

SWP joins in teachers' fight, introduces the Militant, books

BY DAN FEIN

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Socialist Workers Party campaign to expand readership of the *Militant* and books on the communist program by party leaders takes place during a rising wave of school strikes and pro-

DEEPER INTO THE WORKING CLASS

tests across the country.

Thousands of teachers, other school staff, students, public employees and other workers gathered at the Capitol here April 2 to protest the lack of funding for public schools throughout the state. Socialist Workers Party members and supporters set up a literature table there.

"The two party system is against us," teacher John Irons, 33, told me by a literature table set up by the Socialist Workers Party. "The Democrats and Republicans are anti-worker and we need to shift our allegiances. We are begging for crumbs."

Continued on page 3

Spring Campaign to expand the reach of 'Militant,' books

March 24–May 22 (week one)

Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold
UNITED STATES				
Albany	95	18	95	11
Atlanta	90	10	90	10
Chicago	110	28	110	27
Dallas	30	14	30	11
Lincoln	20	5	20	2
Los Angeles	115	21	115	11
Miami	35	4	35	5
New York	165	26	165	21
Oakland	85	10	85	9
Philadelphia	65	12	65	8
Seattle	95	10	95	10
Twin Cities	65	16	65	12
Washington	70	21	70	7
Total U.S.	1,040	195	1,040	144
Prisoners	25	5		
UNITED KINGDOM				
London	70	28	70	15
Manchester	50	6	50	4
Total U.K.	120	34	120	19
CANADA				
Montreal	60	2	60	5
Vancouver	45	5	45	4
Total Canada	105	7	105	9
New Zealand	45	10	45	5
Australia	40	6	40	2
Total	1,375	257	1,350	179
SHOULD BE	1,400	175	1,400	175

Chinese rulers, NKorea push for talks with Washington

BY SETH GALINSKY

After North Korean leader Kim Jong Un met with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing March 26 — his first foreign trip since coming to power — Xi telephoned President Donald Trump. He told Trump that plans for a May U.S.-North Korea summit to discuss ending North Korea's nuclear weapons program are on track.

"Received message last night from XI JINPING of China that his meeting with KIM JONG UN went very well and that KIM looks forward to his meeting with me," Trump wrote March 28. "In the meantime, and unfortunately, maximum sanctions and pressure must be maintained at all cost!"

Pyongyang's goal is "the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula through gradual and simultaneous steps toward achieving peace," Kim told Xi.

Over the last six months Beijing has been aggressively enforcing U.N. sanctions against North Korea, which relies on China for 90 percent of its foreign trade. Washington sees the Chinese rulers as key to getting Pyongyang to end its nuclear weapon

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Teachers rise up, press fight for wages, dignity



Militant/Laura Anderson

Teachers and other school workers rally in Frankfort, Kentucky, April 2. Victory by school workers in West Virginia has inspired wave of protests and strikes by teachers across country.

Tens of thousands walk out, rally in Oklahoma, Kentucky

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

OKLAHOMA CITY — Teachers and school workers rallied at the Capitol here April 2, part of an uprising around the country seeking to reverse years of declining wages and conditions. Tens of thousands walked off the job, shutting down schools in

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Join the protests — Build, fight for labor solidarity!

The walkout by teachers in Oklahoma is part of a rising wave of school workers strikes and protests across the country that point the way forward for the entire labor movement.

EDITORIAL

Inspired by the social movement union members built in West Virginia, teachers in Oklahoma were confident to reject the state's pay raise and

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Sacramento protest: 'Prosecute cops who killed Stephon Clark!'



AP Photo/Rich Pedroncelli

March in Sacramento after funeral of Stephon Clark, who was shot and killed by cops March 18.

BY JOEL BRITTON

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Hundreds packed into Bayside of South Sacramento Church here March 29 for the funeral of Stephon Clark, 22, an unarmed Black man gunned down by cops here March 18. So many people turned out to show solidarity that hundreds had to be turned away.

Outrage over the killing, caught on the cops' body cameras, continued to

spur protests in the days after the killing. Clark's family, their lawyer, the NAACP and many protesters have called for the arrest and charging of Jared Robinet and Terrence Mercadal, the police officers who shot Clark. Protesters gathered several times outside District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert's office demanding that she prosecute the officers.

Continued on page 5

Saudi crown prince tours US, promotes alliance against Tehran

BY SETH GALINSKY

As part of efforts by the capitalist rulers in Washington, Saudi Arabia and Israel to cement a broader alliance against Tehran, Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman be-

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—On the picket line, p. 5—

New York rally backs striking Spectrum cable workers

Port workers in New Zealand strike for safety, pay parity

Cuban women leaders speak in NY about revolution's gains

BY RÓGER CALERO

NEW YORK — A March 16 meeting here featured leaders of the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), the National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (UNEAC) and the National Union of Cuban Jurists. The event, which drew more than 70 people, was held at the New York State Nurses Association union hall.

“Our mothers and grandmothers told us what things were like for women in Cuba before the revolution,” said FMC representative Maritzel González responding to a question about what gains have been made by women in Cuba in the course of its socialist revolution. “They faced discrimination for being women, poor and for being black,” said González. “All of that came to an end,” she said, explaining that women from the beginning of the

revolutionary struggle that overthrew the brutal dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1959 to today “have been involved in the deep social transformations carried out since, not only as beneficiaries but as participants.”

As workers and peasants in Cuba took charge of the country and their own destiny, they took control of factories and carried out a deep land reform that distributed land to peasants. Tens of thousands of women were drawn to these massive mobilizations, including the 1961 campaign that wiped out illiteracy in the country.

During their visit here the Cuban revolutionaries also spoke with students at City College of New York.

Joshua Pendergrass, speaking on behalf of the nurses association, welcomed the delegation to the March 16 event. Juanita Young, a long-time fighter against police brutality, spoke about the visit she and other family members of people killed by the cops made to Cuba in 2016, hosted by the FMC. The meeting, sponsored by the New York-New Jersey Cuba Si Coalition, was chaired by Erin Feely-Nahem and Martín Koppel.

Much of the meeting was devoted to answering questions from the audience on topics ranging from the fight against racism to challenges facing Cuban women today, and the impact of the U.S. economic embargo on Cuba.

“Since the very first days the revolutionary government considered fighting racist discrimination one of the main issues to be addressed,” said Juana Randich, president of the Santiago de Cuba provincial chapter of the National Union



Militant/Mike Shur

At a March 16 New York meeting, leaders of Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) discuss women's participation in 1959 socialist revolution and how the revolution has advanced the fight for women's rights since then. From left, Maritzel González, FMC international relations department, Juana Randich and Myrna Méndez, leaders of National Union of Cuban Jurists.

of Cuban Jurists. “The revolution has fought this scourge.”

“For us, expanding access to culture is a way of improving the quality of life” of Cuban workers and farmers, said Luis Morlote, speaking of UNEAC's work.

As examples of the gains made under the revolution they cited the high percentage of women in the workforce, earning equal pay for equal work; full access to abortion; and paid leave for a mother and father to take care of a child for up to one year, with 60 percent of their salary.

“The aim of the FMC has been to

increase women's participation in the political, economic and social life of the country,” said Yaneidys Pérez Cruz, FMC provincial secretary in Las Tunas.

Gail Walker, executive director of IFCO/Pastors for Peace and a co-chair of the National Network on Cuba, gave an update on the upcoming May Day Brigade to Cuba.

