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THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 90/NO. 44 DECEMBER 7, 2026

INSIDE

Puerto Rico meeting discusses book on Cuba, African independence fight

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Canadian soldiers killed in training, gov't treats us as cannon fodder

BY STEVE PENNER

MONTREAL — Four Canadian Armed Forces soldiers were killed Oct. 17 while training with live munitions under dangerous conditions at the army base in Wainwright, Alberta. A fifth has died since. Thirty-nine more of the 84 infantry trainees were injured, 19 critically. Fourteen have horrendous burns covering 30% to 60% of their bodies. Fifteen remain on ventilators.

They had been trapped in a rapidly spreading grass fire that had been burning for hours just one kilometer (0.62 mile) away from where they were training.

The military commanders continued the training, even though weather forecasts warned of dangerously high winds and extremely dry conditions.

Disasters like this that affect workers in uniform need to be the concern of the labor movement.

People interviewed by Global News

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AS I SEE IT

China summit shows growing int'l rivalries, threats of war

BY TERRY EVANS

Despite their pompous claims that they had mapped out an agenda to reduce the risk of a nuclear war, Presidents Donald Trump, Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin accomplished nothing in their 90-minute summit in Shenzhen, China, Nov. 19 to lessen the deepening conflicts and spreading wars among capitalist powers today.

Trump claimed they were "making history," having signed a joint declaration promising to "conduct a dialogue on reducing nuclear risks." He showed what this meant when he said the agreement didn't apply to Beijing, Moscow and Washington, but opened the door to "combat the threat of nuclear proliferation in other countries." Trump explained, "That's what we're doing in Iran."

The actual wars and military moves underway by the three governments speak much louder than their "peace" talk. Washington continues to pursue its war against Iran, aimed at advancing its domination and plunder of the Middle East. Moscow is escalating its deadly

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Build support for refinery workers locked out by BP!

Bosses get gov't to cut off unemployment checks



Militant/Naomi Craine

Nov. 14 rally in support of 800 members of USW Local 7-1, locked out by BP in Whiting, Indiana. The refinery workers have gained widespread solidarity against the bosses' offensive.

BY NAOMI CRAINE

WHITING, Ind. — The 800 members of United Steelworkers Local 7-1 who have been locked out by BP at its refinery here since March face a new battle. An administrative law judge for the Indiana Department of Workforce Development ruled Nov. 20 that the refinery workers were not entitled to unemployment benefits that had previously been approved.

Nearly 700 members of Local 7-1 filed for unemployment, and many had already collected the maximum six months allowed. They now face the state trying to claw back that money. The local is appealing the decision.

"It's ridiculous that they're going after this," Brian Davis told the *Militant* at the union hall Nov. 23. "This is just union busting. They're trying to bankrupt the union, to starve us out." Davis showed me the decision signed by Ad-

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Socialist Workers Party campaigners: 'We're building a party to take power'



Militant/Arlene Rubinstein

Samir Hazboun, SWP candidate for mayor of Washington, D.C., campaigning on election day Nov. 3, speaks to Jameshia Richardson, prep cook, who got a subscription to the *Militant*.

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

Socialist Workers Party member Rachele Fruit and another *Militant* supporter talked with workers at the Hialeah rail yard gate in Miami as they came off their shift Nov. 23. They introduced them to the *Militant* issue featuring coverage of the 2026 election results as well as the recent successful strike by Wheeling & Lake Erie Railway engineers and conductors over bosses doing union jobs.

"Amtrak is doing that very same thing here, using bosses to do our work and refusing to hire more union workers," said Juan Castillo. Originally from Honduras, he has been an Amtrak maintenance worker for 20 years and a member of the International Association of Machinists.

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Rising prices hit workers hard. Latest blow — your shoes will now cost more

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

High prices are hitting working people right down to our feet, where the cost of shoes, sneakers and boots keeps going up. Shoe prices in the month of October alone shot up 2.1%, and "there's little sign that prices will fall soon," the *New York Times* noted Nov. 17.

Deckers Brands, the owner of Ugg boots, raised the price of its classic sheepskin model 2.6% to $195. Bosses there also raised the price tag for its Hoka running shoes. This comes on top of fiscal year 2026 where the company's revenues rose 10% to a record $5.47 billion.

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Ukrainians mark the 94th anniversary of the Holodomor: 'Death by starvation'

BY ROY LANDERSEN

NEW YORK — Some 200 Ukrainians held a march here Nov. 21 behind a banner, "Holodomor: Walk in remembrance." Two long rows of participants held a giant Ukrainian flag between them. Similar commemorations took place around the world, especially in Ukraine. Holodomor — the Ukrainian word for "death by hunger"— is what they call the man-made famine imposed in 1932-33 by Joseph Stalin's dictatorial regime in Moscow that killed millions

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Strike at British Columbia copper mine wins support

UNITE HERE one-day strike at Qantas Lounge at LAX

Soldiers killed in training

Continued from front page

described the gusts as stronger than anything they'd ever seen. The winds tore across the province before they reached Wainwright, whipping up dust storms, damaging property and blowing semitrailer trucks off the highway.

The wind storm coming was "well advertised days in advance," said meteorologist Anthony Farnell. When the high winds hit the base, the fire, which had already tripled in size to 48 hectares (119 acres), rapidly spread through the dry grass and trapped the soldiers in a wall of flames.

Military brass ignored risks

Despite the rapidly growing risk, the military brass ordered the exercise to continue and stood by its decision afterward. Gen. Jennie Carignan, chief of Canada's armed forces, said it's normal for troops to continue training, even if there's a brush fire or other threat nearby, because it reflects the real conditions they'll face in combat.

Mike Blais, from pro-military Canadian Veterans Advocacy, said that while it's "tragic when a training accident happens," they're simply inevitable. "It would be more tragic if we started making all the training so safety-orientated that the training level is diminished, and those troops are not ready and not competently prepared to deal with what the Canadian government sent them into."

In other words, the needs of Canada's capitalist rulers for a war-ready military come far before ensuring that the training of soldiers is conducted safely. They're treated as cannon fodder even before they're thrown into combat in the wars the ruling rich are planning to defend their position in the world pecking order, lusting for profit and plunder.

The training exercises in Wainwright were aimed at preparing new troops "ready to move within hours (to) any hotspot around the world," Major-Gen. Liam Wade Rutland said. Ottawa fields 54,000 troops today, with some 3,000 deployed in operations in the country and around the world, including over 2,000 in a Canadian-led multinational brigade in Latvia.

Dozens of Canadian soldiers have died in training exercises since World War II. The Department of Defense refuses to release the exact numbers.

In 2005 Patrick Dessureault was killed at CFB Wainwright after the Light Armored Vehicle he was traveling in went over the edge of a cliff and flipped into the Battle River.

Nearly a decade later Global News reported the military still hasn't implemented recommendations from the enquiry into Dessureault's death to improve safety for other soldiers. In May 2014, Lt.-Col. Dan Bobbitt was killed during a similar training accident at Wainwright when another Light Armored Vehicle rolled over, injuring four others, two seriously.

This vehicle has been involved in more than a dozen rollovers since it was introduced in 1999, including several involving troops sent to Afghanistan that resulted in five fatalities. None of this was reported widely in the media.



Christopher Katsarov/The Canadian Press via AP

Memorial outside Canadian Forces Base Wainwright in Alberta for soldiers killed, injured in an Oct. 17 training exercise engulfed by wildfire. Despite warnings of dangerous weather, commanders kept the exercise going.

"How many losses do we have to endure before they do something?" Dessureault's brother, Samuel, said to Global News.

Michel Drapeau, a retired colonel with 34 years of service said, "If what is happening in DND [Department of National Defense] now were happening in the civilian domain, in hospitals, or police forces or in construction — there would be outrage. And reasonably so because we're putting other people at risk."

Safety for workers in uniform

From a working-class point of view, the rank-and-file soldier — as opposed to the military brass — is a worker in uniform who needs to be thoroughly and safely trained in military skills and tools. This is helpful for the toilers, whether they are going to be forced to fight in the Canadian rulers' wars or put their training to use in class-struggle battles to come.

