

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

The Jeffrey Epstein files and the pornographication of US politics
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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MARCH 16, 2026

Cuban border guards prevent armed assault from Florida

BY RÓGER CALERO

Washington is utilizing a deadly gunfight between a Cuban border guard unit and a boatload of armed men trying to infiltrate the island Feb. 25 to step up its smear campaign and threats against Cuba's socialist revolution.

The Florida-registered boat was spotted 1 mile from the Cuban coast along Villa Clara province, reported Cuba's Ministry of the Interior. When the Cuban border patrol approached the vessel, its crew opened fire injuring the Cuban boat commander. The Cuban officers fired back, killing four and wounding the remaining six crew members.

The boat was packed with weapons, including assault and sniper rifles, Molotov cocktails, as well as night-vision equipment, body armor and other tactical gear. The group set out for Cuba "to infiltrate, incite public disorder, carry out violent acts, and attack military units," Cuban officers in charge of the investigation reported on television Feb. 27.

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SWP campaigns against US war moves on Iran, blockade of Cuba

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

Members of the Socialist Workers Party and the Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom are campaigning in the working class, discussing the stakes in opposing Washington's assault on Iran. They're getting out the statement issued by the SWP National Committee, "U.S. Out of the Middle East!"

"SWP members campaigned door to door in Fort Worth the day after the U.S. bombing began. We found working people were seriously concerned about the consequences," reports Alyson Kennedy, SWP candidate for governor of Texas.

Kennedy joined SWP member Gerardo Sánchez to talk with 19-year-old Jamarion Conner and his brother, Caleb Carter, March 1. They both work at a FedEx facility. Conner said he had called his sister, who is in the military, to ask, "Is this attack on Iran for real?" She said "Yes. They are really going to war. I don't think that the U.S. should send troops to Iran. Both sides will lose lives," he said.

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Socialist Workers Party National Committee statement: US out of the Middle East!



AP Photo/Leo Correa

Several people were killed by Iranian missile strike in Beit Shemesh, Israel, March 1. Israel's defensive war aims to prevent Tehran launching a nuclear Holocaust to wipe out Jews, Israel.

After US assault, Tehran hits Israel, Arab regimes

BY SETH GALINSKY

Washington's massive military assault on Iran — a violation of the country's national sovereignty — and Tehran's drone and military counterattacks on U.S. bases, oil facilities in neighboring Arab countries and on Israel are having a devastating impact across the Middle East. Israel continues to defend itself from the Iranian rulers, who are committed to destroying it.

In his announcement of the Feb. 28 assault, President Donald Trump

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The following statement was released March 1, 2026, by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, on behalf of the party's National Committee.

Working people in the United States, the Middle East, and the world over must oppose Washington's large-scale air and naval assault, begun February 28, on the national sovereignty of Iran and the many peoples who make up its population.

This attack on multiple targets in Tehran and across that country — from top leaders of the regime, to ballistic missile

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Protests against US blockade of Cuba spread, actions called for March 8-15



Militant/Mike Tucker

"End U.S. blockade of Cuba and Venezuela!" demanded 70 people at Sydney Town Hall Feb. 28. Protest was called by Australia-Cuba Friendship Society and Venezuela Solidarity Network.

BY MIKE TUCKER

SYDNEY — Up to 70 people rallied at the Town Hall here Feb. 28 to demand "End the U.S. blockade of Cuba and Venezuela!" The protest was called jointly by the Australia-Cuba Friendship Society and the Venezuela Solidarity Network.

The National Network on Cuba in the U.S. has called for a week of actions in defense of Cuba March 8-15, culminat-

ing in a weekend conference in New York City to plan future activity.

At the Sydney event, Marx del Rosario, who participated in a recent solidarity brigade to Cuba, read a message from a member of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples. "The signing of the executive order by [U.S. President Donald] Trump, which cut off or prohibited the entry of fuel from

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Fight to overturn Florida prison ban on coverage of rights of immigrants

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The *Militant* is winning support for its fight to reverse the impoundment of three issues of the paper by prison authorities at the Taylor Cor-

rectional Institution in Perry, Florida. They impounded issues nos. 4, 5, and 6, objecting in each case to front-page articles from Minneapolis reporting on disciplined demonstrations defending immigrants and the need for a labor-led fight for amnesty for workers without papers in the U.S.

"This ban is an attack on both the

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Ábrego García fight against deportation takes step forward

BY ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

Almost exactly a year ago, construction worker Kilmar Ábrego García was picked up by Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents while driving home from work and in short order illegally deported to El Salvador's notorious CE-COT prison and tortured. Today, the U.S. government continues to victimize him for fighting against his deportation and its attempt to frame him up.

In June, the 30-year-old member of

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The Jeffrey Epstein files and the pornographication of US politics

BY TERRY EVANS

After more than a year of partisan bickering and posturing over whether Congress should release its voluminous files on Jeffrey Epstein, it decided to dump online 3 million documents about him, his business, his behavior with women and his political associates Jan. 30.

Epstein was a successful financial advisor to capitalist investors. After cut-

AS I SEE IT

ting a secret plea deal with prosecutors, he ended up in jail in 2008 on charges of solicitation of prostitution with a minor. In return, he got immunity from federal prosecution for himself and four named accomplices on a host of other charges.

After his release, Epstein faced a slew of additional accusations, and prosecutors reneged, saying they were no longer bound by the plea deal. He was arrested for sex trafficking and committed suicide in prison in 2019, before going to trial. Ghislaine Maxwell, his longtime associate, is in prison today after being tried and convicted of sex trafficking in 2021.

Since then, the Department of Justice under both Presidents Joseph Biden and Donald Trump decided not to lay any further charges against anyone else who appeared in the files.

So why are the files being exposed now, leading to speculation about possible dirt on the rich and famous? Is this really an effort to advance the rights of women, or a display of government transparency?

Both of the capitalist rulers’ two main parties — the Democrats and Republicans — are using the release of the files to try to ruin one another and vilify each others’ leaders. Democrats hope to find something to pin on Trump, while Republicans are going after Bill and Hillary Clinton. Wealthy individuals mentioned in the files are being publicly shamed, and some forced from their jobs, simply for having known Epstein or declining to renounce him.

“Time’s Up!” for “Epstein’s friends and high-flying associates,” National Organization for Women President Kim Villanueva declared Feb. 6 — one of many calls to drive people who knew Epstein from public life.

There is an “Epstein class,” House Rep. Ro Khanna claimed Feb. 10. He released the identities of six wealthy individuals whose names had been redacted in the files Feb. 10, alleging they may be “co-conspirators” and were “likely incriminated.” Incriminated in what, Khanna doesn’t say. Nonetheless, he demands an immediate investigation.

Despite the fact there is no evidence that either Bill or Hillary Clinton were involved in sex trafficking, both are being forced to testify at congressional hearings, while pictures of the former president in a swimming pool with Maxwell are plastered all over the press. Hillary Clinton testified she never met Epstein, and no one has said otherwise.

Perhaps the most salacious comments have come from Democratic Rep. Ilhan Omar, who smeared Trump as “the leader of the Pedophile Protection Party.” She claims his unleashing immigration cops on Somalis in Minnesota was

Los Angeles airport workers rally for improved contract



Militant/Deborah Liatos

LOS ANGELES — Some 100 workers from janitors to baggage handlers, members of the Service Employees International Union-United Service Workers West, held this spirited march at Los Angeles International Airport Feb. 25, part of a broader fight for improved contracts going on here.

There have been a number of recent protests at airports across the country by flight attendants and others challenging the grinding conditions they face.