The April 22-May 6 brigade, she said, is an opportunity to see the Cuban Revolution firsthand and to be able to speak out more effectively against Washington's embargo and decadeslong effort to overthrow the revolution.

Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution



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Asela de
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THE MILITANT

Support women's right to abortion!

The growing support for abortion rights in Ireland has led the government to hold a referendum May 25 to repeal the Eighth Amendment to the Irish Constitution that prevents women's access to abortion. The 'Militant' reports on this and other battles to advance women's rights.



Militant/Dag Tirsén

Students rally in Dublin, Ireland, March 8.

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

SWP joins in teachers' fight

Continued from front page

"I want that one about Clinton. Many of my friends still have illusions in him," Irons said pointing to *The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record*. He also got *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?* and a subscription to the *Militant*. The titles are two of the five books the SWP is offering at half price with a *Militant* subscription. (See ad below)

"I am excited about anything that unites the working class," Mike Rogers told party member Jacquie Henderson as they discussed the large turnout at the strike rally. "Our power is in our numbers on the picket lines and in the streets," said Henderson. "We need independent working-class political action." Rogers got a subscription



"We need these kind of books," Pedro Pasada, right, a high school student, told Malcolm Jarrett, who campaigned for the SWP at April 3 teachers' rally in Oklahoma City. Pasada got subscription to the *Militant*, and was one of eight participants who bought *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes.

and a copy of *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?*"

At this rally and one the following day 35 *Militant* subscriptions were sold and 37 books, including eight copies of *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?*

The SWP is in the second week of its eight-week campaign that goes hand in hand with the *Militant* Fighting Fund, whose goal is to raise \$112,000. The fund is made up of contributions big and small from working people who appreciate the paper.

'Have to get out of their framework'

At an April 2 teachers' rally in Frankfort, Kentucky, participants picked up four *Militant* subscriptions and two of the books on special.

SWP members also went door to door in Frankfort, Shelbyville and Providence, selling four subscriptions and five more books. A man who works with adults with special needs told Nadine Carr that he didn't oppose the teachers' actions, but was opposed to paying more taxes that the government says is needed to fund education.

"We have to get out of their framework, that there's a limited pie that we have to fight over for crumbs," Carr replied. "Our labor produces more than enough wealth to provide for the education and other things working people need, but under capitalism it goes into the pockets of the ruling class." Carr reported that he liked what she said and got a copy of the *Militant*.

SWP members from the Bay Area knocked on doors of working people in Sacramento, California, March 25 to discuss the police killing of Stephon Clark, an unarmed Black man, the previous week. A nonunion construction worker told Joel Britton that what the cops did to Stephon Clark was "not right." Originally from Mexico, this worker said there is "plenty of work now for people who want to work." Too many people, he said, "are lazy."



Teachers and others joining in rallies outside the state Capitol in Oklahoma City April 2-3 picked up 35 *Militant* subscriptions and 37 books from SWP members there. Above, Twin Cities SWP member Jacquie Henderson, left, signs up one of the new subscribers.

Britton explained that most fast food and retail stores have "now hiring" signs up and most of these jobs are part time and pay the state minimum of \$11 an hour, not enough to live on. He said that with more people being drawn into the workforce, confidence among workers is increasing and pointed to issues of the *Militant* with front-page coverage of the West Virginia teachers and school workers strike. This worker got *The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record* and *Are they Rich Because They're Smart?*

At a nearby house, Andrea Morell spoke with a teacher who was inspired by the West Virginia teachers strike and subscribed to the *Militant*.

Felicity Coggan reports from New Zealand that in the days leading up to the drive's launch, a Communist League team traveled to Lyttelton, Christchurch, to build solidarity with Rail and Maritime Transport Union members on strike against the Lyttelton Port Company. Cargo handler Sam Reid bought a subscription, saying, "I've seen this paper a long time ago, and I like it."

"It's always good to have a world view," said Polly Bysterveld, as she subscribed. The only woman crane operator at the port, she blazed the trail for several other women who have been employed there since she started in 2004. Bysterveld plans to

share her *Militant* with a Spanish-speaking friend.

Members of the Communist League in Montreal and the Socialist Workers Party in Albany, New York, joined the picket line of aluminum workers locked out by ABI Bécancour in Trois-Rivière April 2. The workers, members of United Steelworkers Local 9700, are resisting company attacks on pension coverage, seniority and other conditions. Copies of the French language editions of *Are they Rich Because They're Smart?* and *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible* were sold on the picket line.

To join the party's campaign, contact the SWP or Communist League branch nearest you listed in the directory on page 8.

Militant Fighting Fund

March 24 - May 22 \$112,000

Country	Quota
UNITED STATES	
Albany	\$5,000
Atlanta	\$9,700
Chicago	\$11,500
Dallas	\$1,900
Lincoln	\$300
Los Angeles	\$10,000
Miami	\$3,200
New York	\$16,700
Oakland	\$13,000
Philadelphia	\$3,600
Seattle	\$7,900
Twin Cities	\$4,500
Washington	\$7,500
Total U.S.	\$94,800
CANADA	
Montreal	\$5,700
Vancouver	\$3,000
Total Canada	\$8,700
NEW ZEALAND	\$4,000
AUSTRALIA	\$800
UNITED KINGDOM	
London	\$2,500
Manchester	\$950
Total UK	\$3,450
FRANCE	\$450
Total	\$112,200
Should be	\$112,000

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A Necessary Debate Among Working People
by Mary-Alice Waters

"It's the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the US 'Justice' System"
The Cuban Five Talk About Their Lives Within the US Working Class

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To subscribe or purchase books at these prices, contact Socialist Workers Party or Communist League branches listed on page 8

Killing of Gaza protesters provokes debate in Israel

BY SETH GALINSKY

Protest actions were held in Israel March 31 and April 1 against Israeli army attacks that killed at least 15 Palestinian demonstrators and wounded hundreds of Gaza Strip residents. They were marching on the border to challenge the Israeli blockade there March 30. Some 300 people protested in Tel Aviv. There were smaller actions in Yad Mordechai near Gaza and one in Jaffa led by Palestinian citizens of Israel.

Forces from Hamas, the Islamist ruling party in Gaza, set up five camps with tents, portable washrooms, offering free food and Wi-Fi, near the border with Israel as part of what they call the “March of Return.” The series of actions will last six weeks and culminate May 15, the 70th anniversary of Israel’s declaration of independence. Many Palestinians call it the Nakba, or catastrophe, the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their land.

The Israeli government pulled out from Gaza in 2005, turning it over to Palestinian control. In June 2007 Hamas, which is backed by Tehran, wrested control of Gaza from Fatah in bloody street fighting.

Because of restrictions on imports of basic necessities imposed by the Israeli government — exacerbated by infighting between the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and Hamas — Gaza residents are dependent on United Nations aid and at least 60 percent of its youth are unemployed.

Hamas deliberately organized the action to provoke Israeli authorities. Despite publicly claiming it would be a peaceful, nonviolent demonstration, members of Hamas’ military wing, the Izzadin Kassam Brigade, organized to attack the border fence. Israeli officials repeatedly warned demonstrators to not approach the fence, through social media, leaflets dropped from airplanes and statements to news media.

Haaretz reported the protest was three actions in one. “The large majority of the nearly 30,000 Palestinian protesters was groups of families” who stayed well away from the border, despite attempts by Hamas to get them to join their provocations; smaller groups that threw stones and rolled burning tires toward the fence; and individuals who physically tried to wreck, burn or blow up the fence, knowing full well that the Israeli government had warned that anyone who did so would be met by force.

