Mary-Alice Waters.

Brig. Gen. Harry Villegas (Pombo). After Che fell in combat in October 1967, it was Pombo who led the small band of Cuban and Bolivian combatants who eluded the encirclement jointly organized by the Bolivian army and U.S. intelligence, eventually returning to Cuba some five months later.

That was the beginning of several decades of fruitful work by Pathfinder Press, in collaboration with Editora Política, the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution, and numerous Cuban leaders known there as the “históricos.” They became our comrades as well, educating us with countless insights into the past and present of the Cuban Revolution, as we occasionally relaxed for an hour or two on Pombo's

or Iraida's veranda over a platter of mangos and a bottle of rum.

Iraida was prodigiously productive, named to the national roster of Vanguard Workers 17 years in a row. She was never happy without work to do. Editing late into the night and then rising well before 5 a.m. to meet some pressing deadline. That was her norm. She got great satisfaction out of helping to train new young editors, especially young women. She was never the easiest person to work with, however, as she held others to the same high standards she demanded of herself. To those she respected, she was generous and kind.

The books we produced were her books as well. Without Iraida none of this would have been possible.

Mary-Alice Waters: Tribute to the life of Iraida Aguirrechu

The following tribute to Iraida Aguirrechu was delivered by Mary-Alice Waters during a brief ceremony on Jan. 11 at the Pantheon of Internationalist Combatants, located in the Colón Cemetery, Havana, Cuba, where Aguirrechu's ashes are interred. Waters is the president of Pathfinder Press and a member of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party.

First of all I want to thank Balbina, Iraidita, Iraida's entire family, and all who are here today. I thank you for the honor of being able to pay tribute to a revolutionary combatant with whom we had the privilege of working for the last decades of her life. Iraida was for us not only a trusted comrade. She became a close friend as well.

In a biographical note Iraida prepared a few years ago, she wrote:

For the last 30 years I have worked with the compañeros of the publishing house of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States. An official who was in charge of other political work with them asked me to help them on publishing matters. Judging by the results, this has been a success. We have published more than 35 titles outside of Cuba. I selected who would be interviewed and reviewed information being made public.

I remember well the first time I met Iraida. It was during the 1992 Havana International Book Fair. That was the first time Pathfinder Press had a stand in our own name at this important cultural festival. We hardly knew a soul back then. I felt like an orphan, wandering the floor of PabExpo, looking for someone to talk with.

When I passed by the stand of Editora Política (the publishing house of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba), a smiling woman waved and invited me in. She told me she had been asked to collaborate with Pathfinder on editorial matters and urged us to visit the Editora Política office when the book fair finished.

From that moment on, Iraida extended to us her invaluable help, not only on our publishing work but much more.

For the Socialist Workers Party and Pathfinder Press, the socialist revolution made by the workers and farmers of Cuba under the leadership of Fidel and the Rebel Army is one of the two great proletarian revolutions of the 20th century. It stands on the same plane as the October Revolution led by Lenin and the Bolshevik Party. That's why workers and youth around the world seeking to emulate Cuba's example need to be able to learn from your political course, and absorb the lessons of both your triumphs and errors.

For that, we need not only historical studies written by others. Above all we need the honest firsthand accounts of those who walked those often difficult paths themselves, leading others. As Raúl told combatants of the Rebel Army and veterans of Cuba's internationalist missions more than a quarter century ago, “We have been able to make history, but not to write it.” And he urged them to get on with that task.

Pathfinder's objective has always been to publish that history — *in the words of those who made it* — and in a form that makes it accessible around the world.

It was Iraida who opened the door for us to realize our shared objective. She

was able to do it because of the respect and confidence she had earned over decades working with revolutionary combatants and leaders of the greatest courage and integrity.

One of the first she arranged for us to meet was José Ramón Fernández, then vice president of the Council of Ministers, and known far and wide as the commander of the main column of troops that routed the U.S.-organized mercenary invasion force at Playa Girón on the Bay of Pigs in April 1961. Iraida had worked under him in numerous educational responsibilities. And her husband, Hermes Caballero, served as Fernández's adjutant for more than 35 years.