Workers marched around Terminal 7 chanting in English and Spanish, “Respect, respect, respect at LAX!” and “What do we want? Contract! When do we want it? Now!” Many fellow airport workers and some passengers signaled their support. Signs said, “We deserve a fair contract! Overworked! Ignored! Underpaid! Undervalued!”

— DEBORAH LIATOS

an effort “to deflect attention from his name being all over the Epstein files.”

“At least in Somalia they execute pedophiles not elect them,” she added.

One example of the whirling hysteria is the call for Casey Wasserman, chair of the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics committee, to quit. His “crime” was emailing flirtatious comments to Maxwell in 2003, years before she was charged with sex trafficking or any knowledge of Epstein’s crimes became public.

Former Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers faces no criminal charges, but resigned from Harvard after Sen. Elizabeth Warren and others used the fact his pictures are in the files to demand his ousting. Summers’ “offense” was continuing to correspond with Epstein after the financier’s 2008 conviction.

Many of those caught up in the scandal are capitalist politicians and wealthy businessmen. But they’re not being targeted for any crime they supposedly committed, but merely an as-

sociation with Epstein. The presumption of innocence and the right to due process are being trampled on.

Like many other wealthy businessmen, Epstein used his fortune and connections to try to get richer and buy political favors. But the release of the files is not aimed at exposing the abuses of power under capitalist rule by Democrats and Republicans alike. Or ensuring that people who say they’ve been sexually assaulted get their day in court.

Instead, the lurid scandalmongering is an effort to get workers to align with one wing of capitalist politics, based on smears and innuendo against the other. It fuels endless partisan claims of a “cover-up” and promotes an explanation of politics as the work of conspiracies by all-powerful mysterious forces.

One “theory” claims Epstein procured child sex slaves for the so-called global elite and then blackmailed them, including a number of former U.S. pres-

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THE MILITANT

Munich meeting shows deepening imperialist rivalries

Sharply opposing national interests were on display at the Feb. 13-15 meeting of former Cold War “allies.” After Secretary of State Marco Rubio touted U.S. leadership, Germany’s Chancellor Friedrich Merz made clear the German rulers intend to dominate Europe.



AP Photo/Martin Meissner
German military shows Leopard II tank at Essen Auto Show to help strengthen army.

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SWP campaigns against US war

Continued from front page

“The U.S. competes with China and Russia and other powers for markets and profits,” Kennedy said. “That’s what’s behind the U.S. attack on Iran. They want control of the Middle East.”

“Israel has been attacked by the Iranian regime. It wants to destroy Israel,” Sánchez added, pointing to the need to defend the one country that offers Jews a refuge.

“I was going to join the military,” Conner said, “but now I’m not so sure.”

“The working class will have to take power and run society to ensure that the world is not devastated by another world war,” Kennedy said. Conner signed up to get a subscription to the *Militant*.

Earlier that day, Miguel Castro, a machine operator in a warehouse, told Kennedy, “Other countries won’t want to do business with the U.S.” Washington “could do things the diplomatic way, but not bombing other countries.”

“The SWP says working people

must oppose U.S. imperialism’s assault against Iran,” Kennedy said. “The U.S. rulers want to dominate Iran and the Middle East to plunder the region’s vast oil and other natural resources. We defend Israel’s right to exist as a safe haven for Jews.”

The U.S. assault “will cost people’s lives,” Castro said. “We will suffer for this and a lot of people will die.” He asked her to return next week when he’d have money to subscribe to the *Militant*.

In New York City Feb. 28 Jamora Allen told SWP member Brian Williams and this reporter that she “was just speaking with a friend about the U.S. bombing of Iran, asking her did Trump really do it?”

“The U.S. ruling class is using its military might to press its interests around the world and working people have to oppose its war moves,” Williams said, showing her the *Militant* with front-page articles opposing Washington’s attacks on Iran and its oil blockade of Cuba.

Allen, a hospitality worker, liked the front-page photo of the “U.S. hands off Cuba” picket in New York Feb. 22 and was glad to see coverage of the recent nurses strike here. She subscribed to the paper saying, “I want this information.”

‘Defend Ukraine!’

In Pittsburgh, SWP candidates Tony Lane for lieutenant governor of Pennsylvania and Sergio Zambrana for U.S. Congress joined a protest Feb. 24 at the University of Pittsburgh marking the fourth anniversary of Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine. They carried signs defending Ukraine against Moscow’s assault, calling for U.S. troops out of Europe, and protesting Washington’s oil blockade of Cuba. The *Pitt News*, the uni-



Alyson Kennedy, SWP candidate for governor of Texas, and party member Gerardo Sánchez, right, speak with FedEx facility workers Jamarion Conner, left, and Caleb Carter while campaigning against U.S. attacks on Iran door to door in Fort Worth March 1.

versity’s student newspaper, ran a photo of Lane with his sign.

SWP members at the protest sold two *Militant* subscriptions and two books about the Cuban Revolution. One participant also bought *Lenin’s Final Fight*. It includes articles by V.I. Lenin on his battle to keep the Bolshevik-led government on a working-class course after the Russian Revolution, including supporting self-determination for Ukraine and combatting all expressions of Great Russian chauvinism.

At an action of some 50 people protesting U.S. attacks on Cuba at the Miami International Airport March 1, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate Rachelle Fruit met Robert Rosa, a member of the American Indian Movement. Rosa read the SWP campaign statement that demands “U.S. hands off Cuba! End Washington’s economic blockade!”

He told Fruit about how Native Americans have had to fight for the right to practice their religion. Fruit pointed to other struggles for constitutional freedoms, including the *Militant*’s current fight to reverse the ban on several of its issues in Florida prisons.



Communist League campaigns at Feb. 28 action to “End the U.S. blockade of Cuba and Venezuela” in Sydney, Australia.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

THE MILITANT

March 12, 2001

Washington’s recent cluster bombing of Iraq on the outskirts of Baghdad is a continuation of the brutal character of the U.S. rulers’ 10-year assault against the Iraqi people. This policy has included the killing of as many as 150,000 human beings in the Gulf War in 1991 through a six-week bombardment and one-hundred-hour invasion of the country; sanctions imposed by Washington under the auspices of the United Nations since 1990; and the imposition of “no-fly” zones over northern and southern Iraq patrolled by U.S. warplanes that regularly bomb the country.

The 28 cluster bombs, each weighing 1,000 pounds, put the lie to Secretary of State Colin Powell’s claim that Washington is “not after the Iraqi people.” Cluster bombs are designed to kill and maim people. The ongoing bombing drive against the Iraqi people shows the true face of U.S. imperialism.

THE MILITANT

March 12, 1976

LOS ANGELES — The Supreme Court dealt Mexicanos and Chicanos a cruel blow when it upheld a reactionary California law making it an offense for employers to “knowingly” hire so-called illegal aliens. The law is designed to increase the victimization and exploitation of workers without citizenship papers, not to provide additional jobs for U.S. workers as its backers claim.

The law is simply one more regulator to better control the flow across the border and increase even further the vulnerability of workers without citizenship papers.

The high court action was assailed by Omari Musa, the SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from California. Musa branded the decision “an attack on all working people.” He said he will press for a halt to all deportations and for a defense of the rights of undocumented workers by all of organized labor.

THE MILITANT

March 12, 1951

The walkout of the labor representatives from all government war agencies has ushered in a new stage in the crisis of American capitalism. The labor bureaucracy did not want this crisis. Only the most compelling pressure of working-class discontent forced them to challenge the exclusive domination of Big Business in the war mobilization setup.

American capitalism must have the entire globe as its sphere of exploitation, or perish. It came out of the Second World War as the victor ruthlessly determined to achieve the goal of world mastery.