Like during three previous wars in Gaza over the past decade, Hamas’

goal was to trigger Israeli military retaliation against Palestinians who were drawn to the protest so the reactionary group can use the deaths and injuries to gain a hearing from the imperialist powers. Their aim is to generate pressure on the rulers in Tel Aviv to make concessions.

Hamas admits that at least five of those killed — overwhelmingly while trying to breach the fence — were members of its armed brigade. Israeli authorities say 10 were, and that some shot at Israeli soldiers.

The Israel Defense Forces’ use of firepower and the resulting deaths and injuries have sparked a debate in Israel.

Well-known radio host Kobi Meidan posted on his Facebook page that he is “ashamed to be Israeli” because of the killings, and then was suspended by Army Radio April 2. Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman called for his firing.

“I am firmly opposed to firings based on freedom of speech,” said Avi Gabbay, leader of the Zionist Union, the main capitalist opposition party, even though he said he disagrees with Meidan’s viewpoint.

Rachel Azaria, a Member of Parliament from the Kulanu Party, was one of the few members of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s ruling coalition who defended the radio host. “It is important that the media, like anywhere else, have a range of opinions,” she said. “Stop censoring. You never know when it’ll reach you.”

Pointing to Hamas’ provocations, former Israeli soldier Lior Tal Sadeh wrote to the online Times of Israel to criticize those who suggest the Israeli soldiers “fired live bullets at Gazans who were simply protesting.”

“You acted in an incredibly irresponsible manner,” he said.

But he also criticized those who insisted “everything was Hamas’s fault and that there is nothing to investigate and this would teach them not to approach the fence.”

Protests spread against poisoning of air in Russia

BY TERRY EVANS

“We can’t stop protesting until the landfill is shut down,” Volokolamsk resident Alexander Lvov told the *Moscow Times*. People in this town of 23,000, about 80 miles from Moscow, have been demanding a halt to the use of the landfill site, which has been emitting noxious gases making people ill over the past year. Recently there have been a series of demonstrations, like the one above March 10, blaming everyone from local officials to recently re-elected President Vladimir Putin for the crisis.

Some 57 children from Volokolamsk were admitted to the hospital March 21, complaining of nausea and headaches. Hundreds gathered outside, chanting “Killer!” at district leader Yevgeny Gavrilov, who was later dismissed by the regional governor.

This landfill, and others like it around Moscow, are brimming over with waste hauled from the capital city and dumped there. Protests against landfills in six other towns in

Puerto Rico unionists resist attacks on working people



Movimiento Independentista Nacional Hostosiano/Victor Birriel

Unionists protest in San Juan March 26 against anti-worker measures pushed by Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rosselló.

His labor “reform” bill would over time cut sick and vacation days in half for private and public workers, lengthen probation for new hires to nine months, allow bosses to eliminate the annual Christmas bonus, eliminate severance pay for many fired workers, and cut the government workforce through attrition. Rosselló claimed this leaves a \$5.5 billion surplus over five years, which could be put toward the government’s \$74 billion debt to bondholders.

A one-day strike by the Federation of Puerto Rican Teachers shut down schools across the island March 19 to protest plans to close 305 schools, promote government-funded charter schools, and issue tuition vouchers to send some children to private schools.

The U.S.-government imposed Financial Oversight and Management Board — known in Puerto Rico as the Junta — said March 28 that the measures are “welcome” but not enough. It is demanding the government of the U.S. colony speed up and deepen all these moves and immediately impose a 10 percent cut to pensions.

Rosselló said that’s too much and an “illegal” act by the board. He then put his labor “reform” on hold. But it’s all an act, Iván Vargas, president of the water workers union in Mayagüez, told the *Militant* by phone April 2. “Rosselló just wants to pass the hot potato to the Junta, that way they can be the ones responsible for all the cuts.”

Meanwhile, more than six months after Hurricane Maria ravaged the island, at least 200,000 people are still without electricity and in some areas water is rationed. Tens of thousands of homes still have only a blue tarp as a roof or none at all.

— SETH GALINSKY

“You too acted irresponsibly,” he said.

Michael Sfard, an Israeli lawyer well-known for his defense of Palestinian rights, is one of those who joined the protest in Tel Aviv. The action was organized under the slogan, “Create hope, stop the next war.”

“Those approaching the border did

not present any serious danger to life or limb. Damage to the fence would be the lesser evil,” Sfard told the *Militant* in a phone interview April 4. “Maybe Hamas should be held accountable for exploiting people. But that doesn’t diminish the responsibility of Israelis to speak out against the killings.”

the region took place last month.

Local authorities initially said there was no connection between people getting sick and the toxic gases. Russia’s Emergency Situations Ministry March 28 urged residents to stay indoors to avoid weather conditions it claimed were “unfavorable for the dissipation of harmful pollutants.” Two days later they began distributing gas masks.

Some Volokolamsk residents say the closure of a waste dump in Balashikha led to the Volokolamsk landfill being filled beyond capacity. Putin had ordered the Balashikha dump closed after residents called him on “Direct Line,” an annual television question and answer show, to complain.

Putin also faces widespread anger over the deaths of 64 people in a fire at the Kemerovo shopping mall in Siberia March 25. It turned out that mall managers and local officials there had locked the fire exits and left a broken fire alarm unrepaired. In an attempt to defuse the protests, Putin called a

national day of mourning for March 28. The day before thousands turned out in 20 cities across Russia to join vigils for those killed. At the one in Moscow some blamed Putin, chanting “Down with the czar!”

For recognition of a Palestinian state and of Israel

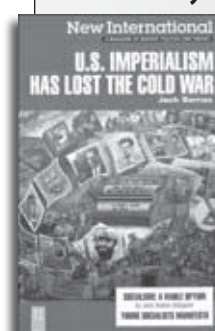
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Socialist Workers Party statement

at www.themilitant.com

U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War

by Jack Barnes



U.S. imperialism has lost the Cold War, the Socialist Workers Party concluded after the collapse of regimes and parties across Eastern Europe and the USSR that claimed to be communist. Contrary to imperialism’s hopes, the working class there has not been crushed.

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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

New York rally backs striking Spectrum cable workers

NEW YORK — Hundreds of workers rallied to back International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 3 members on strike against Charter Communications/Spectrum March 28 outside the company's headquarters in midtown Manhattan.

The spirited demonstration marked the one-year anniversary of the walkout of some 1,800 technicians, dispatchers, constructors, engineers and warehouse workers. The strike was precipitated by the bosses' demands for deep cuts in medical benefits, pensions and other concessions. The company has refused to negotiate and has hired scabs to replace union workers.

"These workers, with a lot of experience, have been out on strike for a year because of company greed," IBEW Local 3 electrician Patricia Mitchell told the *Militant* at the union rally. "Many of them have other jobs, including as helpers on IBEW Local 3 construction sites, but they are still fighting to get their jobs back without giving up their health care

and pensions."

Charter Communications purchased Time Warner Cable in 2016 for \$56 billion and renamed the local cable TV, internet and phone services Spectrum. The company raked in \$41.6 billion in revenue last year with profits of \$9.9 billion. Some \$9.3 billion of that came from the federal tax bill passed in December.