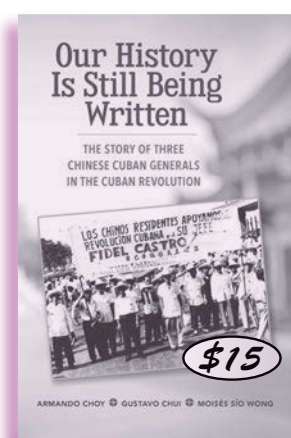
Work with many other leaders expanded: Harry Villegas (Pombo), Armando Hart, Enrique Carreras, Néstor López Cuba, Teté Puebla, Víctor Dreke, Moisés Sío Wong, Gustavo Chui, Armando Choy, Asela de los Santos — to name only a few.

They generously worked with Pathfinder Press and had authorization from the highest levels of the Cuban leadership to do so because they trusted Iraida. And they knew she trusted us.

Working together over these 30 years, the total number of books born of that collaboration is even greater than Iraida noted. Today it's some 61 and counting in seven languages, not only English and Spanish, but Farsi, French, Greek, Chinese, and Arabic.

This body of work stands as a monument to Iraida, one of her lasting contributions to Cuba's socialist revolution, and a treasure that will continue to be mined by revolutionary workers and youth the world over.

We will miss her.



pathfinderpress.com

Baluchi protests: ‘For freedom!’

Continued from front page

Arabs and Lurs, make up some 40% of the population. Their struggles against discrimination in jobs and education and for language rights strengthen the fight of all working people.

The Shiite-based clerical regime’s fear of their struggles is behind the arrests of clerics of the mostly Sunni Baluch, Kurds and Turkmen. Many Sunni clerics have voiced support for the protests. On Jan. 25, Saifullah Hosseini, a Sunni cleric in Kurdistan, was sentenced to 17 years in prison.

Prominent Sunni cleric Maulana Abdul-Hamid, who is based in Zahedan, uses his weekly Friday sermons to speak out against the regime’s crackdown and to call for unity among all nationalities and religions.

In Zahedan, capital of Sistan-Baluchistan province, a prominent banner at the Jan. 27 march read, “Neither monarchy nor a Supreme Leader. We want equality, democracy.” Despite the arrest of some protesters, the march went ahead. The banner is a response to claims by the regime in Tehran that protesters want to return to the days of the U.S.-backed shah, who was overthrown in the 1979 revolution, as well as to monarchists today who seek to pretty up his brutal rule.

Consolidation of counterrevolution

Leaders of the Islamic Republic portray themselves as the defenders of the revolution. But as soon as the shah was overthrown, supporters of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini began trying to push back gains made by working people during that gigantic struggle. They wanted to prevent workers from organizing shoras — councils — in factories and neighborhoods to advance their own interests. They tried to block farmers from demanding land reform.

Club-wielding goons attacked workers’ organizations and the Islamists’ bourgeois rivals, breaking up meetings and closing down offices.

In 1982-83, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and Basij paramilitary

thugs became key weapons in the consolidation of that counterrevolution.