The old equilibrium of U.S. capitalism is receiving the first of a series of violent shocks. The political equilibrium of capitalist rule has rested upon the alliance of the labor bureaucracy with the capitalist state. The historical signpost reads: “Sharper Class Struggles Ahead in America.”

The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us

The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward

The global order imposed by victors of the inter-imperialist slaughter of World War II is shattering with explosive ramifications for workers and farmers worldwide. A decadeslong retreat by the working class and unions has come to an end. More and more workers — of all ages, skin colors, and both sexes — are saying, “Enough is enough!” They’ve begun to wield the collective power of the exploited producers in response.



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After US assault, Tehran retaliates

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claimed it was intended to aid anti-regime protesters who had taken to the streets across Iran. But Trump's claims to be promoting peace, prosperity, and freedom for those who live in Iran or elsewhere in the region are just a pretext for advancing the interests of the U.S. ruling class.

In the first hours of the attacks by U.S. forces and Israel dozens of the Iranian regime's civilian and military officials have been killed, including Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as well as the head of the hated Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. In the first 24 hours alone, more than 1,200 bombs were dropped on targets across the country, including the headquarters of the Revolutionary Guards, the paramilitary Basij and many police stations.

The U.S. assault prevented students, retirees and other workers from holding sit-ins and picket lines planned for Feb. 28. Their actions were gaining momentum, despite the regime's brutal massacre of more than 7,000 protesters in January. Union activists and other opponents of the regime shifted to encouraging people to organize to look out for each other amid the bombings and the regime's ongoing repression.

On Feb. 22, a week before the start of the new war, five Kurdish parties had announced the formation of a coalition to strengthen the fight for the "rights and freedoms of the people of Kurdistan," for the rights of all the oppressed nationalities in Iran and for "democracy and the rejection of all forms of dictatorship."

The bourgeois clerical regime in Iran and its predecessor, the U.S.-backed dictatorship of the shah of Iran, have repressed the country's oppressed nationalities — including Kurds, Baluchis, Arabs and others — who make up some 40% of Iran's population.

‘The people are cannon fodder’

"The government has provided no warning and no facilities to protect people's lives. The people are cannon fodder in the power struggles of governments," the Retirees Council of Iran said as the bombing began. "Whenever politicians compete, they take our lives; whenever they compromise, they steal our bread."

The bourgeois clerical regime has been moving its forces near schools and other civilian buildings, copying the methods of Hamas in Gaza, where its cynical use of civilians as human shields for its military installations caused thousands of deaths.

U.S. forces destroyed oil facilities on Kharg and Kish islands, as well as port facilities that service oil tankers. This is a direct blow to oil workers who have held weekly protests for over a year, demanding higher wages, job safety and better work conditions. Many oil workers had begun joining the anti-regime protests that swept Iran in January. The number of workers killed or injured is not yet known.

A U.S. submarine sank an Iranian warship off the coast of Sri Lanka March 4. War Secretary Peter Hegseth, boasted it was "the first sinking of an enemy ship by a torpedo since World War II."

The Iranian regime has fired hundreds of missiles at population centers in Israel, with most, but not all, intercepted. At least nine people were killed March 1 when a ballistic mis-

sile hit a bomb shelter, residences and a synagogue in Beit Shemesh.

Tehran's drones and missiles also hit U.S. bases in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and Jordan. But instead of forcing those regimes to take their distance from the U.S. war, the attacks deepened Tehran's isolation and opened the door to some Arab governments actively backing the U.S. operation.

The Saudi Ministry of Affairs said Feb. 28 that it "condemns and denounces in the strongest terms the treacherous Iranian aggression" and that it is "placing all its capabilities" to support the Arab nations that were attacked.

Debris from intercepted missiles damaged the airport, residential neighborhoods and a port in Dubai. Tehran bombed a power plant and energy facility in Qatar March 2, and its drones caused a fire at a major Saudi oil refinery.

U.S., Israel's conflicting aims

The goals of the U.S. imperialist rulers and the capitalist government in Israel are not the same.

The U.S. rulers want a regime in Iran that will bow to U.S. efforts to dominate and plunder the oil, gas and other resources in the region and help Washington push back its rivals from Beijing to Moscow and beyond.

"Trump hit Iran — but he's really got China in his crosshairs," was the headline in a March 2 *New York Post* opinion column by Steven Mosher that captured part of this reality.

"Two years ago, China was riding high in the Arab world," Mosher says. It had "brokered a normalization agreement between Shiite Iran and its long-time Sunni adversary Saudi Arabia." And it was buying Iranian oil at below market prices in the face of U.S.-imposed sanctions.

But now, in the wake of Washington's cutoff of Beijing's access to cheap Venezuelan oil, "Beijing will be forced to



IRNA/Mohsen Rezaei

Damage from bombing on Tehran's South Kargar street March 3. U.S. military struck targets in dozens of cities, as well as oil facilities and ports in the southern part of the country.

pay full price for its oil to U.S.-owned refineries, in U.S. dollars," Mosher said, if the U.S. rulers accomplish their current war aims.

As Washington looks for plunder and power, Israel's goal is to defend its existence. Tehran put together the so-called axis of resistance, including Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon, various militias in Iraq, the Houthis in Yemen, with the goal of destroying Israel and eliminating the Jews who live there.

Tehran financed and helped plan the Oct. 7, 2023, anti-Jewish pogrom that slaughtered 1,200 people in Israel. Acquiring one small nuclear bomb would give the Iranian rulers the capacity to wipe out Israel, killing Jews and Arabs alike.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's defensive battle to destroy Tehran's nuclear program and missile capability during last year's "12-day" war was blocked by Washington before Israel could finish the job, when Trump ordered him to end the war prematurely.

After Hezbollah fired missiles and drones at Israel to support Tehran in the current war, Israeli troops entered south-

ern Lebanon and struck Hezbollah posts across the country.

A new regime in Iran?

The Trump administration has begun discussing publicly its plans for who will be in power in Iran when its war ends. Speaking at the White House March 3, Trump dismissed the idea of a government headed by exiled "crown prince" Reza Pahlavi, and told reporters that "someone from within, maybe, would be more appropriate," someone "more moderate."

Trump compared what the U.S. rulers want to gain in Iran, with their assault on Venezuela, where U.S. troops kidnapped President Nicolás Maduro, and installed Vice President Delcy Rodríguez in power, ready to collaborate.

"Venezuela was so incredible because we did the attack and we kept the government totally intact," Trump said. "We have the whole chain of command." But so far, there has been little indication of any section of the Iranian regime that is willing to concede to the U.S. rulers.

"Most of the people we had in mind are dead," Trump said March 3.

‘SWP is the peace party,’ Minnesota Senate candidate says

BY EDWIN FRUIT

MINNEAPOLIS — The Socialist Workers Party here publicly launched the 2026 campaign of Kevin Dwire for U.S. Senate from Minnesota March 1. Mary Martin, who chaired the meeting, welcomed the 23 people in attendance and reported on the campaign to protest Florida prison authorities' latest ban of the *Militant* for its coverage of the fight against government attacks on immigrant rights in Minneapolis. She urged those in the audience to join in gathering letters asking Florida authorities to overturn the ban, and handed out copies of a letter sent by the Florida Press Association along these lines.

Chris Pennock, vice president of the National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 9 in Minneapolis, reported on the union's fight for a new contract with the U.S. Postal Service. Protests were held here and across the country Feb. 22.

Pennock said an anti-union federal law bars postal workers from striking, something he and his co-workers are beginning to discuss more. He thanked the SWP for its support and said he would inform everyone of future actions.