—Lea Sherman

Port workers in New Zealand strike for safety, pay parity

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand — Some 90 dockworkers marched through the port town of Lyttelton March 22, day two of a five-day strike for pay parity with other port workers and against changes to working hours by the Lyttelton Port Company. The workers are organized by the Rail and Maritime Transport Union.

"We organize activities to keep us strong and active," RMTU executive member and crane driver Polly Bysterveld told the *Militant* March 23. Two weeks earlier workers rallied outside the offices of the Christchurch City Coun-



Militant/Willie Cotton

Hundreds of workers rally March 28 in New York to back Spectrum cable workers, members of International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, on strike for a year against concessions.

cil, which owns the port.

The bosses are demanding a free hand in setting work hours. They want "to bring forward or extend any shift by up to four hours," said RMTU organizer John Kerr. "You might not know until you started your shift if it would be extended."

"It's not just about the money," said Bysterveld. "It's about sleep patterns, fatigue, and health and safety." In 2014 port maintenance worker Brad Fletcher was killed when a scissor-lift toppled over.

Last year the company reached agreement on work schedules with the Mari-

time Union of New Zealand, which covers about half of the 400 workers on the docks and tugs.

Their contract includes pay raises of 4 percent this year and 3 percent for each of the next two years. The company has said it will grant the RMTU workers the same wage increases if they sign on to more flexible shifts.

Strikers told us that Maritime Union of New Zealand members, while continuing to work, support the RMTU actions. The RMTU has received solidarity from unions organizing nurses, meatpackers and dairy workers. Lyttelton Port ranks third among container ports across the country.

"If we win this it will be an example for others," said Brian Cunard, a maintenance worker at the port for 12 years.

—Patrick Brown and Baskaran Appu

Help get more reports on labor struggles into the *Militant*

This column gives a voice to those engaged in battle and building solidarity today — from school workers in Oklahoma, Kentucky and Arizona to retail and factory workers looking to stand up and fight. Send in articles, photos, and letters on picket lines and other labor protests to themilitant@mac.com or mail them to: 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018; or call us at (212) 244-4899.

‘Prosecute cops who killed Stephon Clark!’

Continued from front page

Clark's family arranged for pathologist Dr. Bennet Omalu to conduct an autopsy on Clark's bullet-riddled body. At a March 30 press conference, Omalu reported that seven of the eight bullets that struck Clark hit him in the back. Omalu's report disputes the cops' claims that Clark was advancing towards them with his hand outstretched when they shot him. For five minutes after the shooting cops did nothing to render first aid to Clark.

"We want to hold these officers to be accountable not only in Sacramento but across the country," said Matt Barnes,

the former Sacramento Kings basketball player. He organized a rally at Cesar Chavez Plaza of several hundred March 31 where members of the Clark family were joined on the stage by relatives of Joseph Mann, who was killed by cops here in 2016. Mann, who was mentally ill and homeless, was shot 16 times.

Cecilia McClinton, Mann's niece, told the crowd, "We never had a chance to view his body. Two years later, still no justice. The officers are still getting paid ... they need to be arrested!"

Socialist Workers Party members from the Bay Area knocked on the doors of working people in Sacramento March

25 to promote solidarity with the fight to get the cops who killed Clark prosecuted and find others interested in the party.

In the Meadowview neighborhood they met Faron Clark, who said he is part Irish and part Cherokee. He told SWP member Betsey Stone and oil refinery worker Ben Fields that he "felt bad for Stephon and for the cops" who killed him. When Stone said the officers should be prosecuted for firing 20 bullets at the unarmed Black man, Faron Clark said that he too had been "hassled by cops." He got a subscription to the *Militant* and the book *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?*

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



April 19, 1993

Abortion rights activists in Florida are responding to the March 10 murder of Dr. David Gunn in Pensacola and a months-long Operation Rescue training camp. The antiabortion "graduation class" is expected to mobilize to shut down area clinics April 10-11.

Defenders of a woman's right to choose in Florida — by organizing their own training sessions, and by preparing to converge on Melbourne — are affirming that the only way to defend the right to abortion from right-wing attacks is with arms linked — in the streets, clinic by clinic.

The forces seeking to push back women's rights, including the right to abortion, are mobilizing their numbers to intimidate both doctors and women. Only mass action by youth, workers, farmers, and others who support the right to abortion can take on this challenge.



April 15, 1968

April 10 — Some 65,000 national guardsmen and federal troops occupied Black communities across the nation this week as Black people took to the streets in a massive response to the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

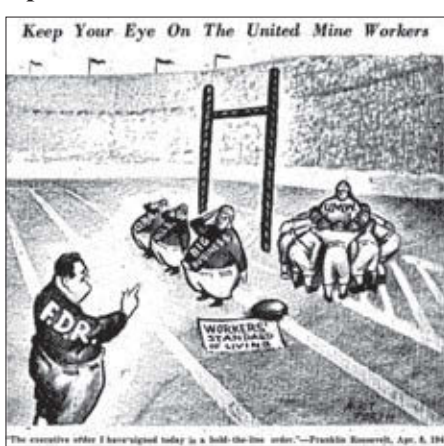
This nationwide outburst was the most widespread series of rebellions yet. Thirty-eight people were killed and thousands injured. The total number of arrests was well over 15,000.

The stated policy of federal and state officials has been to react with "a massive and visible presence of law enforcement" — in other words, the use of thousands of troops and cops.

No sooner had Lyndon Johnson called for Americans to reject the violence that struck down Martin Luther King, "who lived by nonviolence," than he signed an executive order calling for the deployment of 12,500 federal troops to forcibly put down the Washington uprising.



April 17, 1943



President Roosevelt's executive order of April 8 places wages under the most drastic and sweeping control in United States history. Freezing incomes of the great majority of the wage earners while repeating promises about controlling prices, the effect of the new order will be to speed up the reduction of the masses' living standards to a level lower.

Safeway workers in Manitoba push back concessions

WINNIPEG, Manitoba — Some 2,000 members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 832 at Safeway in this province voted overwhelmingly March 25 to ratify a four-year agreement with Sobeys. Sobeys bought the Safeway grocery chain in western Canada five years ago.

After the vote several workers said that the 98 percent strike mandate given to the union helped push back company concessions.

Sobeys withdrew its demand for workers to go from paying nothing to paying 50 percent of premiums for health and dental benefits. There will be no reduction to night shift premium pay. But many workers were disappointed with the wage freeze in the first two years of the contract.

When negotiations began in Manitoba, Sobeys announced that it would close 10 Safeway stores in British Columbia, five of which could become FreshCo. The agreement that workers ratified says that "a new FreshCo agreement will be negotiated."

"The main reason I came to this meeting is I wanted to know what will happen if you work in a store that becomes a FreshCo store," said Eric Schmidt, with 25 years seniority, after voting in favor of the agreement.

"I would probably go from \$21 to less than \$15 an hour," added Gaurav, who works in the meat department.

At the meeting, this reporter, who works at Walmart, gave union officials cards in solidarity with the Safeway workers signed by 20 workers at two Walmart stores in the Vancouver, British Columbia, area.

—Michel Dugré

Oklahoma teachers walk out

Continued from front page

more than 200 districts across the state. They came to demand the legislature raise their wages and increase funding for schools.

“We’re not going to take it anymore!” read the banner teachers from Northeast Academy carried.

“I have taught for over 10 years and live from paycheck to paycheck,” one sixth-grade teacher from a rural school told the *Militant*. “We will be out for as long as it takes.”