And contrary to the remarks of Drapeau, the callous disregard for the lives of soldiers-in-training by the officers who place them in known dangerous conditions is no different than the disregard for the lives and limbs of workers by their bosses whose sole concern is increasing profits. Workers injured or killed in unsafe working conditions can be replaced.

"There is a lack of rigor, there is a lot of laxity in occupational health and safety, because production imperatives are more important than the lives of workers. It should be the other way around," Simon Levesque, the occupational health and safety manager at the Quebec Federation of Labour Construction union, said after nearly 20 workers died on the job over a three-month span in 2024.

In today's deepening capitalist crisis, bosses everywhere are pushing workers to work faster, longer and harder to defend their markets and profits. This means more workers are maimed or killed from "accidents" on the job. In Quebec, for example, the number of workers who have died on the job has jumped by more than 50% over the past five years. There were 91 last year alone.

The labor movement needs to lead the fight to control conditions and safety for workers both in uniform and on the job, as well as to defend their rights.

These questions are becoming more and more important as the imperialist powers, including Canada, accelerate their drive toward future wars.

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THE MILITANT

Support rail workers' fight for safety, job rights!

Members of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Division 292 went on strike Nov. 11 when Wheeling & Lake Erie supervisors operated a train instead of union members, threatening safety, jobs and working conditions.

Within nine hours the union declared victory.



Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen BLET rail workers shut down Ohio rail yard Nov. 11 as workers defended union rights.

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The Militant

Vol. 90/No. 44

Closing news date: November 25, 2026

Editor: John Studer

Managing Editor: Terry Evans

Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Seth Galinsky, Martín Koppel, Roy Landersen, Leslie Dork, Jacob Perasso, Vivian Sahner, Brian Williams.

Published weekly except for one week in January, three weeks in June, and one week in September, one week in December.

Business Manager: Bob Bruce

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Website: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: United States: For one year send $35 to above address.

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

‘Building a party to take power’

Continued from front page

“They’re trying to get rid of union workers. There aren’t that many union jobs in Florida, which is a ‘right to work’ state,” he said.

“The capitalists are in sharpening competition, driven to squeeze more out of our hides and put the crisis of their system on our backs,” Fruit said.

“And the Democrats and Republicans are in cahoots, working to the same end, trying to break us. It doesn’t matter which of them is in office,” said Castillo. “There aren’t enough workers in office. We need a party for workers.”

“That party exists,” said Fruit. “That’s our party, the Socialist Workers Party. We are a party of workers that aims to be part of leading workers in our millions to make a socialist revolution and put our class in power.”

Castillo got a copy of the *Militant* and another worker got a subscription.

In discussions with members of the SWP on the results of the elections, few working people we spoke to thought the outcome would bring any relief from the worsening working and living conditions we face. And they were interested in talking about it.

SWP members Dave Ferguson and Candace Wagner campaigned at shift change at the ATI steel plant in Washington, Pennsylvania, Nov. 23. The *Militant*’s front-page story on solidarity with the steelworkers locked out at the BP oil refinery in Whiting, Indiana, caught their attention.

Campaigners asked the workers what they thought would come from the elections. Answers ranged from “something will change, I’m not sure whether it will be good or bad”; to “as long as the Democrats don’t try to impeach Trump, they might get something accomplished”; to “nothing will change. After the 2020 election I gave up.”

Several workers stopped to talk. When one worker said he didn’t think anything will change, Ferguson agreed. The Democrats and Republicans are both parties of the bosses. To defend our interests as workers, we need to break with them and chart our own course, Ferguson said.

Wagner told the *Militant* everyone they talked to was interested in hearing what the SWP had to say, and four bought copies of the paper.

“The conditions for truck drivers are just horrible right now,” Michael Bradly, a driver from Nashville, Tennessee, told SWP campaigners Betsy Farley and Jacquie Henderson Nov. 22. They met him at a truck stop outside Cincinnati where many drivers have picked up subscriptions to the *Militant* and bought books by Pathfinder Press.

Bradly told them that the prices for fuel and truck repairs have gone up, while freight rates have gone down. “So we’re working harder for less money,” he said. “The other day I filled up in Alabama. I spent $900 for 150 gallons.”

When asked if he thought the elections were going to change anything, Bradly said, “probably not. I mean it got worse after the war started and Trump started his BS across the country.”

“It’s not just Trump, but the Democrats too are responsible for the crisis working people face today,” Farley said. “Their wars and their drive for ever higher profits are grinding working-class families into the ground. We need a party of our own, that can organize all workers to fight for unions and unite the working class. That’s what the Socialist Workers Party stands for. We need a workers government, not like what we have today — a government of the rich.”

Bradly bought two issues of the *Militant*. “Here’s my phone number so we can stay in touch and continue this discussion,” he said.

Workers are constantly told the only choice is between the two big bosses’ parties, anything else is a waste. The opposite is the case — when our class gains the confidence to break with the parties of the capitalist class that oppress and exploit us, it will open the road to real progress. We can change the world!

The widening openings for discussions like these will continue. To join in, contact the campaign center nearest you on page 8.



Join Dec. 9 National Day of Actions at 10 U.S. airports to support flight attendants at regional airlines fighting for new contracts.

For details go to: afacwa.org/rsvp-now-for-national-day-of-action-for-regional-bargaining.

Books by revolutionary leaders in demand at Portland fair



Militant/Jacob Perasso

PORTLAND, Ore. — Hundreds stopped by the Pathfinder Book stand at the Portland Book Festival Nov. 6-7, buying some 76 titles and 26 subscriptions to the *Militant*. Many wanted to discuss a range of political questions, from the roots of today’s deepening economic crisis and the growing threat of more and more dangerous wars; the meaning of the recently concluded U.S. elections; labor struggles past and present; the importance of the fight against Jew-hatred; and the road to end attacks on immigrant workers, racism, women’s oppression and capitalist exploitation.

“It is good to see someone standing up for the Jewish people,” Victoria Lewitt told this *Militant* correspondent, a member of the Socialist Workers Party, after picking up a copy of *The Jewish Question*; *The Fight Against Jew-Hatred and Pogroms in the Imperialist Epoch: Stakes for the International Working Class*; and a subscription to the *Militant*. “Two weeks ago, we woke up to see a swastika outside our balcony,” she said. Perasso explained that the SWP defends Israel’s right to exist and to defend itself as a refuge for Jews.

Top sellers were six copies of *Cuba and the Independence War in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde: The Fall of the Last Colonial Empire in Africa* by Cuban combatant Víctor Dreke; five copies of *Women in Cuba, the Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution*, which documents the formation and work of the Federation of Cuban Women born after Cuba’s socialist revolution; and four of *Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women* by SWP leaders Evelyn Reed, Joseph Hansen and Mary-Alice Waters. Overall sales were among the highest of any year Pathfinder has set up at the festival.

— JACOB PERASSO

94th anniversary of Holodomor: ‘Death by starvation’

Continued from front page

of Ukrainian workers and peasants.

The march also backed Ukraine’s battle to defend its national sovereignty almost five years after Russian President Vladimir Putin’s invasion. It condemned Moscow’s intensified air attacks on Ukraine’s cities, factories and rail network today, with handwritten signs like “Russia destroys what it can’t control” and “Russia uses starvation as a weapon.”

“Serious hunger is again being used as a weapon in Ukraine today,” Andrij Dobriansky, a reporter who visited Ukraine this year, told the assembled marchers. He pointed to Oleshky where no food had been allowed in for six months by Russian occupiers, forcing the residents to eat grass. The town is just across the Dnipro River — and the front line — from the Ukrainian city of Kherson, which was occupied for nine months in 2022.

A six-day local ceasefire at the end of October allowed hundreds of starving, exhausted residents to be evacuated.

As we were marching, I talked with Christina Pikhmanets, a language teacher at the Ukrainian Institute of America. She grew up in Lviv in western Ukraine, before moving to the U.S. We discussed the explosion of Ukrainian culture in the early 1920s. I said, “This was when Lenin, the leader of the Bolsheviks, was still alive and championing the right of self-determination for the nations oppressed under czarism.”

“Oh yes,” she said, “Putin blames Lenin for the creation of Ukraine!” We discussed Ivan Dzyuba, the author of *Internationalism or Russification?* She noted he was “a Ukrainian communist.”