Farhio Khalif of Somali Youth Link and Neighbors United, an organization of Somali small-business owners at the Karmel Mall and community center,

also spoke. Khalif explained that Neighbors United is demanding the state of Minnesota provide monetary relief for the losses their businesses have suffered during the government's anti-immigrant assaults, which scared shoppers to stay away from the mall. She thanked the SWP for its support.

The Socialist Workers Party is "the peace party" in the upcoming elections, Dwire said in his opening remarks. He then read from the SWP National Committee's statement "US Out of the Middle East" issued by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes. It says Washington's war moves there are an assault on the "national sovereignty of Iran and the many peoples who make up its population."

"We call for all U.S. forces out of the Middle East," he said.

At the same time, "Israel has a right to exist as a refuge for Jews and a right to defend itself against Tehran's call for its destruction," Dwire said.

The SWP candidate reported there have been several actions in Minneapolis opposing Washington's threats against Cuba and the bipartisan economic blockade the U.S. rulers have imposed on the Cuban Revolution. More actions are planned. He encouraged campaign supporters to at-

tend the Cuban Film Festival, an opportunity to discuss defending Cuba against U.S. attacks.

Dwire said working people and the unions need to discuss and learn the lessons from the recent immigration fight. "The disciplined, union-led mass actions here on Dec. 4, Dec. 20 and Jan. 23, were a key factor in the government's decision to pull back Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents.

"The call for amnesty for all undocumented workers in the U.S. is a realistic and essential proposal to protect immigrant workers from the constant threat of arrests and deportations, and to unite the working class," he explained.

"Working people in the U.S. don't want another war. We need a party that represents the working class as opposed to the two parties that represent the ruling class," Dwire said.

"It is important we win working people to support this fight by small-business people, as Khalif explained earlier," he said. "Many of them work day jobs and try to sell their goods at night at the mall. We want to win these people and millions like them to see their only future in a socialist revolution here in the U.S."

The meeting was a big step forward in advancing the campaign.

US troops, bases and warships out of the Middle East!

Continued from front page
installations and production facilities — has nothing to do with the US administration’s pretext of promoting peace, prosperity, and “freedom” for those who live in Iran or elsewhere in the region. It is a blow to the aspirations for peace held by workers and millions of other oppressed and exploited people in the United States.

Washington’s assertion of the right to use its massive military arsenal to simply murder political figures it disap-

to take — *not yours*, not those of the toilers. That’s true from Greenland and parts of Canada and Europe today, to Venezuela’s oil fields, the Panama Canal, and the tightening naval blockade of Cuba’s access to energy and other necessities of life.

The participation of the capitalist Israeli government and armed forces in the current military operation against Tehran is different in both its character and goals from those of imperialist Washington. Israel’s objective is to end

SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY NATIONAL COMMITTEE STATEMENT

proves of sets a lethal precedent, at home and abroad. Who will be the next foreign “enemy” the US government places in its crosshairs? Or domestic “enemy”?

“When we” — the United States Armed Forces — “are finished, take over your government. It will be yours to take,” blustered President Donald Trump in his eight-minute, middle-of-the-night “social media” address announcing “Operation Epic Fury.” Had Trump’s demagoguery been addressed not to “the Iranian people” but instead to the profit-driven US ruling families — whose class interests are protected by both the imperialist Republican and Democratic parties — those words would have had some accuracy to them.

Amid their intensifying conflict with imperialist rivals and rising capitalist powers such as Beijing, the US rulers increasingly act the world over on their view that the natural resources, industrial base, exploitable labor, strategic location, and right to govern are *theirs*

Iran’s nuclear threat as part of its defensive war against Hamas and the Iranian rulers. Working people in the United States and worldwide have a historic stake in an Israeli victory in that battle to prevent another Holocaust, a threat that was starkly announced by the October 7, 2023, pogrom jointly planned by the Tehran regime and Hamas.

As millions of Jews in Israel and elsewhere know all too well, their very survival is endangered by the Iranian government’s course to develop nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles to deliver them. Even a few such weapons of mass destruction could annihilate the vast majority of Israel’s seven million Jews, some half of all Jews on earth. As recently as May 2025, Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei declared that Israel “is a lethal, dangerous, cancerous tumor [that] should certainly be eradicated, and it will be.”

Israel’s successful “twelve-day war” in June 2025 was aimed at destroying



Workers flee after Iranian drones hit the Ras Tanura refinery, one of the world’s largest, in Saudi Arabia March 2. Iran has carried out bombing and drone attacks in Israel as well as in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Jordan and Iraq.

the nuclear and related military installations of Iran’s capitalist regime. It was a *defensive* operation against yearslong efforts by Tehran, Hamas, Hezbollah, and other reactionary forces to destroy Israel as the only state on earth that provides unconditional refuge from Jew-hating violence and pogroms.

Class-conscious workers, of whatever national or religious origin, place *no political confidence* in the government, political parties, or armed forces of the Israeli capitalist state. But the US imperialist government’s current aerial and naval strikes on Iran have nothing to do with Israel’s life-or-death battle.

The US ruling families, their political parties, and their government have *never* lifted a finger to defend Jews in Israel, Europe, North America, Australia, or anywhere else. Nor have the US rulers *ever* acted to advance the interests and aspirations of the some two million Palestinians in Gaza, and millions more Palestinians and Arabs in Israel itself and across the region.

To the contrary, Washington has been and remains the biggest obstacle to Israel obtaining a decisive defeat of Hamas. The US rulers’ objective is to strengthen their own class domination of the countries and peoples of the Middle East, in order to exploit the natural wealth and labor of millions of Arabs, Jews, Kurds, Druze, Yazidis, and others. To impose a Pax Americana — an American imperialist peace of the grave — across that region. As we’re already seeing, Wash-

ington’s assault on Iran and its buildup of massive firepower in the Middle East *increase* the likelihood of more devastating wars both there and around the world. The US rulers’ actions are dragging humanity toward a third world war.

As the Socialist Workers Party National Committee stated in the immediate aftermath of Washington’s air attacks on Iran in June 2025: “The US ruling class has its eyes firmly fixed on plunder. On pillage of the Middle East’s vast natural resources — oil and gas fields, above all — and exploitation of its low-wage labor.

“Amid the capitalist world’s profit-driven rivalries and arms buildups today, the last thing Washington wants is to destabilize its economic, political, and strategic relations with bourgeois governments in the Middle East. It acts to maintain US imperialism’s interests — *and its control* — over what happens there.” And the SWP statement concluded:

“Iran’s working people, of many nationalities, remain the most important curb on the aims of the regime there. They are *feared* by both the Iranian rulers and imperialist powers. ...

“The crisis of imperialism is accelerating, and conflicts among rival capitalist powers are becoming ever more explosive. As during the buildup to the second imperialist slaughter of the twentieth century, Jew-hatred and violence are once again being openly embraced as a banner of reaction. It is capitalism and the ruling classes who are the enemy of working people everywhere, however, not ‘the Jews.’”

Defend Israel’s right to exist as a refuge for Jews!

US troops, bases, and warships out of the Middle East!



Celebrate the political life of Dave Prince

A meeting will be held in New York March 22 to celebrate the political life of Dave Prince, a central leader of the Socialist Workers Party. The program on his life, political contributions and the party he helped build, will be held on the 14th Floor at 307 W. 36th Street in Manhattan.

More details to come.

Hamas moves to reestablish dictatorial control in Gaza

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

The Al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas’ military wing, released a statement Feb. 28 condemning the bombardments of Iran by Washington and Israel. Calling for Palestinians “to act in anger against Zionist and American policy,” the group vowed the “battle with Zionists will continue.”

Hamas — long backed financially, politically and militarily by Tehran — has never backed off its determination to destroy Israel and slaughter Jews.