“It’s like the Arab spring, but it’s a teachers’ spring,” geography teacher Toni Henson told the press at the rally.

Buses from throughout the state and shuttles from nearby parking lots began dropping off participants as early as 7 a.m. They marched around the Capitol and mingled on the grounds for several hours before the rally began. The crowd grew so large you couldn’t move. The *Tulsa World* reports 25,000 “marched on and through the Capitol.” Thousands of homemade signs graphically expressed workers’ opinions about their working and living conditions.

The teachers were outraged at the abusive conditions they and their students face.

“We have 30 kids in a classroom,” said Angie Gibson, who has taught for 24 years. She traveled here with a group of teachers who work at Briggs, a rural elementary school near Tahlequah. They described how families there face similar difficulties imposed by the crisis of capitalism today. They said they’ve volunteered to buy shoes and coats for the kids and plan to stay here for the whole week.

When it was clear the protests would continue the next day, many school districts closed throughout the state. Thousands returned to the Capitol. Then school districts were closed April 4 for a third straight day. Hundreds gathered inside the Capitol where the legislature was in session, chanting, “Fund our schools” and “We’re not leaving.”

The legislature and Gov. Mary Fallon tried to defuse the teachers’ anger and stave off the walkout at the last minute. On March 28, after months of claiming there was no money for raises, legislators passed and Fallon signed a bill increasing annual wages for teachers by an average of \$6,100, for staff by \$1,250 and adding \$50 million to school funding. This fell short of the demands by the teachers union, the Oklahoma Education Association. Fallon’s efforts failed to prevent teachers from walking out.

The bill also imposed new taxes that will hit working people the hardest, including on gas and tobacco.

Many teachers at the April 2 rally supported some tax increases, saying they couldn’t see how else needed changes could be paid for. But Bill Ray, who teaches at Douglass High School here, told the *Militant*, “We need to look at the way we rely too much on revenue from taxes. This will hurt teachers and workers.” Others favored putting the cost onto the gas and oil bosses, the biggest industry in the state.

School closures continue

Rallies were held across the state the following day, leading more school districts to announce suspension of classes.

Many strikers are fed up with politicians. Frederick Smitherman, an eighth-grade teacher, joined a protest in Tulsa. “We all pay taxes and expect our legislators to do what we voted them in to do,” he told Reuters. “What else are teachers supposed to do besides yell and scream? We can vote them out, but voting one out just brings a bad one in instead.”

On the third day of the walkout, a group of school workers, parents and other supporters in Tulsa started a seven-day, 100-mile march to the Capitol. The Tulsa superintendent, the vice president of the Oklahoma teachers union and the National Education Association secretary treasurer are participating.

Solidarity and support for the school workers’ fight has been a prominent feature across Oklahoma, as in other states. The weight of the sizable Native American population in Oklahoma was registered when the National Indian Education Association based in Washington, D.C., issued a statement of support.

Justin Evans, a heavy equipment operator from Tulsa, attended the April 2 rally. He is president of International Union of Operating Engineers Local 627. “There were some crane operators who shut their jobs down today to be here. I heard some ironworkers did the same,” he said.

Dezrea Dalessandro, a 29-year-old member of the National Association of Social Workers, joined the rally. “We face similar conditions,” she said. “When I became a social worker I thought I would be able to help people. But it is impossible.”

Going door to door to discuss the fight and introduce the party in nearby Purcell, members of the Socialist Workers Party met Sherraina Walden, who said she works four jobs.

“I’m a tutor, a child care worker, house sitter and a clerk in a store, and I still can’t get by,” she said. “My husband worked for Walmart. That’s why he’s got problems with his knees and back. I’m with the teachers. My son is autistic, there are 29 kids in his special needs class.”

Kentucky teachers fight attacks on pensions

FRANKFORT, Ky. — “Don’t make me go West Virginia on you,” read a number of signs at the April 2 rally of teachers and other school workers outside the state Capitol here.

Courtney Watson, a teacher from Louisville, was one of thousands gathered to protest the attacks on pensions and funding for schools throughout



Militant/Theresa Kendrick

Thousands of teachers and their allies rally in Oklahoma City, April 3. Oklahoma teachers, like those elsewhere, point to example of fight, social movement that led to victory in West Virginia.

the state. The social movement school workers in West Virginia built during their nine-day walkout provided an example to emulate for many here.

“What impressed me about their strike was how they gathered beforehand to provide for those kids,” Watson said.

In addition to teachers, bus drivers, custodians, librarians and other school workers, a lot of high school students and younger children joined the action, organized by the Kentucky Education Association. All Kentucky’s counties were represented, reflected in the popular chant, “120 strong.”

‘Pension reform’ part of sewage bill

On March 29 the state legislature passed a “pension reform” bill tacked onto a sewage bill. It ends regular pensions for new teachers, instead tying their retirement to capitalist market returns on a 401(k)-type account. Teachers in Kentucky aren’t eligible for Social Security, so they depend entirely on their pensions.

Teachers have staged several rallies in their hundreds and thousands protesting the pension proposal. The union ranks responded immediately after the bill was adopted.

“That night a bunch of us decided to sick out,” Caroline Wilkerson, a second-grade teacher in Jessamine County, told the *Militant* at the April 2 rally. So many called off that officials cancelled school there and in some 20 other counties. The next day “we rallied here in the morning, and then went back to protest at the Jessamine County Courthouse,” she said.

“I made this sign with scented markers because our Sewage Bill stinks!” read Katie O’Daniel’s sign. She teaches English as a second language at Oldham County High School. She came with her school-age children. “Every week 12.5 percent is taken out of our checks towards our pension. When we’re low on cash we can’t use it, but the state can use it,” for other things.

Nearly all schools statewide were closed for the start of spring break. Some 21 districts that were not on break were closed because workers took off to join the protest at the Capitol.

O’Daniel said that this week teachers in her district packed extra lunches for the kids, since school would be closed. They often do this for holidays, and usually it’s the teachers who deliver them in their own vehicles to students’ homes.

Sometimes there are local pickup areas.

The rally took place as the legislature debated a budget proposal that includes many cuts to education funding. Teresa Wren, a school bus driver in Madison County, said there is talk of cutting \$2 million from school transportation funds for her district alone. If that happens, “they’ll start by cutting field trips,” she said. “After paying taxes and insurance we take home barely minimum wage unless we can drive those extra trips.”

The proposal also includes a tax increase on cigarettes and puts taxes on car repairs, veterinary services for small animals — your cats and dogs — and a service tax on gyms.

Other unionists picked up by the determination of the teachers to resist the attacks came to the rally to show their support. This included members of the Teamsters and United Food and Commercial Workers. “This same administration attacked us, repealing the prevailing wage law and passing ‘right to work’” last year, said Doug Conley, business agent for Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 452.

Gov. Matt Bevin just signed another anti-labor law that weakens workers’ compensation protections. Among other things, House Bill 2 places new obstacles to coal miners receiving state compensation for black lung disease. And on March 27 the legislature adopted a bill that would ban a common abortion procedure after the 11th week of pregnancy.

— Laura Anderson

Arizona teachers rally, demand 20 percent raise

PHOENIX — The crowd chanted “20 percent!” when Noah Karvelis of Arizona Educators United announced the raise Arizona teachers are demanding from the podium of a teachers’ rally here, March 28.

A month of actions included a sick-out on March 21 by teachers in Pendergast Elementary School District, forcing the closure of nine schools.