It was members of the Socialist Workers Party who translated and published the book in the U.S.

“The Holodomor was intentional,” Pikhmanets said. Since Moscow “couldn’t succeed in imposing its power by regular repression to defeat the nationalistic Ukrainian peasantry,” it resorted to starving them. “It was a genocide.”

The Stalinist regime “closed the rural areas off from the cities” in order to block supplies to the peasants. She had heard how people in Lviv, then on the Polish side of the border from Soviet Ukraine, threw bread across the river to the starving peasants until the Stalinist rulers ordered troops to open fire on them.

Lenin fought for self-determination

In the 1917 Russian Revolution, the world’s first socialist revolution, the workers and peasants led by V.I. Lenin and the Bolsheviks took state power. The young workers government ended Russian participation in the imperialist world war, nationalized the factories and banks, distributed land to the peasants and reorganized industry and agriculture in the interests of the great majority.

Lenin championed the right to self-determination of oppressed nationalities within what had been the Russian empire’s prison house of nations. The Bolsheviks encouraged a flowering of Ukrainian language and culture that Pikhmanets spoke of, strengthening Ukraine’s voluntary adherence to the Soviet Union.

In 1922 and 1923 Lenin waged a battle within the Communist Party to try to save the alliance of workers and peasants at the heart of the revolution. In doing so, he opposed “every manifestation of Great-Russian nationalism.”

Following Lenin’s death, the communist course he led was crushed in a bloody counterrevolution headed by Stalin. Workers and farmers were driven out of politics by the rising bureaucracy. Moscow’s domination over the nations freed from czarist tyranny was restored.

Stalin launched a brutal forced collectivization of the peasants across the Soviet Union, which fell with an especially savage force on Ukraine. Beginning in 1929, tens of thousands of revolutionary militants and cultural leaders were arrested and exiled to Stalin’s Gulag labor camps, or executed.

These assaults spawned the Holodomor. Stalinist forces in Ukraine forcibly requisitioned all the grain, selling it for export abroad, leaving peasant families to starve.

“Nowhere did restrictions, purges, repressions and in general all forms of bureaucratic hooliganism assume such murderous sweep as they did in the Ukraine,” Leon Trotsky, the Bolshevik leader who led the fight to continue Lenin’s communist course, wrote from exile in 1939. The bureaucracy was waging a brutal battle “against the powerful, deeply rooted longings of the Ukrainian masses for greater freedom and independence.”

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CANADA

Montreal

There Is No Peace! The Working-Class Road to Stopping Capitalism’s Wars. Speaker: Beatrice Bowen, Communist League. Sat. Dec. 5, 7 p.m. Donation $5. *7107 St-Denis #204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.*

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Strike at British Columbia copper mine wins support

LOGAN LAKE, British Columbia — A solidarity rally for copper miners on strike against Highland Valley Copper here Nov. 9 held up traffic into the Teck-owned mine for over six hours. Representatives from the BC Federation of Labour, BC Government Employees Union, Service Employees International Union and United Steelworkers Local 480, from a smelter in Trail also owned by Teck, together with retirees and community members joined in the action.

Safety is a major issue. Silica dust from breaking, drilling and crushing rocks causes silicosis, an incurable and sometimes deadly lung disease. USW Local 7619 President Kyle Wolff said two union members have been diagnosed with the disease. It's been a struggle to get the company to take measures like installing more dust monitors in the pit and having water trucks on roads to the mine to wet them down before a shift starts to keep dust on the ground. Equipment is in poor repair.

Other issues include the company's demand to cut pensions by 25% and its refusal to keep equipment in good repair.

The over 1,200 mine workers walked off the job Oct. 24 after negotiations broke down. Now the bosses are bringing in strikebreakers.

A few days before the rally the BC Federation had declared a "hot edict," which calls on all of its affiliates to refrain from handling anything coming from Highland Valley.

Picketing expanded to the Port of Vancouver, where copper from the mine is shipped to China. With support from the International Longshore and Warehouse Union they stopped it from being loaded on ships Nov. 6. In response, the port operator, PKM Canada Services, sought an injunction to bar picketing, as well as damages for the delay in shipments.

"There have been replacement workers that came to the mine but decided to leave after seeing that there was a strike and after talking to our USW 7619 members," Wolff told the *Militant* by phone Nov. 19. "The same has happened with delivery drivers who refused to bring parcels into the mine. The other day four members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers who the company called out drove 44 hours from Quebec, but when they discovered there was a strike they refused to cross the picket line."

Highland Valley is the largest open-pit copper mine in Canada. Teck Resources also has mines in Chile, Peru and Alaska, as well as the smelter in Trail. Teck reports they made 1.6 billion Canadian dollars ($1.1 billion) in gross profits in the last quarter.

Being on strike "is building solidarity within the whole membership," Daryl Flemming, a picket captain, told the *Militant*. "Because of people working in different areas a lot of us haven't crossed paths."

Naomi Murphy has worked here for 17 years. When she started there were only four women. She says now about 20% of the workforce are women and they work all the jobs.

Prescott Shackelly, who works as a janitor, said the indigenous bands in the area have fought for natives to get hired. "When I was young, I couldn't get hired because they said Indians were lazy," he said. "The workforce today is 19% aboriginal."

The strike needs solidarity! Send messages to Wolff at president@usw7619.com.

— Dan Grant and Joe Young



Militant/Dan Grant

United Steelworkers Local 7619 members on strike against Highland Valley Copper in Logan Lake, British Columbia, rally Nov. 12. They're fighting for safety on the job and against pension cuts.

Frontier flight attendants picket at Atlanta airport for a contract

ATLANTA — Nearly 100 Frontier Airlines flight attendants and supporters picketed in front of Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport Nov. 17 calling for a new and improved contract. The spirited protest drew waves and honks of support from passing cars and passengers entering and leaving the airport.

"We are here to raise awareness about our fight for a livable wage," Association of Flight Attendants Local Vice President J.D. Minter told the *Militant*. They're also fighting to be "paid for every hour we work." Frontier Airlines flight attendants are not paid for boarding and seating passengers or deplaning, nor for time spent waiting when a flight is delayed.

"The company pushes and pushes to make their money while paying us as little as possible," said 10-year Frontier flight attendant Courtney Colquitt. Frontier is now the second largest airline at the Atlanta airport. According to the Association of Flight Attendants, their last contract was ratified in 2019. The union says they haven't had a raise since their last contract expired in 2024.

Flight attendants from United and Southwest, as well as Delta Air Lines, where the AFA is fighting to win union recognition, joined the protest. "We're here to show our solidarity with the Frontier AFA members," Delta flight attendant Shane Price said. "If they win their fight, it will help all of us."

Several members of UNITE HERE Local 23, which organizes food service workers at the airport, and members of the Transport Workers Union, International Association of Machinists, National Nurses United, and several other unions also participated.

"With a union you have more accountability, better scheduling, and better pay and benefits," said Delta flight attendant John Polito. "I'm here to support them."

The Atlanta picketing follows protests by Frontier flight attendants at Denver and Philadelphia airports.

— Janice Lynn and Susan LaMont

UNITE HERE conducts one-day strike at Qantas Lounge at LAX

LOS ANGELES — To press their fight for a first contract, UNITE HERE Local 11 members who work at the Qantas Airline Lounge at Los Angeles International Airport carried out a one-day strike Nov. 20. The loud, spirited action of some 25 pickets went on all day. UNITE HERE members from other airport worksites joined in.

"We're tired of how this company has treated us like a number," Leif Borja, who's worked as a bartender in the lounge for four years, told the *Militant*. "So we're making it a big number, all of us together!"

The union has represented workers at Qantas Lounge for two years. But Sodexo, a massive international conglomerate, took over the lounge after the union won recognition and has refused to agree to a contract.

Sodexo says it runs 170 lounges worldwide serving 37 million people each year. A July press release said the company overall has 426,000 employees and raked in 24.1 billion euros ($26.3 billion) in revenue in 2025. It also said the company isn't satisfied with its bottom line, and intends to achieve an "above 5% operating margin by Fiscal 2030."

"They expect top-tier service, but they won't pay us for it," said Eliana Diaz, who has worked as a cook there for four years. "The company only wants to discuss small details, not what we need."