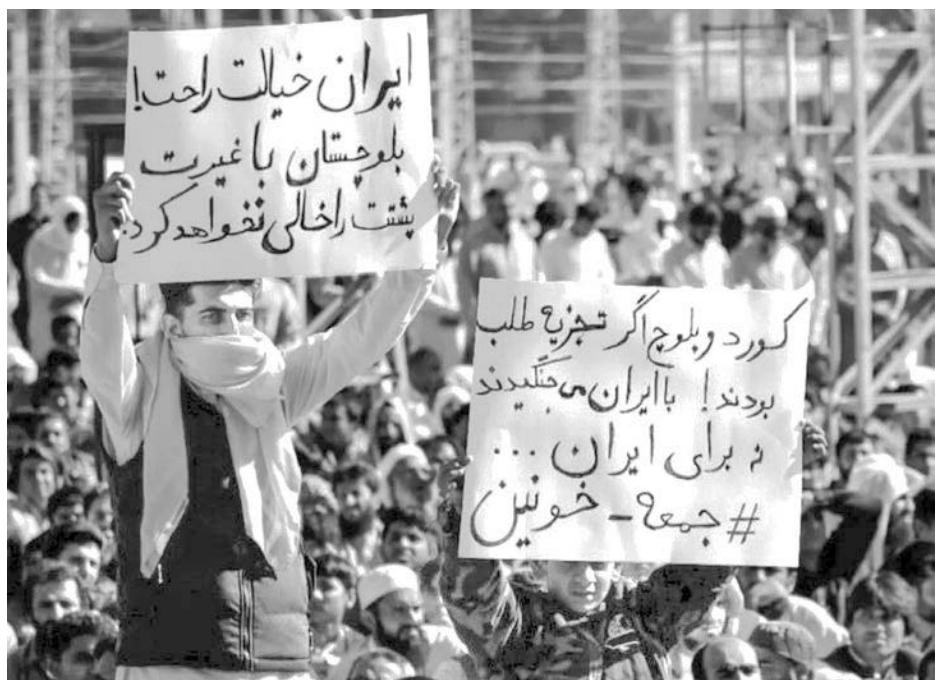
Today the Revolutionary Guard plays a key role in the regime’s drive to spread its counterrevolutionary influence across Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria.

In his Jan. 27 remarks, Abdul-Hamid noted that not only do people in Iran want freedom for political prisoners, equal rights for women and the end of discrimination against oppressed minorities, they also “want Iran to be a peaceful country.”

He said that “the government of Israel and the Palestinian people should make peace,” adding that both Israel and Palestine should have their own government.

This is in sharp contrast to the calls by central leaders of the Islamic Republic for the destruction of Israel. The pro-regime press ran articles saluting the Jan. 27 massacre of seven Jews outside a synagogue in Jerusalem by a Palestinian gunman.

The Sunni leader also called for the formation of an “all-inclusive government” in Yemen to end a war that has led to the deaths of more than 150,000 people and widespread famine. The Iranian rulers intervene there by arm-



Protesters chanted, “No monarchy, no Supreme Leader,” at Jan. 27 action in Baluchistan, Iran.

ing Houthi militias that are at war with forces backed by the Saudi monarchy.

The deadly consequences of the regime’s military incursions are felt especially hard in the Baluchistan region, which is home to many refugees from the war in Afghanistan. Tehran has “recruited” thousands of Afghan refugees to join militias it controls in Syria and Iraq to extend its influence.

Four protesters have been executed

since December. Abdul-Hamid denounces the use of the death penalty in Iran and “anywhere in the world.”

Executions accelerated after the election of Ebrahim Raisi as president in 2021. That year at least 314 prisoners were executed, overwhelmingly workers. More than 20% were Baluch — even though they make up about 5% of the population — and more than 18% were Kurds, who form about 10%.

Ukraine fighters battle Putin’s push in Donetsk

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Because Moscow never achieved air superiority, its warplanes haven’t been able to obliterate the main Ukrainian cities. But its missile strikes invite comparison with the methods used by the imperialist powers during World War II, when Washington and London firebombed the German cities of Hamburg and Dresden while U.S. bombers did the same to Tokyo. The aim was to kill the largest number of civilians possible and inflict the widest destruction.

For months Moscow’s assaults on the town of Bakhmut in eastern Ukraine have been carried out without any regard for the lives of Russian conscripts. While the Kremlin’s exact

losses are a state secret, the boom in Russia’s funeral industry and the backlog of work at crematoriums is one indication of the extent of the carnage. The Bakinskaya cemetery, in southwestern Russia, has been expanded sevenfold in the past two months.

Putin is banking on the larger size of Russia’s population and its military forces to ensure his victory. But the rising death toll is undermining support for the war.

Lenin on Ukraine national rights

The right of oppressed nations to self-determination was championed by V.I. Lenin and the Bolshevik Party as they led the working class and its allies to take power into their own hands in Russia in 1917. The new workers and peasants republic acted on the Bolsheviks’ program.