Four months ago Washington imposed a “ceasefire” in Gaza, blocking Israel from decisively defeating Hamas in the war Tel Aviv launched after Hamas carried out its anti-Jewish pogrom in Israel Oct. 7, 2023. Its thugs killed 1,200 people, kidnapped 251, and raped and mutilated dozens of women.

While Israel holds over half of Gaza,

nearly all of its 2 million residents live in areas controlled by Hamas, which is expanding its dictatorial grip over policing power, and killing off its political opponents.

It’s not clear what will happen next in this region since Washington launched its bombardment of Iran, with Israel striking blows as well.

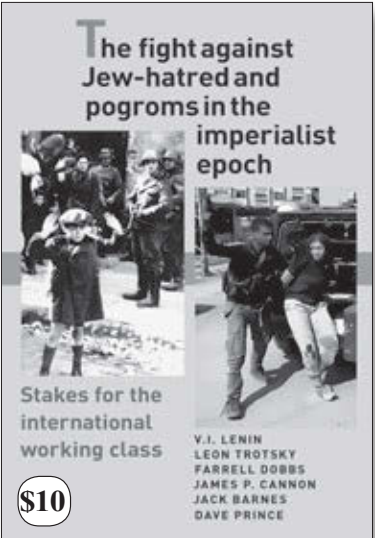
At markets across Gaza, stallholders told BBC News about the despised patrols by Hamas, as the group reestablishes its iron grip on collecting official fees and taxes. “Every single day they come to us aggressively,” one said, “saying if we don’t pay they’ll throw us and our goods into the street.”

On Jan. 20 Doctors Without Borders suspended all noncritical services at one of Gaza’s largest hospitals, the Nasser Hospital Complex in Khan Younis, saying the facility — used as

a Hamas command center for years — was again filled with combatants and arms caches.

When Israel’s advancing offensive against Hamas was halted by Washington last October, the outfit immediately turned its guns on rival clans. Footage of the crackdown, including summary executions in the streets of blindfolded rivals, was released by Hamas leaders in an effort to terrorize anyone considering standing up to them.

The Times of Israel reports that Hamas is looking to leverage itself inside President Donald Trump’s planned National Committee for the Administration of Gaza, to be headed by a former Palestinian Authority deputy minister, Ali Shaath. “Shaath may have the key to the car, and he may even be allowed to drive, but it is a Hamas car,” one source told Reuters.



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Neighborhood committees stand ready to defend Cuban Revolution

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

HAVANA — Some 120 residents of Colón, a working-class district in central Havana, gathered here Feb. 25 for an evening street meeting, organized by the neighborhood-based Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs). They discussed Washington’s latest attacks on Cuba’s socialist revolution. The meeting took place at a time when Cubans are confronting the brutal effects of a U.S. oil blockade. The island nation needs to import some 60% of its fuel.

CDR national coordinator Gerardo Hernández pointed to the news just hours earlier that Cuban border guards

Reporter’s notebook from Cuba

had thwarted an armed incursion by Florida-based counterrevolutionaries on a speedboat seeking to land on Cuba’s northern coast (see article on front page). “We must be prepared,” he said, for the U.S. government to use such a provocation to ratchet up its propaganda campaign and efforts to overthrow the revolution.

Hernández addressed the meeting together with René González. They are two of five revolutionaries — known worldwide as the Cuban Five — who, between 1998 and 2014, were imprisoned in the U.S. for helping deter violent attacks on Cuba by similar U.S.-based counterrevolutionary outfits.

Both underscored Washington’s decadeslong efforts to crush the Cuban people for making a socialist revolution in what the U.S. capitalists consider to be “their” hemisphere. The audience viewed a film clip of a speech by revolutionary leader Fidel Castro, who said it was important to distinguish between the U.S. government and the people of the U.S.

“Fidel always taught us to make that distinction,” Hernández said. As an example, he welcomed the presence at the meeting of members of the Socialist Workers Party who, together with members of the Communist Leagues in Canada and the United Kingdom, were in Havana to report on the Cuban people’s response to Washington’s attacks. “While we were in prison, these compañeros supported the fight for our freedom and sent us the *Militant* and revolutionary books by Pathfinder,” Hernández said.

Hernández noted that the day before, members of the Cuban Five had spoken at events in different Havana neighborhoods to recall what had happened exactly 30 years earlier — Feb. 24, 1996 — when two planes flown by the Miami-based counterrevolutionary group Brothers to the Rescue, after repeated similar provocations, invaded the island’s airspace once again and were shot down by Cuban forces (see article on page 7). They especially sought to educate younger generations who didn’t live through that experience.

‘A hornet’s nest awaits them’

Several Colón residents took the floor. Luis Caballero, a retired restaurant worker, saluted the Cuban border guards who had stopped the most recent armed incursion. It’s a reminder

to the U.S. government, he said, of “the hornet’s nest that awaits them if they launch a military attack on us.” He also paid tribute to the 32 Cuban internationalists killed in combat Jan. 3 when Washington assaulted Venezuela, kidnapped President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, and locked them up in a U.S. prison.

Caballero himself, like several others at the meeting, was among the more than 300,000 Cuban volunteer combatants who helped defend Angola’s sovereignty against invasions by the white-supremacist South African regime in the 1970s and ’80s.

Miguel Morales, a telephone line-man and president of the local telephone workers union, told the *Militant* this was one of the “barrio-debates” (neighborhood discussions) organized periodically by the CDRs. Residents discuss both defense of the revolution and how to confront challenges of daily life, in a country being strangled economically by U.S. government measures that deny working people access to the most basic necessities, from medicines to electricity and transportation.

Marisela Padrón said, “We face a lot



Militant photos by Jonathan Silberman

Feb. 25 meeting in Havana’s Colón neighborhood sponsored by Committees for the Defense of the Revolution. Inset, Gerardo Hernández, left, national coordinator of CDRs, spoke along with René González, right. They are two of the Cuban Five, revolutionaries who spent up to 16 years in U.S. prisons on frame-up charges before winning their freedom in 2013-14.



of difficulties here as a result of the U.S. economic blockade. For example, high food prices because so many goods must be imported, and limited trash collection because the U.S. blockade leaves our trucks without fuel or spare parts.

“We discuss these problems in the CDRs. It’s not easy,” Padrón told us. “But one thing Mr. Trump should know — despite all this, we’re not going to give in to the demands of the imperialists that we change our system.” Others at the meeting said they knew what capitalism is like and did not want to ever go

back to that exploitation.

Speaking with *Militant* reporters a few days before, Gustavo Chui Beltrán, a retired brigadier general in Cuba’s Revolutionary Armed Forces and also an Angola combatant, said it’s true the U.S. rulers know that, if they invaded Cuba, they would face a response far different from when they launched their assault on Venezuela.

Will they invade? “There’s one thing we’ve learned from our revolution, from Fidel and Che [Guevara],” Chui replied. “We can’t ever lower our guard.”

Protests against US economic blockade of Cuba spread, March 8-15 actions called

Continued from front page

Venezuela to Cuba, and the application of tariffs on countries that sell fuel to the island, has greatly worsened our current situation.”

This has led to “massive daily blackouts” and means the “public transportation system is unable to meet the demand,” adding, “hospitals have been deprived not only of basic supplies to ensure care of the population, but also of medication to treat our illnesses.”

Washington’s attacks on Cuba come at “one of the most critical points in her entire history,” the message said, targeting “a people whose only crime was achieving, through their own strength, freedom for the first time in their history.” The fact that Cuba’s people continue to resist, “in the eyes of our neighbor 90 miles away, is the greatest of affronts.”

Supporters of the Communist League built the protest, pointing to the need for action by working people to oppose the U.S. rulers’ blockade and escalating military threats against Cuba.