The union says its demands include fair wages, manageable workloads, affordable health insurance and a good pension.

Strikers reported no bartenders, no buffet service workers and no shower service workers reported for duty that morning. Dylan Daney, lead UNITE HERE organizer at Los Angeles airport, said nearly all of the 100 union members at Qantas went out. "We stationed pickets where lounge workers arrive on shuttle buses, so co-workers could discuss the strike action, and see it was a success.

"Sodexo used Instawork temp agency workers to try to keep the lounge open," he added, "but we explained our strike to them and some turned away."

— Ray Parsons, UNITE HERE Local 11 member at LAX

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

THE Mmilitant
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

December 3, 2001

Washington should unconditionally end its economic embargo of Cuba if, as its spokespeople claim, it is truly concerned about the destruction wreaked by Hurricane Michelle.

The U.S. rulers were horrified when, after sweeping out a U.S.-backed dictatorship in 1959, Cuban workers and farmers established their own government, mobilized youth to wipe out illiteracy, guaranteed farmers their right to the land, took the factories out of the hands of the exploiters, uprooted racist discrimination, expanded women's rights, and sent volunteers to join in anti-imperialist freedom struggles from Algeria to Angola.

Above all, Cuba sets a "dangerous" example to workers and farmers throughout Latin America and the world — including in the U.S. The embargo is a cold-blooded course in the interests of the tiny class of billionaire families who rule this country.

THE MILITANT
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

December 3, 1976

For the families and friends of eleven men in Oven Fork, Kentucky, this past week was a nightmare revisited — the nightmare of the two mine explosions last March that left twenty-six people dead. Last week the remaining eleven bodies were finally recovered from the Scotia No.1 mine and buried by relatives.

For the Scotia Coal Company, these were merely twenty-six statistics, sacrificed in the interests of digging more coal, faster, cheaper, and more profitably. Just one day before the first methane-gas blast, the mine had been cited by federal inspectors for three explosion-related safety violations.

UMW President Arnold Miller charges that the Justice Department has "failed utterly even to attempt to enforce" mine safety legislation. "Because of that failure, hundreds of coal miners have been needlessly killed and maimed."

THE MILITANT
PUBLISHED WEEKLY IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

December 3, 1951

Interpreting an order from the top command in accordance with their own desires, U.S. troops in Korea brought about a cease-fire virtually along the entire battlefront for as long as 48 hours in some sectors.

The enthusiasm with which the GIs put into effect the cease-fire and the prospect of possible fraternization between the opposing armies so alarmed the top command and leading U.S. diplomatic and political circles that new orders were issued emphasizing that there was no cease-fire and that the war should go on with U.S. troops "shooting to kill."

Among the statements of the GIs was the following: "Let the shooting fade away and us old soldiers will never die." This is exactly how the frontline troops interpreted the still secret order. They "just let the shooting fade away." Every GI wants to live and wants to return home.

Marathon workers fight bosses' moves to run refinery with scabs

BY JOEL BRITTON

MARTINEZ, Calif. — On a chilly Nov. 16 afternoon, Carl Smith and several other members of United Steelworkers Local 5 drew close to a propane space heater in a picket tent at the Marathon Renewables refinery's South Gate here. Almost seven months after about 100 workers went on strike in April, then were locked out in June, the union keeps up a presence 24/7 at two of the refinery's gates.

Smith, a member of the union negotiating committee, told the *Militant* that after the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health recently cited and fined Marathon for operating with 12 untrained, unqualified personnel, the refinery asked the union to return to contract negotiations. The USW had paused the talks in September after 20 sessions in which the company's attorney came, but refused to negotiate.

"We'll be back at the table Dec. 1 and 2," said Smith, but "if it's the same attorney and no local refinery managers, as in the earlier sessions, I'm not sure anything will come of it."

For operating the refinery with unqualified strikebreakers, including four process operators, the union said Cal/OSHA had fined Marathon a mere $11,475. This oil giant reported a hefty $7.4 billion net income in the third quarter of 2026.

Locked-out workers told the *Militant* that Marathon is now trying to hire scabs with refinery experience. But, they note, every refinery is different and to work safely at Marathon requires a monthslong period of training by workers with full knowledge of *this* refinery.

"Safety is a big issue, for us and the community," Smith said. "You must have operators who are *empowered*, and not afraid, in order for the refinery to be run in a safe way. Marathon wants to allow supervisors, who don't have the same experience and knowledge union workers have, to override decisions on running the process. They want to be able to tell board operators what to do and, if operators exercise their right to refuse to operate unsafely, to replace them in these jobs."

The union now has hung up three large banners at the refinery's South Gate, including one that reads: "All Your Qualified Labor is Locked Out, How Safe is Marathon Running?"

Another says, "Removing Over 50% of USW Union Labor Jobs Is Not Good Faith Bargaining!!" This refers to Marathon's demand to remove 46 jobs from the union's bargaining unit.

At the North Gate, on Waterfront Road, locked-out picket stalwart Vinnie Caragan, a longtime operator at Marathon, told the *Militant*, "The most important thing for us isn't wages. It's about *keeping the union together*. I was willing to concede some on wages if we could keep the 46 workers."

"This fight is about safety, for us and the whole community," Caragan added. Pointing to the refinery, he said, "We know there are problems in there. We see the flares, which shows that there is an upset in the system. They preach safety, but they don't follow it."

Since the Marathon refinery here makes biodiesel fuel, it relies on feedstock deliveries of animal fats and vegetable oil by both ships and rail. When Union Pacific crews learned about the locked-out workers' fight in August, they stopped rail deliveries for a week. For several weeks, UP bosses took over that work, delivering and picking up over 50 tanker cars a day. Now scabs are doing it, but can only handle 18 cars a day.

In recent months the locked-out workers bought a small boat with an outboard motor and used it to picket feedstock ships, with mixed results. An official of the International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots union from Los Angeles recently visited the workers to express solidarity with their fight.

Join the locked-out workers in Martinez at Solano Way and Arnold Industrial Way or at the North Gate on Waterfront Road east of I-680. Contributions and messages of solidarity can be delivered to USW Local 5, 1333 Pine St., Suite C, Martinez, CA or mailed to USW Local 5, PO Box 349, Martinez, CA 94553.

Betsey Stone contributed to this article.



Militant/Joel Britton

"Safety is a big issue," Carl Smith, left, said, at Marathon Renewables picket line in Martinez, California, Nov. 16. Smith and Alfonso Aguilera are locked-out United Steelworkers members.

Locked-out BP workers told to pay back unemployment

Continued from front page

ministrative Judge Scott Schultz and a letter he received. "If that determination becomes final," the letter states, "you will be required to repay" six months of benefits totaling $10,140.

President Eric Schultz denounced the judge's ruling as "unconscionable." A union statement noted that the ruling came "just hours before we entered yet another day of negotiations."

"It's fishy," utility operator Robert Higgins said on the picket line. "A lot of us tried to file at the beginning. We were denied and later deemed eligible. How can they go back on it now?" He also got a notice that he was "overpaid" by $10,140 — money he spent on basic necessities as soon as he got it.

The ruling largely repeats the company's claims that the union is responsible for the lockout by refusing to accept deepgoing concessions, even though the union offered to continue working while contract negotiations continued.

The company demands it be able to outsource dozens of union jobs, restructure job classifications and training, undermine seniority rights and receive 150 days notice before the union can go on strike. And it wants to extend the contract to six years, placing it outside the national pattern-bargaining in the oil industry.

Higgins said the company has tried to portray the USW members as greedy. "They say we make up to $200,000 a year, but to do that you're living out here," working 16-hour days for 21 days in a row, he said. Most workers don't, though they still work long, exhausting hours.

The company touts its continuing payments of workers' medical benefits during the lockout. But "we still have to pay our part of the premium out of our pockets, without a paycheck," Higgins pointed out. "For me, that's $678 a month for family coverage."

The fight continues

The members of Local 7-1 remain determined to outlast BP. With winter kicking in, firewood for the burn barrels is a necessity. On a recent visit, half a dozen volunteers were working behind the union hall with a couple of donated wood splitters and an old farm conveyor belt chopping up a mountain of logs.