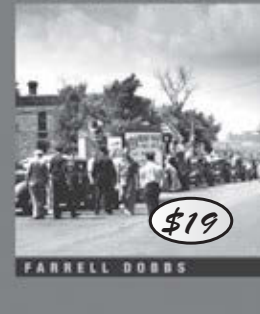
Teachers got a 1 percent raise this year and will get another 1 percent next year. Gov. Doug Ducey has rejected the teachers’ demands.

Karvelis told the rally that if legislators do nothing to meet their demands before the legislative session closes April 17 workers will step up their actions.

— Bernie Senter and Betsy Whittaker

Further reading:

TEAMSTER POLITICS



“Unionism and politics cannot be separated. Power generated at the trade-union level can be shattered by government blows. Workers must enter the political arena as an independent

class force, with their own party.”

— Farrell Dobbs

pathfinderpress.com

Cuba's role in defeat of apartheid debated at UK meeting

South African forces 'broke their teeth' against Cuban and Angolan forces in battle of Cuito Cuanavale

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON — Sharply conflicting assessments of the historic victory won by Cuban and Angolan forces over the apartheid South African army at the battle of Cuito Cuanavale in 1988 were presented at a daylong conference here March 23. The event, titled "The 30th Anniversary of the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale: Reflections on Southern Africa's Turning Point," was hosted by Chatham House, The Royal Institute of International Affairs.

Cuito Cuanavale was "a turning point in the struggle to free the continent and our country from the scourge of apartheid!" explained Nelson Mandela in 1991 in remarks cited by a number of conference participants.

Mandela gave that speech to pay tribute to the people and leadership of revolutionary Cuba for their solidarity. Some 425,000 Cubans volunteers came to aid Angola in repelling successive invasions by the apartheid regime. The decisive victory by the combined forces of Angola, Cuba and Namibia forced South Africa to withdraw from the area, allowed the people of Namibia to achieve independence from apartheid rule, and gave a powerful boost to the mass revolutionary struggle that bought down white-supremacist rule in South Africa just a few years later. The Cuban volunteers' contribution was "unparalleled for its principled and selfless character," Mandela said.

The speech is reprinted in *Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own*, which contains talks by Mandela, Fidel and Raúl Castro, and other Cuban revolutionaries who fought in Angola. The Pathfinder Press book is available from distributors listed on page 8.

The victory in Angola also gave a boost to the confidence and fighting capacities of working people in Cuba. It enabled them to see the effects of imperialism and to fight against it. It strengthened the fight led by Cuban President Fidel Castro to combat the growing weight of relatively privileged administrative layers in the country. And it put the Cuban Revolution in a stronger position to surmount the massive plunge of its trade after the Stalinist regimes imploded in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and early '90s.

Conference panelists included Angolan Ambassador Miguel Gaspar Fernandes Neto; Gen. Salviano de Jesus Sequeira "Kianda," Angola's minister of national defense; Cuban Ambassador Teresita de Jesús Vicente Sotolongo; Maj. Gen. Roland de Vries, who served in the apartheid regime's South African Defence Force; Chester Crocker, U.S. assistant secretary of state for African affairs during much of South Africa's intervention, which Washington sup-



Granma/Ricardo López

Cuban internationalist volunteers in Cuito Cuanavale, Angola, May 31, 1988. Former general in apartheid army and U.S. government official then responsible for Africa affairs debated Cuba Ambassador to U.K. Teresita Vicente, Angolan officials and others. Cuba's role in defeat of South African army invasion of Angola hastened fall of apartheid and Namibian independence.

ported; Professor Piero Gleijeses from Johns Hopkins University; Professor Vladimir Shubin from the Institute for African Studies of the Russian Academy of Social Sciences; Baroness Northover, the British prime minister's trade envoy to Angola; and others.

Cuba's internationalist solidarity, which was decisive in helping the new Angolan government that had won independence from Portuguese colonial rule defend its country, won the hatred not only of Pretoria but of London and Washington. Cuba's role was supported by Thomas Sankara, leader of the revolution in Burkina Faso in West Africa, and millions of working people in Africa and internationally.

Debate over Cuito Cuanavale

Gen. de Vries tried to dismiss the battle at Cuito Cuanavale, saying it was a small episode in what he called South Africa's "border war." South Africa never had any intention to take Cuito Cuanavale, he said. De Vries, an on-the-ground commander with the rank of colonel in 1988, said, "I don't see myself as having been defeated anywhere." The army top brass was a major force in ending apartheid, he claimed. "We had argued the government should release Mandela already in 1985."

De Vries' attempt to hide the truth was echoed by Crocker, who spoke in a video recording. "Cuito Cuanavale is exaggerated in its significance," the former U.S. official said. "Fidel Castro very cleverly orchestrated the Cuito Cuanavale 'victory' narrative to give cover to, and pave the way for, what Castro really wanted — Cuban withdrawal from Africa."

Col. Nelson Gonçalves, Angolan defense attaché at their embassy in London, intervened from the floor to answer de Vries. He quoted from the minutes of a South African cabinet meeting in which the government bemoans its failure to take Cuito Cuanavale.

"Cuito Cuanavale was not an isolated action," Cuban Ambassador Vicente said. The Cubans had significantly escalated the number of its forces up to some 50,000 soldiers in preparation

for decisive confrontations: the defensive battle of Cuito Cuanavale and an offensive in southwest Angola.

"In Cuito Cuanavale the South Africans really broke their teeth," Vicente said, quoting from a Dec. 5, 1988, speech by Cuban President Fidel Castro. "And it all came about with a minimum of casualties for the Angolan and Cuban forces," Castro said.

"The Cuban-Angolan strategy wasn't simply to stop the enemy at Cuito Cuanavale, but to gather enough forces and equipment ... to strike hard at them on terrain that we, and not the enemy, had chosen," Castro said. "This change in the relationship of forces was what paved the way for negotiations."

Vicente explained how the threat to Cuito Cuanavale had arisen because of a disastrous offensive launched by the People's Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola (FAPLA) and their Soviet advisers against Mavinga, a town in southeastern Angola, in mid-1987. This was a stronghold of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), a counterrevolution-

ary opponent of the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) government and ally of the apartheid rulers and Washington.

The Cuban leadership "expressed its concern" with the Soviet's proposed offensive, Vicente said. Mavinga presented a logistical nightmare to get supplies to their troops, and it would inevitably provoke a South African intervention. Cuba refused to participate.

The inevitable South African response — with troops and aircraft — inflicted heavy casualties on the Angolan forces, who fought courageously but were decimated, Vicente said. They retreated to Cuito Cuanavale.

Cuba's role decisive

"Cuito Cuanavale was going to fall if Cuba didn't intervene," Piero Gleijeses said by video. Gleijeses is author of two books — *Conflicting Missions* and *Visions of Freedom* — that describe the roles of Cuba, South Africa, Washington and Moscow during this struggle for African freedom.

Cuba's revolutionary leadership decided to commit armed forces in support of Angola out of internationalist solidarity, and did so in the face of Soviet opposition, Gleijeses said. Throughout the campaign, Fidel Castro and the Cuban high command were at loggerheads with Moscow and the Soviet military leaders over the politics of the war, its international context and how to conduct it militarily.

The scope of Cuba's commitment of troops, planes and armaments was decisive — and on a scale that the Cuban leaders later said could have exposed the revolution to attack.