The Maritime Union of Australia, which organizes seafarers and long-shoremen, sent a message to the Cuban Embassy in Canberra Feb. 17 condemning Washington’s oil blockade. “Threats of naval and economic measures against countries that lawfully trade with and supply vital goods, including oil, to Cuba,” the union said, “constitute an intolerable extension of the blockade and an affront to the sovereignty of all affected nations.

“As maritime workers, we are particularly conscious of the gravity of attempts to enforce coercive measures on international shipping and energy supplies, including threats of secondary sanctions against third countries and companies.”

MIAMI — Nearly 50 people rallied in a pouring rain in the Flag Plaza at

the Miami International Airport here March 1 to protest the government’s escalating attacks on Cuba. The Miami Coalition to End the Blockade of Cuba and the José Martí Cultural Association organized the action, with the Democratic Socialists of America, Socialist Workers Party and a number of other groups participating.

A constant flow of cars and people passed by, and many drivers slowed down to read the handmade signs we carried. They included, “The oil blockade is a crime, US hands off Cuba! End the criminal economic blockade!” and “No power = no incubators, no water in homes, no trucks, no buses: Let Cubans live. No más guerra contra Cuba. [No more war against Cuba.]”

CBS and Univision TV both filmed the demonstration, and CBS ran a story on the protest on the evening news.

Robert Rosa, a member of the American Indian Movement, drove four hours from Deltona to join the protest. He held a giant Cuban flag and chanted with the crowd, “¡Familia sí, bloqueo no!” (Family yes, blockade no!) This was one of the most popular chants at the event.

— Laura Anderson

LOS ANGELES — Some 100 people joined an emergency speak-out held in person and online against the U.S. oil blockade against Cuba Feb. 28. The program, hosted by the Los Angeles U.S. Hands Off Cuba Committee, featured David Ramírez from the Cuban Embassy in Washington, D.C., and other speakers.

“The blockade against Cuba is still in place and still affecting the people of Cuba,” Ramírez said. “It’s still affecting the children in our schools, still affecting our patients in our hospitals.”

“Yes, the blockade is stronger than ever. Yes, the United States is enforce-

ing it. Yes, there was an incursion of terrorists that tried to enter the country illegally,” he said. “We are creative in essence and we will always seek for a way out of our problems. If you block access to fuel, we will put in solar panels in order to power our hospitals and our schools. If you block our access to food, we will start growing food in the cities if we have to. We are not going to give up.

“When the people of Cuba feel threatened, we unite, because for us what’s most important is to preserve our nation, to preserve our independence, to preserve our sovereignty,” he said. “And we are willing to do everything to defend our nation because we have shed a lot of blood for many centuries in order to be independent and not be a colony of any other country.”

Ramírez talked about U.S. efforts to prevent other governments from requesting Cuban doctors to serve in their countries. The governments of Honduras and Guatemala have recently been told they must leave. “There is a direct pressure campaign from the U.S. government against these countries to stop their medical cooperation with us. We always try to pursue humanitarian

Cuba border guards defeat assault

Continued from front page

Cuban authorities have identified the boat crew, including one of the deceased, Michael Ortega Casanova. His relatives told U.S. media he’d fallen into an “obsessive and diabolical” quest to bring down the Cuban government. Accounts from family and friends of the other men support the Cuban government’s report that they were part of a group of Cuban counter-revolutionaries living in Florida who “set out on a mission to invade the island,” the *Miami Herald* reported.

Cuban Deputy Foreign Minister Carlos Fernández de Cossío reasserted Feb. 26 that Cuba has “the duty and responsibility to protect its territorial waters.” It is a mainstay of Cuba’s national defense, of its “sovereignty, as well as the lives, security, and well-being of Cubans.”

Fernández de Cossío explained that Cuban authorities have sought collaboration with the U.S. State Department and Coast Guard from the outset of the incident.

U.S. threats and slanders

But U.S. officials wasted no time cranking up threats and slanders against Havana.

Ignoring Cuba’s sovereign right to

investigate and prosecute the perpetrators of the attack, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Feb. 25 that Washington will provide its own version of what happened and then “we’ll respond appropriately.”

He asserted the shootout happened “on open sea.” But all the evidence shows it happened well within Cuba’s territorial waters.

Florida law enforcement officials have reported the boat used in the operation was stolen by one of the men killed in the shootout.

Fernández de Cossío said that Cuban authorities provided the U.S. government in both 2023 and 2025 with a list of individuals and organizations involved in activities promoting, planning and financing terrorist acts against Cuba from the U.S. Two of those detained in the Feb. 25 operation, Amijail Sánchez and Leordan Cruz, were on the list.

“The Cuban government is still awaiting responses” from Washington, Fernández de Cossío said. He pointed to the long history of activity by counterrevolutionary groups that have carried out violent attacks and provocations against Cuba with impunity from U.S. soil (see article below).

No ‘double taps’ against boat

“It is highly unusual to see shootouts on open sea like that,” Rubio said. “It’s something, frankly, that hasn’t happened with Cuba in a very long time.”

But as recently as June 2022 a U.S. speedboat entered Cuba’s territorial waters off the coast of Villa Clara. Its crew fired at Cuban border guards, wounding an officer. Shortly after, another U.S. boat was intercepted. When Cuban guards asked for identification, suspects on board began shooting. These boats were among 13 intercepted by Cuban authorities that year alone for human trafficking.

The Straits of Florida is also a major corridor for drug smuggling. Cuba has a long, public record of combating illegal drug trafficking, often in close collaboration with the U.S. Coast Guard.

Unlike the U.S. military’s “shoot-first-ask-questions-later” approach in blowing alleged drug boats out of the water in the Caribbean and Pacific since September 2025 — nowhere close to the U.S. — Cuban authorities use different tactics.

“We only respond with firearms when we are attacked,” said Col. Ybey Carballo Pérez, head of Cuba’s border guards. “It’s a rational and defensive model that prioritizes avoiding the use of weapons except in situations of



Cubadebate/Abel Padrón Padilla

Weapons seized from counterrevolutionaries from Florida who approached Cuba on a speedboat and opened fire on Cuban border guards Feb. 25. Ten were killed or captured.

direct aggression.”

Also, fortunately for the survivors of the speedboat that intruded into Cuban waters Feb. 25, the wounded were immediately taken to a hospital.

The U.S. targeting of boats, on the

contrary, has included at least one incident involving a “double-tap” strike.

Two men who survived an initial bombing Sept. 2, 2025, were killed by a second one ordered by the U.S. high command to ensure their deaths.

‘Brothers to the Rescue’ shot down flying provocatively toward Cuba in the 1990s

BY TERRY EVANS

As part of its stepped-up threats against the Cuban people and government, Washington is dusting off the long-discredited charge against Raúl Castro, a central leader of the Cuban Revolution, of ordering the shooting down of two planes by Cuba’s air force in 1996.

Four members of Congress wrote to the Justice Department Feb. 13 demanding Castro be indicted.

The two planes belonged to Brothers to the Rescue, a counterrevolutionary Cuban American group based in Miami. It had organized provocative flights from the U.S. over Cuban territory in the mid-1990s, despite Havana’s repeated requests to Washington to stop them, warning that they would be shot down.

In February 1996, three planes intruded into Cuba’s airspace, defying warnings by Cuban air traffic controllers. Two of them were shot down in a defensive act by Cuba’s air force, ending the hostile flights over Cuba.

Far from being a “humanitarian” group as they claimed, Brothers to the Rescue leader José Basulto proudly

acknowledged his decadeslong record as a CIA-trained operative behind numerous attempts to carry out terror attacks against Cuba. His admission came during the trial of five Cuban revolutionaries who came to the U.S. to monitor the activities of counter-revolutionary groups in Florida and warn the Cuban government about imminent attacks.