Solidarity from other unions continues to come in. "We just got a Thanksgiving donation of 150 frozen turkeys from one union local, and a lot of canned goods and fixings from another," Higgins said.

On Oct. 30 new support came from the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA when the union wrote to United Airlines officials calling on them to "directly engage with British Petroleum and urge them to end the lockout at the Whiting Refinery and reach a fair agreement with the workers represented by USW Local 7-1."

Women of Steel, organized by USW members at the steel mills and other industries in the area, has a "Diaper Drive" going to collect supplies for locked-out families with young children. The union hall is full of donations for workers.

A number of local organizations and businesses are hosting a free "Cookies with Santa" event Dec. 12 for USW 7-1 families. The next day, Off Square Brewing Company in Crown Point is having a launch party for a special "Fight for Your Right" brew that it's selling as a fundraiser for the local.

"When you've got companies like Off Square Brewing and the ongoing community support that we've gotten, it makes it just a little bit easier," refinery worker Louie Aguilera told the *Northwest Indiana Times*. "We all got each other's backs," he added. "We band together and help each other out."

To send a message of support or a contribution, visit supportoilworkers.com or write to USW Local 7-1 Strike & Defense Fund, 2045 Schrage Ave., Whiting, IN 46394. To join the picket line, stop by the union hall at this address.

Another botched, but deadly, execution, in Texas

Yet another death row prisoner in the U.S. has been killed in a botched execution. On Nov. 19 Reinaldo Dennes, 70, who had been convicted of murder in a 1996 shooting in Houston, was executed at the state penitentiary in Huntsville, Texas, in an excruciating procedure that took over an hour. After several failed attempts to find suitable veins in his arms for an injection of the lethal drug pentobarbital, prison officials finally inserted two lines, one in Dennes' neck, another in his foot.

Dennes began screaming in pain, his spiritual advisor, Rev. Jeff Hood of the Execution Intervention Project, who was in the execution chamber with him, said, calling it "torture." Dennes tried to lift himself off the gurney by grabbing the leather straps holding him and cried out twice, "It's not working. It's not how it's supposed to go. This isn't right," Hood reported. Dennes shouted, "My right leg is killing me," describing it as being "on fire." "Take me, father," he begged, "Don't make me suffer like this. C'mon."

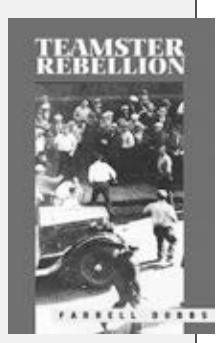
Amanda Hernandez, spokesperson for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, told the *New York Times*, "This was a successful execution, and we did follow all of the proper protocols to do it correctly." She accused Dennes of "faking" his pain.

Hood, who has witnessed 13 executions by lethal injection, told reporters this killing most certainly did not go "correctly." Dennes cried out, awake, for several minutes, Hood said, but he had never seen "anyone able to make complete sentences past 30 seconds."

This follows a widely discussed botched execution in Tennessee in September, where death row prisoner Christa Pike survived two rounds of pentobarbital, leaving her badly injured but alive. She is now back in prison, her future uncertain. The state has paused all executions.

— JANET POST

Teamster Rebellion
by Farrell Dobbs
The 1934 strikes that built the industrial union movement in Minneapolis and helped pave the way for the CIO, as recounted by a central leader of that battle.**—$16**



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Daily protests in Iran as Tehran pushes workers to pay for crisis

BY SETH GALINSKY

Every day brings new strikes, labor actions and social protests in Iran as the reactionary capitalist regime makes workers and farmers pay for the deepening capitalist economic crisis and for Tehran's bloated military and provocative foreign adventures.

Those taking to the streets include bakers; youth looking for jobs; steel, electrical, municipal, health care and oil workers demanding a living wage and job safety; truck drivers; students; and opponents of the death penalty and violence against women.

Bakers protested outside the Khuzestan province governor's office in Ahvaz Nov. 21 after the regime cut their flour allocations.

"Our flour has been gone for six days now," the bakers said. "If we close the bakery, people will be dissatisfied. If we obtain flour from somewhere else the government accuses us of smuggling."

The flour shortage comes on top of a government cap on how much subsidized bread households can buy in Khuzestan and at least two other provinces. Once their monthly bread quota runs out, customers pay more than five times the subsidized price.

Prices of meat and other staples have skyrocketed under the impact of the worldwide capitalist crisis, the devastation from the U.S. military attacks and sanctions on Iran, and the regime's decision to prioritize producing weapons. As a result, growing numbers of working people rely on subsidized bread to survive.

Striking workers at the Khorasan Steel Complex in Neyshabur, in northeastern Iran, were joined by their wives and children sitting down in the road leading to the plant Nov. 22. They're demanding higher wages, protesting poor work conditions and the threat of layoffs.

"For several years we have been asking company officials to eliminate discrimination and improve our conditions and benefits, but there has been no change," one striker told the government-funded Iranian Labour News Agency.

Truck strike in face of tripling costs

Owner-operator truck drivers went on strike in as many as a dozen cities Nov. 22, saying the government's 22% rate increase for carrying freight was far too little. It "does nothing to solve our problems," the Association of Truckers and Drivers Unions of Iran, which called the strike, said Nov. 23.

"The prices of tires, spare parts, engine oil, and repairs in many cases increased by up to 300%," two trucker associations in Aligudarz, Lorestan province, said in a letter to the government. "How can a driver whose truck maintenance costs have increased several times over be expected to continue operating with only a small increase in rates?"

One trucker wrote on the association's internet site Nov. 23 that "the authorities attempt to use war and sanctions as an excuse to evade responsibility for their own negligence and incompetence.

"In order to cover the government's expense, they have placed the entire burden of rising prices and hardship on our shoulders and those of the people."

Retirees: 'We don't want war'

Weekly protests by retirees across the country for higher pensions and medical benefits are taking on broader demands.

"I don't want war or killing. I want lasting prosperity," some 75 retirees chanted outside the Labor Department in Kermanshah Nov. 24. "Imprisoned workers must be freed," they demanded, a reference to the hundreds, if not thousands, of teachers, workers and others who have been detained by the regime on bogus charges.



Electrical substation workers in Tehran Nov. 22 protest company imposing new work schedule over their objection and denial of increased allowances despite rising prices.

The deepening resistance is impacting the government-funded Workers House. It supports workplace committees that include representatives of the workers, the government and the bosses to try to keep workers tied to the regime and prevent them from going on strike.

But at a Nov. 20 meeting attended by over 500 people, the Workers House read out a resolution calling on the regime to raise wages and benefits and to guarantee workers the right to organize unions without government or boss "interference."

It also demanded the government take "appropriate decisions as soon as possible to bring an end to unjust and inhumane sanctions against the people of Iran" — while also pledging "unwavering" support for Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei.

That can only be understood as a call on the regime to agree to the demands of the U.S. rulers for Tehran to cease attacking ships using the Strait of Hormuz, restrict its nuclear program and stop its stepped-up military attacks against neighboring states.

But the regime boasts it is ready for a new war. It's promoting a video showing a massive underground facility full of missiles. This gives Washington a pretext for blockading Iranian ports and imposing sanctions, which adds further to the burden the working people in Iran face.

Summit in China shows int'l rivalries, threats of war

Continued from front page

bombardment of Ukrainian civilians, while Beijing threatens to invade Taiwan and advances its own expansionist course against rivals in the Pacific.

Each is hell-bent on acquiring ever-larger, more lethal stockpiles of weapons.

Days before the summit, Washington announced that the Quad alliance — the governments of Australia, Japan, India and the U.S. — would hold its first ever military exercises in 2027 using surveillance aircraft capable of spying on the movements of Chinese submarines.

The day after the summit Trump announced the U.S. was investing $17 billion in Southeast Asia, including money to upgrade the Philippine rulers' military as clashes sharpen between the rulers there and Beijing in the South China Seas. He also announced new tariffs of up to 20% on China Nov. 24.

The same week the Danish government ratified a deal allowing the expansion of U.S. military bases in Greenland. Washington has been pushing to counter the growing influence of Moscow and Beijing in the Arctic and bolster its domination across the Western Hemisphere.