“For centuries the indignation and distrust of the non-sovereign and dependent nations towards the dominant and oppressor nations have been accumulating,” wrote Lenin in 1919. “Only the Ukrainian workers and peasants themselves can and will decide at their All-Ukraine Congress of Soviets whether the Ukraine shall amalgamate with Russia, or whether she shall remain a separate and independent republic.”

In 1922, after defeating the counterrevolutionary armies of the capitalists, landlords and 16 invading foreign powers, a voluntary federation of the Russian, Ukrainian, and four other republics was established: the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

It was only through a bloody counterrevolution led by Joseph Stalin after Lenin’s death that those conquests were reversed and the Ukrainian and other oppressed peoples were denied their language, cultural and other national rights. Ukraine became independent again in 1991 after the collapse of the Stalinist regime.

“The sooner Moscow’s invading army gets out of Ukraine, all of Ukraine, the better for the working

class, not only there but in Russia itself and throughout the world,” Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Fort Worth, Texas, told the *Militant* Jan. 30.

Since the Kremlin’s missile strike on a Dnipro apartment block that killed 46 residents, including several children, Jan. 14, people in at least 50 Russian cities have been laying flowers and children’s soft toys daily at monuments. In St. Petersburg there are at least seven makeshift memorials. Items removed by police or street cleaners are constantly replenished.

“In the silent war between utility workers and those who sympathize with Ukraine, the latter are winning,” reported the Mozhem Obyasnit news channel Jan. 30.

Around the country individuals continue to hold single-person protests against the war despite facing repeated arrests. Olga Tsukanova, leader of the Council of Soldiers’ Mothers and Wives, was detained at Samara airport for three hours Jan. 22, to prevent her from flying to Moscow where she was going to deliver 700 statements by mothers of conscripts, prisoners and missing persons — complaining about the treatment of their sons — to the prosecutor general’s office. The council was formed after Putin’s call-up of conscripts last September. It says it now has chapters in 89 cities.

Writers, poets and publishers are also finding ways to express their opposition to the war.

“I thought that I was a Russian but this maniac appears to also think he is,” wrote German Lukomnikov, referring to Putin, in a poem published in the January issue of *Volga*, the Samara literary journal.

The website Briefly, which provides the main Russian-language summary of books for thousands of school and university students, ends each page with a heart in blue and yellow, the Ukrainian national colors. This is followed by a message, “He who defends his own home is right.”

Case strikers defended their union

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if the contract wasn’t approved. “That turned the tide for accepting the contract,” UAW Local 180 President Yasin Mahdi told the *Militant*.

Strikers were able to beat back some of the company’s most onerous demands. Kim Alber, a paint line worker and member of UAW Local 807 in Burlington, Iowa, told the *Des Moines Register* that her annual health insurance deductible would have increased to \$13,000 under the company’s original offer. Now, current employees will keep their current plan for a year and a half, but then get an inferior plan for the remainder of the contract. New hires will immediately be forced to take more expensive health insurance.

Case workers will still be subject to forced overtime. “The new contract has us working more Saturdays,” Gray said. “We need Saturdays for family time.” They’ll also receive a \$4,500 signing bonus, which many workers say they can really use.

Over the course of the strike, several solidarity actions and support from unionists across the country helped reinforce the determination of the strikers. As the temperature dipped

below the freezing mark, 200 strikers and supporters collected Christmas gifts, food and hand warmers as they rallied Dec. 17 at the union hall outside of Racine, Wisconsin. They caravanned throughout the town and to the picket line at the plant.

From the very beginning of the strike, Case New Holland — a multinational construction and agricultural implements giant with some 37,000 workers overall — brought in scabs and management personnel to try to keep production running. The company reported its third-quarter profits jumped 22% to \$559 million.

After months walking the picket line, the strike took its toll on some. A few workers crossed the line to return to work. Some others “were considering crossing if the strike continued,” tool and die maker Tony Marnall said.

One outstanding issue is the status of the couple dozen agency workers who joined the picket line and the union agreed to give them strike pay. Strikers said the company has agreed to hire those workers back, but the union plans to make sure bosses do so.

“We want to honor them,” striker Tracy Chew told the *Register*.