In 2001 the Bill Clinton White House framed up the revolutionaries, who became known as the Cuban Five. They served up to 16 years in prison. By 2014 all of them had won their freedom after an international defense campaign.

Using the shooting down of the planes as a pretext, Clinton in March 1996 signed the Helms-Burton Act with bipartisan congressional support. The measure is being used today to intensify the U.S. rulers’ economic and political war against Cuba.

The Trump administration issued an executive order Jan. 29 to block all oil supplies to Cuba. It’s the latest step in Washington’s bipartisan drive to punish working people in Cuba for having made a socialist revolution.

— VIVIAN SAHNER

Largest nurses’ union in US condemns blockade of Cuba

National Nurses United, the largest union of registered nurses in the U.S. with over 225,000, members released a statement Feb. 27 calling for an end to Washington’s blockade of Cuba. Excerpts are printed below.

“The nurses call on the administration and Congress to end the blockade and allow full delivery of oil resources and other aid for the Cuban people.”

“Depriving the Cuban people of essential resources needed to sustain life and health is an unconscionable violation of human rights,” said NNU President Mary Turner. “As nurses, we will not be silent when our nation’s policies cause immense suffering for any people, whether at home or abroad.”

“It is long past time for a complete reversal in the regime-change policies of the U.S. in Cuba,” she said. “The Cuban people — not politicians in Washington — ought to decide their own leaders and their own future.”

‘Women wanted to participate in what was a genuine revolution’

To mark International Women’s Day, one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for March is *Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution*, by three leaders of the Federation of Cuban Women, Vilma Espín, Asela de los Santos and Yolanda Ferrer. It tells the story of Cuban women — workers, peasants, housewives and youth — who joined the unfolding socialist revolution and transformed their lives. The excerpt is from “With No Preconceived Structure or Agenda” by Espín, who was a leader of the Cuban Revolution for over 50 years. Copyright © 2012 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY VILMA ESPÍN

The Federation of Cuban Women was launched on August 23, 1960. In reality, however, we had been laying the foundations for more than a year.

In 1959, the first year after the triumph, women wanted to organize to participate more effectively in the tasks of the revolution, and we responded to this pressure. I remember being struck, in the first months after the January 1 victory, by the large number of women, some carrying babies, who took part in demonstrations and street actions. There was strong support for the revolution, even before it had demonstrated its full meaning.

Women who were already organized in various small groups approached



Federation of Cuban Women
Young girls from peasant families graduate from Ana Betancourt School in Havana, 1961. They learned to read and write, sew, and gained pride in themselves. Fidel Castro called for a mass literacy campaign, transforming the lives of the Cuban people, deeply impacting women.

me. They wrote letters; they asked to meet. These included people from the women’s sections of the political parties that supported the revolution. Others came from religious organizations, such as groups of Catholic and Baptist women. There were trade union members — from the garment union, for example. There were peasant women. And, of course, there were women who had taken part in the war.

As you might expect, those of us who had participated in the war — whether in the urban underground or in the mountains — were approached by women who wanted to do precisely what we had done, to take part in the revolution. They looked to us for leadership.

“What can we do?” they asked.

“How can we show our support for the revolution?”

“What’s needed most?”

They asked to be trained in emergency medical care, because of the threats and attacks from imperialism. So that became one of our first tasks, even before we organized the Federation of Cuban Women. It was these classes, in fact, along with the sewing classes we organized, that gave birth to the federation — not the other way around.

The classes weren’t just a way of responding to women who had asked for emergency medical training. They were a way of bringing women together, so we could discuss things they wanted to

know about the revolution.

Then the first revolutionary laws started to be issued by the new government.

From the very beginning we decided that all children would go to school. Parents were required by law to make sure they did so. So the first big job was to find enough teachers. Women responded to this need, both those who were already teachers and those who had finished sixth grade and were taking review courses to prepare for teaching.

Many women who were housewives, who didn’t work outside the home, who had devoted themselves only to their children and their families, reached out to us. They, too, asked us what they could do.

We began to organize women who were already in trade unions, women who were workers, and women who had some kind of political experience, either in the past or more recently. We helped them set up classes in emergency medical treatment and sewing. The medical care classes were taught with the help of the Armed Forces and the Red Cross. The sewing classes were taught by women who had completed the initial courses. This was a way of organizing women who were housewives. They were very eager to learn how to make clothes for themselves and their children.

Women in the classes who had some political experience explained the new

laws to others. When the Agrarian Reform Law was adopted, women asked a lot of questions about it. Peasant women, of course, had a better understanding of what the law meant. But many women approached others known for their activity during the revolutionary struggle to learn about it and how they could support the revolution.

So the federation arose not so much as a decision of the revolutionary leadership but as a response to the demand from masses of women from different layers of society who were already in action. ...

When I talk about how the federation was created, I always emphasize that at the time we didn’t talk about women’s liberation. We didn’t talk about women’s emancipation, or the struggle for equality. We didn’t use those terms then. What we did talk about was participation. Women wanted to participate. This included women who had taken an active part in the struggle, who had been in the mountains. They, like other women across the country, wanted to help in this new stage that was dawning, which was a genuine revolution.

From the very beginning, the new laws made it clear to the mother, the housewife, the woman who had lost her children in the struggle, that this revolution was in her interests. It was in the interests of her children and her family.

Women had confidence in the revolution — because there was real proof, every day, that the revolution wasn’t just hot air, it wasn’t empty phrases of the kind people were used to hearing from politicians in the past. This was the genuine thing. And women wanted to be part of it, to *do* something. The more the revolutionary laws strengthened this conviction, the more women demanded a chance to contribute — and the more they saw how necessary their contribution was.

Sometimes I’m asked to give a one-word definition of the Cuban Revolution. I reply that it’s about participation — the participation of the entire people in everything. Together, the population went through difficult years. For women, this had an impact right from the beginning. They began to understand the point Lenin emphasized over and over — that for a revolution to move forward, to develop, women had to participate.

March
BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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A working-class campaign against war

The protests being organized against the so-called “US/Israel war” on Iran have been called by groups like the People’s Forum and Party for Socialism and Liberation, which are unabashed partisans of the Iranian regime and its “axis of resistance” allies — Hamas, Hezbollah, the Houthis and related Iraqi militias. These forces are united in their goal of destroying Israel, the only country that offers refuge from Jew-hatred, and killing or driving out the Jews who live there.

The People’s World, paper of the Communist Party, says “Progressives denounced the war as a manifestation of U.S. and Israeli imperialism, and worse.” Workers World Party issued a statement, “Sayyed Ali Khamenei: Rest in power!” It describes him as “the great Iranian leader of the Islamic Revolution” and a “world-renowned religious and political leader who represented Iran’s steadfast resistance to U.S. imperialism.” These forces — and much of the liberal media — insist on referring to the unfolding conflict as an “Israeli/U.S. war,” when in fact these are two very different wars.

These groups speak as if the U.S. imperialists’ bloody war to extend their domination and plunder of the peoples and resources of the Middle East is the same as Israel’s war to defend its existence and that of the Jewish people. Israel is fighting to prevent the Iranian rulers from acquiring the weapons — nuclear and otherwise — Tehran needs to wipe Israel off the face of the earth and inflict another Ho-

locoust. The Jews in Israel make up almost half of the entire Jewish population in the world.

These are two quite different wars and require counterposed responses from working people worldwide.