To get ahead of its rivals and uphold U.S. imperialist power, the administration has pledged to hike military spending by 42% to $1.45 trillion in 2027. This includes funding expanded drone technology, developing a Golden Dome missile shield and more hypersonic weapons. In September the U.S. Navy announced it was developing nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missiles.

Democratic Party Senate leader Charles Schumer decried the summit's outcome as a "betrayal," taking an even more bellicose stance and accusing Trump of wanting "nothing more than to bow down to our adversaries." Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton scolded Trump for being "played" by Putin and Xi.

All three regimes face difficulties

But in fact none of the three government heads came out of the summit looking like a winner. Each faces different, but serious challenges to advancing the competing interests of its own ruling class.

Under both Democratic and Republican administrations, the U.S. capitalists are driving to maintain their weakened but still dominant position worldwide. That's despite the fact they haven't won a major war in decades, including in Iraq, Afghanistan and now Iran.

Moreover, they face a growing capitalist economic and social crisis that feeds violent competition for resources, markets and labor power between state powers worldwide, as well as rising anger among working people at home about high prices and the broader effects of this crisis.

Washington is principally aiming to put together new alliances to isolate Beijing, its most formidable rival. For their part, China's rulers have greatly expanded their navy and are asserting their power over competitors in the Pacific. But they too face today's conflicts from weakness, having failed to reverse a yearslong deflationary slump at home, spreading class inequality and a shrinking birth rate.

Workers in manufacturing and construction in China are losing jobs and often find the only work they can get is in the so-called gig economy. The number of Chinese workers without a full-time contract rose from 280 million in 2025 to 320 million this year, some 44% of the workforce. At least four major cities report the number of ride-hailing drivers has reached "saturation," with rising competition pushing drivers' wages down.

China's capitalist rulers fear that worsening conditions of life and work increase the prospect that working people will join together to defend themselves.

Putin came to the summit in the worst position. His regime's war to conquer Ukraine continues to result in huge numbers of Russian casualties, while failing to break the courageous resistance of working people in Ukraine who are fighting to defend the country's sovereignty. At home, Putin's police-state regime fears deepening opposition to his war, as well as the impact of the capitalist crisis on working people.

Moscow, once a powerful oil exporter, has been forced to import oil, as Ukraine's drone attacks have done serious damage to Russian refineries. By the summer, some 40% of Russian refining capacity was offline, and fuel rationing reappeared.

Far from offering a road to peace, the Shenzhen summit reflected the conflicting interests of the rulers in Washington, Beijing and Moscow, and the growing threat of new wars, this time with nuclear weapons.



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Puerto Rico meeting: Book on Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde independence fight 'broadens our perspective'

BY SETH GALINSKY

HUMACAO, Puerto Rico — Amid the chorus of hundreds of whistling coquí tree frogs on the Loma de la Niña Mariana hilltop, Rosalina Abreu welcomed participants to an Oct. 24 panel discussion about *Cuba and the Independence War in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde: The Fall of the Last Colonial Empire in Africa* by Cuban revolutionary Víctor Dreke.

Abreu is a longtime leader of Arecma — the Recreational and Educational Community Association of Mariana Neighborhood — which has organized working people here since 1982 to take initiatives to improve their lives in the face of government disdain and inaction.

In the wake of Hurricane Maria in 2017 — which ravaged the region — Arecma set up a community kitchen that fed hundreds of residents daily for six months. The group now maintains some 16 acres, including a breadfruit tree grove, a children's playground, and the outdoor pavilion where the book presentation took place.

From the highest point of the hill are amazing views of nearby towns and the valleys where thousands of farmworkers went on strike in 1934 on now-vanished sugar plantations. You can see all the way to the island of Vieques, which was used by the U.S. Navy for live-fire bombing exercises until it was forced to close in 2003, after decades of protests.

"Members of the Socialist Workers Party and correspondents for the *Militant* newspaper have visited us several times over the last decade to learn about our political, social and economic situation," Abreu said. "When they called us about having this conversation about the book, we liked the idea."

Abreu introduced the two speakers, Marisaura Serrano, a graduate student at the University of Puerto Rico and member of Arecma's executive board, and Róger Calero, a member of the Pathfinder Press editorial staff who took part in the interviews with Dreke, drawn together in this book.

In 1967-68 Dreke led Cuba's internationalist mission in the West African countries of Guinea-Bissau and Guinea-Conakry that provided military training and medical help to combatants of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) led by Amílcar Cabral. The book is a firsthand account of that historic struggle that put an end to 500 years of Portuguese colonial domination.

The panelists highlighted the importance of Cabral's leadership and the example of the Cuban Revolution for today's struggles.



Militant/Linda Joyce

From left, Marisaura Serrano, Róger Calero and Rosalina Abreu. Calero is speaking during panel discussion on book by Cuban revolutionary Víctor Dreke that describes Cuba's collaboration with Amílcar Cabral in victorious fight against Portuguese colonialism. The book shows "how we can transform our society," said Abreu.

Cabral convinced people to unite

"Cabral's determination to unite all the different ethnic groups, working people in city and countryside, men and women of all ages, blew my mind," said Serrano. "He convinced everyone of why they must join together and fight." That, and Cabral's clear presentation of the PAIGC's political program is what led Cuban leader Fidel Castro to have confidence their struggle would achieve victory, she noted.

It's not just about "replacing a foreign authority with a national authority. The reasons that led these peoples to fight were basic needs like access to education, healthcare, the improvement of conditions and ending the empire's exploitation," she said. "They worked to develop political organization, and popular participation."

Serrano noted Cabral's firm stance in advancing women's participation in society and politics. He didn't see women "as spectators, companions or secondary figures," she said. "But as necessary participants so that the revolution can achieve its objectives."

"This book was published above all for working people and youth who are learning through their own struggles how to defend their working and living conditions and their rights, as the crisis of capitalism deepens and the rulers are marching humanity toward a third world war," Calero said. And its publication is a contribution to telling the truth about Cuba's socialist revolution.

"What motivated the Cubans to help struggles in other countries?" Calero asked. "The revolution that they themselves made in Cuba following Jan. 1, 1959. In overthrowing a hated dictatorship they discovered that to eradicate imperialist domination and all forms of exploitation, they had to defeat the capitalist class at home and take power into their own hands."

"They understood that this was an international struggle of an international working class," he added.

"The process of liberation" of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde "culminated a little more than 52 years ago" — not that long ago, Serrano said.

"This made me think about Puerto Rico," she said. "How did other countries succeed in advancing to independence? What circumstances made this possible? Why are we, the Puerto Rican people, still debating our political future?" Puerto Rico has been a U.S. colony since 1898, when U.S. troops occupied the island after defeating Spain's colonial forces.

"Every people have their own history, circumstances and traditions," she added. "But learning about other experiences with decolonization allows us to broaden our perspective and ask what we can learn from it."

"I also read the book," Abreu said. "It's an example of how we can transform our society. We are the ones who have to do it. No one can come and tell us how, it has to grow out of our own experience."

Like in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, "in Puerto Rico it is the working class that suffers the biggest impact of impoverishment today," she said.

The discussion on the book "is invaluable to find a road forward," she said. "We want to continue with these conversations."

Cuban ambassador: 'Fidel's legacy is valuable for today'

The Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations held a commemorative event Nov. 19 to mark the 10th anniversary of the passing of Commander in Chief Fidel Castro Ruz. Close to 100 people attended, including a number of U.N. ambassadors from other countries, as well as participants in solidarity activity with Cuba.

The featured speaker was Cuban Ambassador Ernesto Soberón Guzmán. Among the other speakers were three ambassadors whose countries had benefited from Cuba's internationalism under Castro's leadership — Vietnamese Ambassador Do Hung Viet, Namibian Ambassador Penda Naanda and Nicaraguan Ambassador Jaime Hermida Castillo. The following are Soberón's remarks.

❖

Dear Comrades:

Ten years ago, on Nov. 25, 2016, Cuba and the world heard the news of the death of Commander in Chief Fidel Castro Ruz. An extraordinary chapter of our history closed, but a new stage also began in which his thought, work, and example took on a different dimension: a legacy that transcends his time and his physical existence.

Few men are part of the history of their peoples. Others, however, have the capacity to transform that history, to change the horizon of the possible, and to help several generations find a collective meaning for their aspirations. Fidel belongs to that category of men.