In addition to the formal conference proceedings, the Cuban government prepared an attractive photo display on the struggle.

Pathfinder Books was invited to have a stand. Copies of Gleijeses' books were among the £105-worth (\$150) of literature participants got. Other books sold included *Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own* and *Cuba and Angola: The War for Freedom* by Harry Villegas.

The Cuban Revolution and Africa

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Bolshevik Revolution transformed all social relations

Below is an excerpt from “The Struggle for Cultured Speech,” published in Pravda, May 16, 1923, a chapter in Problems of Everyday Life: Creating the Foundations for a New Society in Revolutionary Russia by Leon Trotsky. The title is one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for April. Trotsky was one of the central leaders of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. Copyright © 1973 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY LEON TROTSKY

I read lately in one of our papers that at a general meeting of the workers at the “Paris Commune” shoe factory, a resolution was carried to abstain from swearing, to impose fines for bad language, etc.

This is a small incident in the turmoil of the present day — but a very telling small incident. Its importance, however, depends on the response the initiative of the shoe factory is going to meet with in the working class.

Abusive language and swearing are a legacy of slavery, humiliation, and disrespect for human dignity — one’s own and that of other people. ...

[T]he revolution is in the first place an awakening of human personality in the masses — who were supposed to possess no personality. In spite of occasional cruelty and the sanguinary relentlessness of its methods, the



Women rail workers in Russia hold on-the-job training class, December 1923. “A revolution does not deserve its name if, with all its might, and all the means at its disposal, it does not help the woman — twofold and threefold enslaved as she has been in the past — to get out on the road of individual and social progress,” wrote Leon Trotsky, one of revolution’s central leaders.

revolution is, before and above all, the awakening of humanity, its onward march, and is marked with a growing respect for the personal dignity of every individual, with an ever-increasing concern for those who are weak. A revolution does not deserve its name if, with all its might and all the means at its disposal, it does not help the woman — twofold and threefold enslaved as she has been in the past—to get out on the road of individual and social progress. A revolution does not deserve its name, if it does not take the greatest care possible of the children — the future race for whose benefit the revolution has been made. And how could one create day by day, if only by little bits, a new life based on mutual consideration, on self-respect, on the real equality of women, looked upon as fellow workers, on the efficient care of the children — in an atmosphere poisoned with the roaring, rolling, ringing, and resounding swearing of masters and slaves, that swearing which spares no one and stops at nothing? The struggle against “bad language” is a condition of intellectual culture, just as the fight against filth and vermin is a condition of physical culture.

To do away radically with abusive speech is not an easy thing, considering that unrestrained speech has psychological roots and is an outcome of uncultured surroundings. We certainly welcome the initiative of the shoe fac-

tory, and above all we wish the promoters of the new movement much perseverance. Psychological habits which come down from generation to generation and saturate the whole atmosphere of life are very tenacious, and on the other hand it often happens with us in Russia that we just make a violent rush forward, strain our forces, and then let things drift in the old way.

Let us hope that the working women — those of the Communist ranks, in the first place — will support the initiative of the “Paris Commune” factory. As a rule — which has exceptions, of course — men who use bad language scorn women, and have no regard for children. This does not apply only to the uncultured masses, but also to the advanced and even the so-called responsible elements of the present social order. ...

In addition to such social contrasts — obtuse bestiality and the highest revolutionary idealism — we often witness psychological contrasts in the same mind. A man is a sound communist devoted to the cause, but women for him are just “females,” not to be taken seriously in any way. Or it happens that an otherwise reliable communist, when discussing nationalistic matters, starts talking hopelessly reactionary stuff. To account for that we must remember that different parts of the human consciousness do not change and develop simultaneously

and on parallel lines. There is a certain economy in the process. Human psychology is very conservative by nature, and the change due to the demands and the push of life affects in the first place those parts of the mind which are directly concerned in the case. ...

Reactionary blockheads maintain that the revolution, if it hasn’t altogether ruined it, is in the process of spoiling the Russian language. There is actually an enormous quantity of words in use now that have originated by chance, many of them perfectly needless, provincial expressions, some contrary to the spirit of our language. And yet the reactionary blockheads are quite mistaken about the future of the Russian language — as about all the rest. Out of the revolutionary turmoil our language will come strengthened, rejuvenated, with an increased flexibility and delicacy. Our prerevolutionary, obviously ossified bureaucratic and liberal press language is already considerably enriched by new descriptive forms, by new, much more precise and dynamic expressions. But during all these stormy years our language has certainly become greatly obstructed, and part of our progress in culture will show, among other things, in our casting out of our speech all useless words and expressions, and those which are not in keeping with the spirit of the language, while preserving the unquestionable and invaluable linguistic acquisitions of the revolutionary epoch.

Language is the instrument of thought. Precision and correctness of speech are indispensable conditions of correct and precise thinking. In our country, the working class has come to power for the first time in history. The working class possesses a rich store of work and life experience and a language based on that experience. But our proletariat has not had sufficient schooling in elementary reading and writing, not to speak of literary education. And this is the reason that the now governing working class, which is in itself and by its social nature a powerful safeguard of the integrity and greatness of the Russian language in the future, does not, nevertheless, stand up now with the necessary energy against the intrusion of needless, corrupt, and sometimes hideous new words and expressions.

April **BOOKS OF THE MONTH**

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Join the protests, build labor solidarity!

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small increase in funding as insufficient and walk out. When Kentucky’s legislature slashed teachers’ pensions last week, they didn’t hesitate to walk out and march on the Capitol. Thousands of teachers in Arizona rallied March 28 and plan to step up their protests if the state doesn’t meet their demand for a pay raise.

Get in your car, book a flight, get on a bus — make your way to these fights. Join the picket lines and rallies teachers and their allies are organizing in Oklahoma and elsewhere. Stand with them. And use what you learn to get your union and co-workers to send messages of solidarity and contribute to their strike funds.

Solidarity is needed. Like the bosses in mines, mills and factories, state government officials are determined to make working people pay for the economic, political and moral crisis of their capitalist system, and are going after workers’ pay, pensions, health care and dignity.

Workers solidarity is even more important for teachers and other public workers. They confront the capitalist rulers only indirectly. Whether their bosses are a school board or state government, they aren’t capital-

ists themselves, but government bodies that represent the class interests of the bosses.

Autoworkers, coal miners and other private-employed workers can use their collective power on the shop floor and the picket line to fight boss attacks, and can strike and shut production, cutting off the bosses’ profits.

Members of the Socialist Workers Party are organizing to get to these battles, and seek to bring co-workers, others we work with and youth to go with us. Join us! Contact the party branch nearest you listed on page 8.

We’ll use the *Militant* and books by SWP leaders to deepen the discussions we have with strikers and others about the class divide between workers on one side and bosses and their government on the other. We explain that everything that breaks down the divisions they try to push on us — employed vs. unemployed, native-born vs. immigrant, men vs. women, Black vs. Caucasian — is in our interest. On this road we can chart a course to independent working-class political action and the fight to take political power into our own hands.

Let’s get going!

Saudi prince pushes alliance against Tehran

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gan a three-week U.S. tour March 20. He is also seeking more capitalist investment to diversify and strengthen the Saudi economy and “modernize” social relations there.

At the same time, the presidents of Russia, Turkey and Iran — Vladimir Putin, Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Hassan Rouhani — met April 4 in Ankara to discuss further collaboration in Syria. Each of these capitalist regimes is jockeying to strengthen their own interests, and have worked together on some moves in Syria — mostly give each other space to maneuver.