And there is a third battle being waged inside Iran. Since 2017 there has been an upsurge in struggles by Iran’s working people and oppressed nationalities to get the murderous bourgeois clerical regime off their backs. That regime was the product of a counterrevolution in the early 1980s aimed at pushing back the powerful gains won by workers, farmers, women and oppressed nationalities as part of the revolutionary upsurge that toppled the U.S.-backed shah in 1979.

A working-class campaign against the U.S. war on Iran has to start from the interests that workers share in common in the U.S., in Iran, in Israel and worldwide. That includes unequivocally opposing the U.S. rulers’ bombing of Iran, and explaining why workers should back calls for Washington to get its troops, bases and warships out of the Middle East. It means defending Israel’s right to exist as a refuge from Jew-hatred and pogroms. And it means support for the aspirations and struggles of the toilers inside Iran.

It is impossible to accomplish these objectives in the actions being promoted today. Their goals are a deadly danger to working people.

Join the Socialist Workers Party in advancing a working-class campaign against Washington’s war along the line projected in the party statement “US out of the Middle East!” printed on the front page.

Epstein and the pornographication of US politics

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idents. Another alleges, with no evidence presented, that Epstein worked for the Israeli spy agency Mossad, stoking all-too-familiar reactionary notions that he was part of an international Jewish conspiracy seeking world domination.

Scandalmongering a danger for workers

Conspiracy theories are based on rejecting any idea that the workings of society can be explained by unfolding the class interests involved, let alone that workers are capable of organizing to fight to change our conditions. The files’ dump also sets a dangerous precedent for document releases in criminal frame-ups in the years ahead, targeting trade unionists, communists and opponents of Washington’s wars.

The dangers of bourgeois scandalmongering for the working class are explained clearly in the article “Imperialism’s March Toward Fascism and War” by Jack Barnes, Socialist Workers Party national secretary, in *New International* no. 10.

“The greater *vulnerability* to scandals today,”

Barnes writes, “is a reflection of the instability of the world imperialist order and the growing lack of confidence in this system and its leading personnel expressed both by its beneficiaries and by millions of others.”

“Scandalmongering is an effort,” he writes, “to exacerbate and profit from middle-class panic and to drag workers ... into the pit of resentment and salacious envy.” Barnes aptly describes this as the “pornographication of politics.”

“What the working class needs is not exposés of bourgeois politicians,” Barnes says. “We need to be able to explain politically why the working class has no common interests with the class these bourgeois politicians speak for.”

Along this road, workers can take steps to build a party of our own. This course, not infatuation with allegations about the dissolute and corrupt behavior of capitalists and their politicians, is the road to workers developing confidence in our own capacities and advancing the struggle for our class’s emancipation.

Ábrego García fight against deportation advances

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SMART Local 100 was returned to the U.S., a result of the support he had won and an order from the U.S. Supreme Court. But before the plane landed, Ábrego García was indicted in Nashville, Tennessee, on criminal charges of having engaged in “human smuggling” — crimes he insists he never committed.

The case is based on a traffic stop there over two years ago. After a discussion, the cops decided not to arrest him for anything, not even to give him a ticket.

On Feb. 26, Ábrego García was back in court in Nashville, accompanied by his wife, Jennifer Suarez Sura; members of CASA, the immigrant rights group that has defended him; the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition; and other supporters who crowded the courtroom. Ábrego García didn’t testify.

In December, U.S. District Judge Waverly Crenshaw Jr. canceled the criminal case against him, ordering an evidentiary hearing instead to decide whether Ábrego García was the target of “selective vindictive prosecution” by the Justice Department.

Ábrego García’s lawyers explain the charges are retaliation against him that should be thrown out.

For more than two hours, former Acting U.S. At-

torney Robert McGuire was questioned about emails, phone calls and meetings with Department of Justice and other officials, who insisted Ábrego García’s prosecution was a “top priority for us.” Despite the evidence, McGuire testified repeatedly that he alone made the decision to prosecute. “I did it,” he said.

But the more government witnesses testify, the more they undermine their own case. McGuire’s testimony couldn’t rebut the 3,000 pages of government documents Judge Crenshaw had unsealed that convinced him Ábrego García’s lawyers looked to be right. The documents show top Justice Department officials pressing McGuire to act, as well as McGuire’s willingness to comply. “We want the high command looped in. Happy to talk at any time,” McGuire told one Justice Department official.

Judge Crenshaw said he will rule within 30 days. No further hearings are scheduled.

“We heard many, many times over the past year that Kilmar will never walk a free man in this country ever again,” Ama Frimpong, CASA’s legal director, told reporters outside the court. “And what happened today? Kilmar walked inside this courtroom a free man, and he’s walking out a free man.”

Fight ban on ‘Militant’

Continued from front page

freedom of the press of the *Militant*, and that of the workers behind bars reading it, as guaranteed by the First Amendment of the U.S. constitution,” Félix Vincent Ardea, president of division 89 of the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference, wrote to the Florida state prison Literature Review Committee Feb. 26. “As workers, we have a fundamental right to our own press organ.”

Prison officials claim this coverage is “dangerously inflammatory in that it advocates or encourages riot, insurrection, rebellion, organized prison protest, disruption of the institution, or the violation of the federal law, state law, or Department rules.”

And that they present “a threat to the security, order, or rehabilitative objectives of the correctional system or the safety of any person.”

“Nothing in the cited articles is ‘inflammatory’ or advocates for any kind of violence,” wrote Vincent Ardea. “On the opposite, the *Militant* champions a course of peaceful, *lawful* protesting led by the unions in order to fight for immigrant rights.”

Each of the articles objected to includes photos of broad, union-supported demonstrations.

“Peacefully protesting for your rights is at the core of the liberties protected by the United States’ constitution, and reporting on such protests is not cause for accusations of violence,” Vincent Ardea added.

The *Militant* was informed March 3 that the Literature Review Committee has upheld the ban of issues no. 5 and 6, and it did the same for no. 4 a couple of weeks earlier. The committee has not said what it found objectionable in these articles. *Militant* attorney David Goldstein is preparing an appeal of all three of these bans to be filed by mid-March.

“Please immediately reverse the bans,” wrote Timothy Frankland, a member of the American Postal Workers Union in Eagan, Minnesota, in a March 1 letter to the Literature Review Committee. “The justifications offered for the ban are unsupported by the articles’ actual content. The articles strongly condemn ‘ultraleft actions aimed at disrupting ICE’ as well as any ‘provocations leading to violent clashes.’”

‘Uphold the rights of prisoners’

“I call for you and your institution to uphold and maintain the right of prisoners to read what they wish and to form their own opinions about political developments in the world,” he added.

Among the groups that have submitted letters demanding the ban be overturned are the Florida Press Association, which represents all the daily and most of the weekly newspapers in that state, and PEN America, the 103-year-old branch of the world’s leading international literary and human rights organization.

“I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the Committee’s recent decision to uphold the impoundment of three issues of the *Militant*,” said a Feb. 28 letter sent by David Lefrancois, a professor at the University of Quebec in Outaouais. The claim that the issues are inflammatory, “profoundly misrepresents the content and intention of the articles.”

“Upholding the rights to read, to think critically, and to engage with divergent perspectives remains essential to both democratic life and rehabilitation efforts within the correctional system.”

Keep the letters coming! Urge the Literature Review Committee to reverse the bans.

Join ‘Militant’ fight on prison ban

Get letters of support from unions, churches and defenders of workers rights and free speech. Send to Literature Review Committee, Florida Department of Corrections, 501 South Calhoun Street, Tallahassee, FL 32399-2500, or email to Melvin Herring@fdc.myflorida.com and Saritza.Legault@fdc.myflorida.com, with a copy to themilitant@mac.com

Send a check to the *Militant*, 306 W. 37th St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10018, earmarked “Prisoners Rights Fight.”