To speak of Fidel is to speak, first and foremost, of the transformation of Cuban society. The revolution he led was not limited to changing the country's political power structures or economic relations. His project was aimed at transforming the material and spiritual conditions of existence of millions of Cubans.

The literacy campaign, the universalization of education, free access to healthcare, the expansion of culture and the democratization of knowledge were achievements that changed our people's lives forever. Where exclusion, ignorance, and inequality once prevailed, opportunities were opened for the children of peasants, workers, and humble families to become doctors, teachers, scientists, artists and professionals.

Fidel understood that a true revolution could not simply seize power: it had to transform people and create the conditions for them to lead their own destiny. Human dignity, social justice and solidarity were fundamental pillars of this vision. In politics, his legacy is expressed in the intransigent defense of national sovereignty and Cuba's right to build its own path. From the days of the insurrectional struggle to the long years of confrontation with the United States' hostile policy, Fidel defended an essential idea: no people can give up their independence without also giving up a fundamental part of their dignity.

But his political thought was never limited to national borders. Fidel's dimension was also internationalist. His commitment to national liberation struggles, the peoples of the Third World, and humanity made Cuba a relevant actor in international politics despite its small territory and economic limitations.

His contribution to Latin American and Caribbean unity, his support for liberation movements, and Cuban medical and educational solidarity reveal a conviction: Cuba's fate cannot be detached from other peoples.

Sports and culture

But his impact wasn't limited to politics. In sports, Fidel also left an extraor-

Continued on page 9

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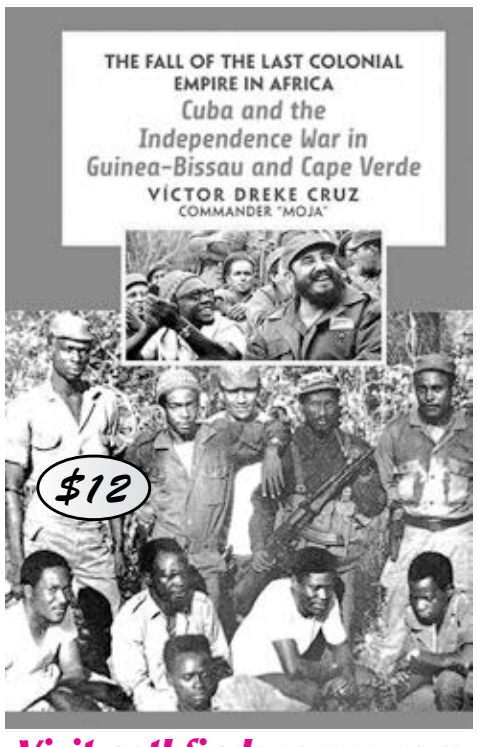

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World War II wasn't a war between fascist and 'democratic' rulers

Writings of Leon Trotsky (1938-39) *is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for November. Trotsky was a central leader of the Bolshevik Revolution who fought for the continuation of V.I. Lenin's communist course after his death in January 1924 against a counterrevolution led by Joseph Stalin. The book includes articles and letters Trotsky wrote from exile in Mexico marked by preparations by the imperialist powers for World War II, Francisco Franco's Hitler-backed victory in Spain, and efforts by Social Democratic and Stalinist leaders in the U.S. and Europe to bring the labor movement into the war drive. The except is from an interview, "Anti-imperialist struggle is key to liberation," conducted by Argentine trade union leader Mateo Fossa with Trotsky, Sept. 23, 1938. Copyright © 1974 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*



A selection of front pages in 1938 from *Socialist Appeal*, as the *Militant* was named then, as second imperialist world war loomed. Socialist Workers Party called on workers to look to themselves to end imperialist war, not the ruling classes of the warring capitalist nations.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

MATEO FOSSA: In your opinion what will be the further development of the present situation in Europe?

LEON TROTSKY: It is possible that this time too diplomacy will succeed in reaching a rotten compromise. But it will not last long. War is inevitable and moreover in the very near future. One international crisis follows another. These convulsions are similar to the birth pangs of the approaching war. Each new paroxysm will bear a more severe and dangerous character. At present I do not see any force in the world that can stop the development of this process, that is, the birth of war. A horrible new slaughter is relentlessly drawing upon humanity.

Of course, timely revolutionary action by the international proletariat could paralyze the rapacious work of the imperialists. But we must look the truth straight in the face. The working masses of Europe in their overwhelming majority are under the leadership of the Second and Third Internationals. The leaders of the Amsterdam International of trade unions fully support the policy of the Second and the Third Internationals and enter together with them into so-called "People's Fronts."

The policy of the "People's Front," as is shown by the example of Spain, France, and other countries, consists in subordinating the proletariat to the left wing of the bourgeoisie. But the entire bourgeoisie of the capitalist countries, the right as well as the "left," is permeated through and through with chauvinism and imperialism. The "People's Front" serves to turn the workers into cannon fodder for their imperialist bourgeoisie. Only that and nothing more.

The Second, the Third, and the Amsterdam Internationals are at present counterrevolutionary organizations whose task it is to put brakes upon and paralyze the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat against "democratic" imperialism. So long as the criminal leadership of these Internationals is not overthrown, the workers will be powerless to oppose war. This is the bitter but inescapable truth. We must know how to face it and not console ourselves with illusions and pacifist babbling. War is inevitable!

FOSSA: What will be its effect on the struggle in Spain and on the international working class movement?

TROTSKY: In order to understand correctly the nature of the coming events we must first of all reject the false and thoroughly erroneous theory that the coming war will be a war between fascism and "democracy." Nothing is more false and foolish than this idea. Imperialist "democracies" are divided by the contradictions of their interests in all parts of the world. Fascist Italy can easily find herself in one camp with Great Britain and France if she should lose faith in the victory of Hitler. Semifascist Poland may join one or the other of the camps depending upon the advantages offered. In the course of war the French bourgeoisie may substitute fascism for its "democracy" in order to keep its workers in submission and force them to fight "to the end." Fascist France, like "democratic" France would equally defend its colonies with weapons in hand. The new war will have a much more openly rapacious imperialist character than the war of 1914–18. Imperialists do not fight for political principles but for markets, colonies, raw materials, for hegemony over the world and its wealth.

The 'People's Front' turns the workers into cannon fodder for their imperialist bourgeoisie… — Leon Trotsky, 1938

The victory of any one of the imperialist camps would mean the definite enslavement of all humanity, the clamping of double chains on present-day colonies, and all weak and backward peoples, among them the peoples of Latin America. The victory of any one of the imperialist camps would spell slavery, wretchedness, misery, the decline of human culture.

What is the way out, you ask? Personally, I do not doubt for a moment that a new war will provoke an international revolution against the rule of the rapacious capitalist cliques over humanity. In wartime all differences between imperialist "democracy" and fascism will disappear. In all countries a merciless military dictatorship will reign. The German workers and peasants will perish just like the French and English. The modern means of destruction are so monstrous that humanity will probably not be able to endure war even a few months. Despair, indignation, hatred will push the masses of all warring countries into an uprising with weapons in hand. Victory of the world proletariat will put an end to war and will also solve the Spanish problem as well as all the current problems of Europe and other parts of the world.

Those working class "leaders" who want to chain the proletariat to the war chariot of imperialism, covered by the mask of "democracy," are now the worst enemies and the direct traitors of the toilers. We must teach the workers to hate and despise the agents of imperialism, since they poison the consciousness of the toilers; we must explain to the workers that fascism is only one of the forms of imperialism, that we must fight not against the external symptoms of the disease but against its organic causes, that is, against capitalism.

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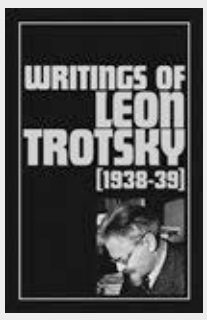

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EDITORIAL

Join, build protests: 'US hands off Cuba!'

Street protests are needed across the U.S. and worldwide more than ever to demand an end to the U.S. government's inhuman oil blockade of Cuba and brutal decades-long economic and political war on the Cuban people. This war has been policy for every administration for over 65 years — Democratic and Republican alike.