The Saudi monarchy recognizes that for it to become a serious force in the region — politically, economically and militarily — requires bringing the country into the 21st century.

In an interview with the *Atlantic*’s editor Jeffrey Goldberg, Prince Mohammed said there are two warring camps in the Middle East today. The first is what he called “the triangle of evil” — the Shiite clerical regime in Iran, the Muslim Brotherhood, and Sunni terrorist groups like Islamic State and al-Qaeda.

Along with Washington, he includes in his camp the governments of Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. Without saying it in so many words, he sees the Israeli regime as a crucial ally.

When asked by Goldberg if he believed the Jewish people have a right to a nation-state, he replied, “I believe the Palestinians and the Israelis have the right to have their own land. But we have to have a peace agreement to assure the stability for everyone and to have normal relations.”

The Saudi government, like its Arab government allies, does not have formal diplomatic relations with the Israeli regime, but has growing collaboration on intelligence matters and other connections.

“There are a lot of interests we share with Israel,” Prince Mohammed said, “and if there is peace, there would be a lot of interest between Israel and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and countries like Egypt and Jordan.”

Besides meeting with President Donald Trump, cabinet members and Democratic and Republican Party politicians, the Saudi prince is meeting with corporate executives in Boston, New York, California and Texas. He is also meeting with movie producers and others in Hollywood, as the Saudi regime prepares to reopen movie theaters for the first time in decades.

Prince Mohammed has been in the forefront of efforts to limit the power of the Wahhabi clerical police and open up social relations. Women will be permitted to drive in June, and are now allowed to attend sporting and other public events.

“We’re knocking the hell out of ISIS [Islamic State].

We’ll be coming out of Syria, like very soon,” President Trump said in Ohio March 29, while the Saudi ruler was still in the U.S. “Let other people take care of it.” He has reportedly put on hold \$200 million allocated for reconstruction in Syria.

Much of the liberal press went ballistic. The *Washington Post* ran an editorial March 31 headlined, “Trump Says We’re Leaving Syria ‘Like, Very Soon.’ Bad Idea.” *Politico* charged Trump with abandoning “the larger battle of influence underway among multiple nations, including Russia and Iran.”

But the liberals, who view all politics through the prism of trying to drive Trump from office, miss the point. Trump wants U.S. allies to shoulder more of the cost. Reuters noted that at an April 3 press conference Trump said the U.S. government won’t “rest until ISIS is gone” and set no timetable for a troop withdrawal.

Trump noted that Saudi Arabia wants the 2,000 plus U.S. troops to remain in Syria. “Well you know, you want us to stay,” Trump said. “Maybe you’re going to have to pay.”

The president told national security officials, the *Post* reported April 4, that “he expects other countries, especially wealthy Arab states in the region, to pick up the task of paying for reconstruction of stabilized areas [in Syria], including sending their own troops, if necessary.”

Speaking at the misnamed U.S. Institute of Peace the same day, Gen. Joseph Votel, head of the U.S. Central Command in the Mideast, said, “A lot of good military progress has been made over the last couple of years, but the hard part, I think, is in front of us.” As the war with Islamic State winds down, he said, “the situation continues to become more and more complex.” The task, he said, is to move forward “without ceding power to Russia and Iran, and resolving U.S. difficulties with neighboring Turkey.”

Turkish rulers threaten Manbij

The Turkish military has invaded Syria alongside Syrian forces under its command in an offensive against Kurdish forces in the northwestern Afrin canton.

In the last few weeks the Pentagon has sent some 300 additional troops to Manbij, which Erdogan has threatened to attack next. The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces drove Islamic State out of Manbij in 2016 and has been the main ground force Washington has relied on in the battle against Islamic State.

U.S. forces have built emplacements and begun patrols both west and north of Manbij, in areas where Turkish-led forces from either Afrin or Turkey itself would mount an attack. Kurdish representatives met with French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris March 29, where he said French troops would “bolster” U.S. efforts in Manbij.

NKorea, US talks

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and missile programs.

At the urging of Washington and with the backing of Beijing, the U.N. Security Council March 30 black-listed 27 ships and 21 shipping companies accused of involvement in oil or coal trade with North Korea.

The *Financial Times* reports that shipments of refined oil from China to North Korea were slashed 99 percent in January and February. Chinese coal exports to North Korea — which averaged 8,600 tons a month in 2017 — plummeted to zero. Steel exports fell to 257 tons a month, from more than 15,000 tons. A number of North Korean factories have been forced to close and thousands of workers have been laid off.

The Chinese rulers are seeking détente between Washington and Pyongyang, to achieve a measure of stability in the region. They want to prevent an economic and political collapse in North Korea, which could lead to a flood of refugees and to U.S. imperialist troops on its borders.

Korea divided against will of its people

At the end of the second imperialist world war and the end of the Japanese occupation of Korea, Korean workers and farmers rebelled. U.S. troops occupied the South, with the agreement of Moscow, and installed the dictatorship of Syngman Rhee, who imposed a reign of terror, killing tens of thousands and drowning their uprising in blood. But in the North, working people succeeded in overturning the power of the capitalists and landlords.

Washington’s provocations led to the 1950-53 Korean War, where some 4 million people were killed. U.S.-led troops, fighting under the U.N. flag, drove North Korean forces almost to the Chinese border. With the aid of tens of thousands of Chinese volunteers, the North Koreans fought the U.S. troops back to the 38th parallel, dealing U.S. imperialism its first-ever military defeat.

The U.S. government violated the terms of the 1953 cease-fire by placing nuclear weapons in South Korea in 1958, keeping them there until 1991. South Korea remains under the U.S. rulers’ nuclear “umbrella” and the Pentagon still deploys nuclear-armed submarines in nearby waters. Washington has refused for 65 years to sign a formal peace treaty with Pyongyang.

When Pyongyang began testing nuclear weapons — and threatening the South with a “rain of fire” — it dealt a blow to its moral high ground against U.S. imperialism’s brutality.

Both North Korea and Washington have moved over the last several months to ease military tensions. Pyongyang has not conducted any nuclear tests since Sept. 3. Washington in turn postponed to April 1 and scaled down its provocative annual joint military maneuvers with South Korea to facilitate talks. Washington cut the duration of the Operation Foal Eagle war games in half. They began April 1 and unlike previous years will not include U.S. aircraft carriers or nuclear submarines.

Desire for reunification can’t be quelled

Leading up to the talks between Washington and Pyongyang, South Korean President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim are planning an April 27 summit. Tokyo also wants to meet with Pyongyang.

Ever since the U.S. occupation, the Korean people have thirsted for reunification. Since the reunification of Vietnam and Germany the division of Korea is the one national division remaining from World War II.

At this year’s Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea, a large delegation from the North created quite a stir. This week Seoul sent 120 people to the North, including music groups, government officials, reporters and a taekwondo demonstration team, for concerts April 1 and 3 in Pyongyang. The South Korean female K-Pop group Red Velvet sang “Our Hope Is Unification,” and the audience joined in.

Kim Jong Un attended and was introduced to the performers. He proposed that North Korean musicians perform in Seoul in the fall.

Correction

The caption to the picture with the article “Kurds: ‘Atrocities Don’t Kill Our Quest for Freedom’” in the April 9 issue incorrectly identified Muhammad Aziz as the man in the picture. Aziz is not in the picture.