Working people in Cuba are finding ways to come together to meet their most basic needs, especially for the elderly and the very young. They're doing so despite the U.S.-imposed power outages and escalating steps to deprive Cubans of the essentials of life. Standing shoulder to shoulder with Cuba strengthens workers and our unions here as we become more active in the worldwide class struggle. The propertied U.S. rulers' attacks on Cuba are motivated by the same class hatred they display as they attack our jobs, wages, social and political rights.

Decisive to this fight is refuting Washington's incessant lies about Cuba. Join Socialist Workers Party members in getting out the truth about the Cuban Revolution and winning working people to defend it. They're distributing the *Militant,* with its unparalleled weekly coverage of Cuba, and the over 100 books by SWP and Cuban leaders on Cuba distributed by Pathfinder Press. And they join others collecting sorely needed medical aid for Cuba.

What the U.S. rulers fear most about Cuba is its example: How working people transformed themselves as they stepped up to take their destiny into their own hands. Led by Fidel Castro, they made a socialist revolution and defend it today arms in hand. In the words of Cuban Ambassador Ernesto Soberón Guzmán, printed elsewhere in this issue, "Fidel defended an essential idea: no people can give up their independence without also giving up a fundamental part of their dignity."

Workers and farmers in Cuba overthrew a U.S.-backed dictator, formed their own government and took over and ran the factories and the land. They fought to fulfill the unmet needs of millions for jobs, land to till, literacy, access to culture, sports and much more. Millions of workers, farmers, women and blacks were drawn into every aspect of social and political life.

With a government they could call their own, working people's confidence in themselves and their own capacities fundamentally changed.

Cuban working people set out to extend the hand of solidarity to workers and the oppressed worldwide, providing decisive aid to liberation struggles. They made historic contributions to the freedom of the African peoples of Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Namibia, helping lead to the overthrow of South African apartheid. This further deepened their confidence in their own abilities.

And it deepened the class hatred and enmity of the U.S. capitalist rulers and their allies worldwide.

Today those same capitalist rulers seek Cuba's surrender. We join the Cuban toilers to say, NO!

Organizing public protests in defense of Cuba is an essential part of the fight to end Cuba's isolation. Growing protests, involving larger and larger numbers of working people, were decisive in forcing the U.S. rulers to pull back from their bloody assault on the people of Vietnam.

Ultimately what is needed is extending Cuba's socialist revolution, especially here in the U.S. This is what the SWP is set up to do. To organize working people in their millions to overthrow the world's final empire and bring a workers government to power.

The U.S. rulers "fear that the plundered people of the continent will seize the arms from the oppressors and, like Cuba, declare themselves free peoples of the Americas," Castro told over a million Cubans at a 1962 rally. And he explained why the possibilities of success in carrying out that course lay in the hands of working people and none other.

The road forward Castro presented can be advanced today. Join us in taking to the streets to say, "U.S. hands off Cuba!"

Cuban ambassador: 'Fidel's legacy valuable for today'

Continued from page 7

dinary mark. He understood that sport should not be a privilege reserved for those who could afford it, but a right of the people. By creating and developing a national sports system, promoting mass participation, and training generations of athletes, Cuba reached a prominent place on the international sports stage.

Behind every Olympic medal, every world championship and every young Cuban who found in sport an opportunity for personal fulfillment, was also a deeply humanistic conception: sport as a school of discipline, solidarity, achievement and comprehensive education.

In culture, Fidel defended an idea that remains fully valid: culture is the nation's shield and sword. His understanding of the importance of art education, film, literature, music, visual arts and critical thinking contributed to creating conditions for an extraordinary expansion of Cuban cultural life.

The creation of cultural institutions, the promotion of artistic education, the development of the national film industry, and the promotion of popular access to cultural manifestations responded to a conviction: a truly free society needs educated citizens, able to think, create, and participate.

For this reason, the Cuban Revolution cannot be understood solely as a political event. It was and remains also a project of cultural emancipation, reaffirmation of our identity, and defense of the capacity of peoples to produce their own values and representations of the world.

And when we talk about the history of Cuba, it is impossible to separate the figure of Fidel from the great traditions of struggle that preceded him. In his thinking came together the independence ideals of Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, the revolutionary spirit of Antonio Maceo, and, especially, the anti-imperialist, humanist, and Latin American thought of José Martí.

Fidel knew how to interpret this tradition in the conditions of the 20th century. The feats of Moncada, Granma, Sierra Maestra, the new dawn on Jan. 1, 1959, and the great transformations that followed are part of a history that does not belong exclusively to one generation, but to the collective heritage of the Cuban nation.

Ten years after his departure, remembering Fidel cannot be just an exercise in nostalgia or a repetition of slogans. The best way to honor his memory is to study his thought, critically understand his work, defend the conquests achieved and responsibly take on the challenges of the present.

Dear comrades:

Fidel taught us that small nations can undertake great events; that social justice is not a naive aspiration, but a cause worth fighting for; that solidarity can become a state policy; and that sovereignty is an indispensable condition for building our own future.

Fidel remains a reference for those who believe that another world is possible, for those who defend the independence of nations and for those who consider that the dignity of the human being should be put above the interests of capital and ambitions of power.

Because men like Fidel do not disappear completely when they cease to exist physically. They remain in the institutions they helped to create, in the generations they helped to shape, in the struggles they inspired and, above all, in the ideas that continue to call for action.

Fidel is not a figure from our past. It is a duty of our present and a challenge for our future.

Until victory forever! Viva Fidel!

'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

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Shoes will now cost more

Continued from front page

The chief financial officer of Birkenstock, Ivica Krolo, was blunt in describing the morality of the shoe bosses. "Our pricing decisions are made with the goal of passing through inflation and protecting gross margin," he told the *Times*. "Something that we do very consistently."

Footwear prices have gone up every six months since 2000. In the first half of this year, they rose 2.3%. All this takes place as prices for essential items working families need have been climbing for years, making it increasingly difficult for us to make ends meet.

Over the past five years prices for the food we eat at home jumped 22%; while eating out at restaurants or ordering takeout is up 27.8%. Electricity and other energy costs have jumped 33.2%, public transportation nearly 40%, and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority here in New York just announced the fares are going up 4% next year. Fresh fruits and vegetables are going up, with lettuce jumping 8% in October alone. And the list goes on.

Not surprisingly, cooking Thanksgiving dinner costs more this year, up about 6% from 2025, with a 16-pound turkey now averaging $23.68. In fact the wholesale price of a frozen turkey is up 29% from last year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reports.

In November, Pacific Power, a California electric utility, requested a 57% rate increase, which would boost residential power bills by $120 a month. This is the company whose faulty equipment and shoddy maintenance has been tied to two disastrous blazes in California — the 2022 McKinney Fire that burned 60,000 acres and killed four people and the 2020 Slater Fire that burned more than 150,000 acres. The bosses now claim that working-class households should bear the burden of paying some $340 million of the company's liability claims and legal expenses by paying higher bills.

Nationwide these giant utility monopolies are demanding a whopping $23 billion in rate raises.

Rising Medicare premiums

The federal government announced in October that those of us getting monthly Social Security checks will receive a cost-of-living adjustment of 3.6% starting in 2027. But we'll see a good chunk of this siphoned off the top to pay for increased Medicare health premiums.

Medicare's Part B premiums will rise some 3.2% to $209.40 a month next year. That means a total of $2,512 for the year. Meanwhile, the annual deductible you have to pay before any coverage kicks in will be $292 in 2027. High home prices, averaging over $400,000 for a one-family house, and mortgage rates over 7%, make it exceedingly difficult for young workers to move out on their own and start a family. And those of us who have shelled out for a home will find we face growing challenges.

"More people are pulling cash out of their homes," reports a Nov. 17 *Wall Street Journal* article, to get money to pay off credit cards and other debts.

But working people who do so find themselves actually going deeper into debt when they refinance their mortgages, or home equity lines of credit, known as Helocs. Today they carry an additional 7.5% in interest rates or more. Working people now owe upwards of $481 billion on Heloc loans, the New York Federal Reserve reports.

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution



by Jack Barnes

This is a book about the example set by the people of Cuba that revolution is not only necessary — it can be made.

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